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



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NICK WARREN

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From the Editors

Life in a changing and dangerous world

This year, we're quickly learning to expect the unexpected. All bets are off. It was 77 degrees in February. In Erie. If you think something is going to be a certain way, chances are it won't.

Life presents new changes around the corner every day. Some of these things are fun and interesting, and are received by us with open arms, a welcome reprieve to everyday stresses.

Some are the opposite. New changes come, too often, in the form of tragedy. Lives are cut short, forever altering those around them.

This year, we're quickly learning to expect the unexpected. All bets are off.

Over the course of this month, our community has been hit by a startling number of deaths from heroin overdoses. This horrific epidemic is cutting down people in the prime of their lives. Creative young people with open minds and warm hearts, who had so much to give, are dying right before our eyes. So many things need to be done to curb this troubling tide. Support treatment centers and encourage counseling services. Talk to your friends. Reach out and make it known that you're eager to listen, giving help when needed.

Don't be fooled by appearances. Problems can live secretly for years, only to manifest themselves when it's too late.

As frightening as it is, even the air we breathe can pose a threat to our health. Join Katie Christ as she lays out the facts about the Erie Coke Corporation. The company, along with its nearly identical plant in Tonawanda, New York, has a documented history of environmental degradation. These plants emit benzene, a harmful chemical and known carcinogen. Tracing the history of both the Erie Coke and Tonawanda Coke plants, Christ connects the dots, shedding light on the dangerous implications that go along with this type of contamination.

Now is the time to change things. Do what you can to reverse the dark tide of illness and death. Though at times these problems may seem insurmountable, remember that nothing is solved by inaction. Despite the terrible circumstances that life sometimes hands us, we must persist and persevere. Help those who need it. If you believe you're being led down the wrong path, do what you can to change the minds of those in power. Write and call them. Arm yourself with the knowledge you need, and spread the word. Above all, be safe. Make sure the time we have here is the best that it can be, because it's a precious, wonderful thing.

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Just a Thought

The spice of life



KATIE CHRIEST

By: Katie Chriest

Some call it vampire repellent. Some call it the Stinking Rose, or Russian Penicillin. But if you tend to vascillate between seasonally-affected depression and claw-your-eyes-out cabin fever come early March (like yours truly), you might want to call garlic preventive medicine.

Garlic's health benefits are widely recognized, whether cooked or encapsulated. But I've not yet come across anyone touting its very *growth* as a panacea. Maybe it's time to change that.

Garlic growers – or planters of any bulbs, really – know the magic of those little life-containing papery bundles that bravely withstand the coldest of winters and heaviest snowfalls, only to sprout delightfully come spring (or, in some cases, February).

But garlic is exceptional. Where we live, I sow it around Veterans Day. Sometimes in snow boots, sometimes in shorts. This year, I planted just after the tumultuous election cycle that challenged all of us, regardless of which candidate we supported.

But when you feel ungrounded, get closer to the ground. And plant something in it, if you can.

In fall, you prepare the soil, with composted kitchen scraps and shed leaves you've raked up. Garlic is a "heavy feeder," and needs a lot of nu-

trition to produce the buxom cloves that cooks lust after.

Accordingly, garlic planting also involves a little Darwinian culling: You save the biggest bulbs from the last year's crop – regardless of how badly you want them in your soup – so that your future bulbs will have the best genes.

You head out on a short November day and plunk a bunch of broken-apart bulbs into the soil, clove by clove. Then, you lightly cover the tops of the cloves with soil, mulch the bed with straw or leaves, and wait.

And wait. And wait.

Temperatures drop, winds blow,

So you put a tiny little thing in the ground, and it knows what to do. It trusts in the earth and in life to go on, even when you're questioning such things, yourself.

frost heaves the ground, snow blankets everything. Holidays come and go, playoffs come and go, New Year's resolutions come and go. Inaugurations, Oscar nominations, winter vacations ... and through it all, those little cloves hang out, waiting along with you for the lengthening reach

The early sprouts of this year's garlic, pushing their way through a bed of straw to reach toward the late-winter light.

of the sun to beckon them into the light.

Once they get the cue, they're off and running. They slough off winter's heavy hibernation like college students donning flip-flops the second the snow melts.

In our backyard, they're now about four inches tall. Ahead of schedule, but hardy enough to survive whatever's left of this season. Come late May or June, they'll sprout flowery scapes that make a killer pesto. By late July, it'll be time to dig the bulbs for drying and curing, first setting aside those standouts that'll carry on the lineage next fall.

So you put a tiny little thing in the ground, and it knows what to do. It trusts in the earth and in life to go on, even when you're questioning such things, yourself. It harbors no existential angst. It just feeds you, in every sense of the word.

Admittedly, I'm not always much of an optimist by nature. But it's in nature that I find that little voice that says, *be patient. See the good. And know's that there's always good to see.*

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

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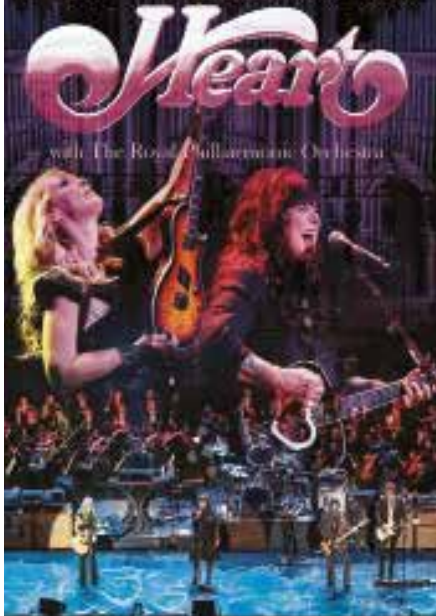
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NEWS & VIEWS

Harrisburg Happenings

Concerns abound over Wolf budget proposal



KEVZ

By: Sen. Dan Laughlin

On Tuesday, Feb. 7, Gov. Tom Wolf gave his budget address before a joint session of the General Assembly to provide a broad overview of his proposed \$32.3 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 2017-18, which begins on July 1.

Overall, the governor's proposal represents a \$571.5 million (1.8 percent) increase in spending, including \$200 million more for pre-K through grade 12 education statewide. While the governor promoted his education initiatives during his relatively brief budget address, I was disappointed that he made no special note of support for the Erie School District.

The governor and state Department of Education leaders are certainly aware of the dire financial issues here, and I had hoped that a strong commitment to Erie School District students would be part of the budget address.

Spreadsheets from the Department of Education show the Erie School District is in line for a \$1.57 million increase in Basic Education Funding (to \$64.4 million) and a \$287,568 increase in Special Education Funding (to nearly \$10.5 million). The district would also receive a \$2.6 million Ready to Learn Block Grant in FY 2017-18.

The proposed increases in BEF and SEF are certainly welcome, but I know the state can and should do more to help Erie stabilize its financial base and move forward in the future to provide the quality education that

all of our children deserve. I am committed to working with Senate leaders to find additional supplemental funding for the Erie School District as part of budget negotiations.

The budget now on the table represents a significant change by Gov.

Wolf from his previous two state spending plans, in which he requested substantial increases in the state's income tax and sales tax. This year's proposal instead calls for about \$1 billion in narrow tax increases, such as one on Marcellus Shale extraction, and \$2 billion in cuts and savings initiatives.

I join with a majority of my colleagues who support efforts to make government more efficient by relying on prudent spending rather than imposing broad-based tax increases to balance the state budget.

That said, I plan to look very closely at a couple of aspects of the governor's proposed costs and savings initiatives. One initiative that could have a serious impact here in Erie is the proposed consolidation of the departments of Aging, Health, Human Services, and Drug & Alcohol Programs. There is no doubt that such a move – if handled properly and thoroughly – could provide true cost savings through the elimination of duplicative services.

But, the problems created by the abrupt and unnecessary closure of the state Unemployment Compensation Service Centers and the impact that move has had on thousands of Pennsylvanians makes me a little uneasy about the proposed merger.

I need to know how this merger into one massive Department of Health and Human Services would impact organizations such as the Greater Erie Community Action Community, especially its Area Agency on Aging

services. Of the \$8.4 million in state funding received by GECAC, \$6.8 million was channeled from the Department of Aging (\$4.4 million) and the Department of Human Services (\$2.4 million). Certainly, we need more information about how this vital funding for important senior citizen and family support programs would be impacted by the merger of those state agencies.

These are just a few of the concerns I have with the governor's budget proposal. I will study these issues in depth over the coming weeks and months as the Legislature works to develop a spending plan that is in the best interests of the people of Pennsylvania.

The merger could also mean the closure of state offices that conveniently provide important services in our community. The Department of Health currently operates six regional Vital Records Offices including the Erie Office at 1910 W. 26th Street to process requests for birth and death certificates. There is no way at this point to know if our local office would remain open or be rolled into another office somewhere else as the state consolidates operations under the proposed new mega-department.

These are just a few of the concerns I have with the governor's budget proposal. I will study these issues in depth over the coming weeks and months as the Legislature works to develop a spending plan that is in the best interests of the people of Pennsylvania.

I encourage local residents to visit my website, senatorlaughlin.com, and my Facebook page, [facebook.com/senatorlaughlin/](https://www.facebook.com/senatorlaughlin/), to keep up-to-date with state government news – including the state budget – and learn more about state services and agencies.



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Prevention is crucial. What does this mean?

It means coordinating organizations and other services to ensure people can receive the help they need to turn potentially destructive choices into truly constructive ones.

How do we lead the way for positive change?



Working Smarter Together. What does this mean?

More communication and better cooperation between the community, federal, state, and local law enforcement offices strengthens all of us and begins an outpouring of positive change.

How can we assist those caught in the revolving door?

More than 50% return to a life of crime after returning home from prison.

In order to build positive change, let's promote hope, opportunity and second chances. It takes community awareness, focus, coordination, and desire to be the encouragement someone needs. With the right support channels in place, we can make a difference in Erie County.



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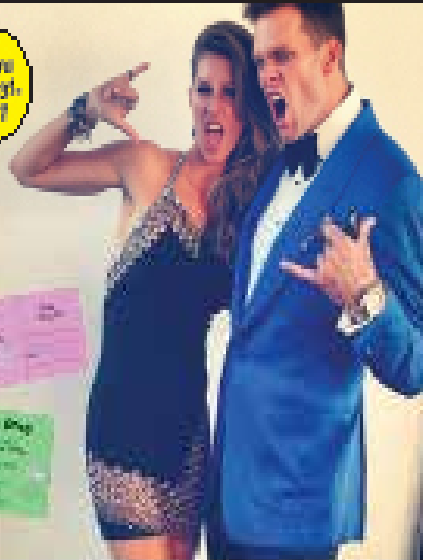
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News of the Weird

Fake banks and barfly thanks

by: **Chuck Shepherd**

U-S-A! U-S-A!

Although discouraging the marriage of children in developing nations has been U.S. foreign policy for years, a data-collecting watchdog group in America disclosed in February that 27 U.S. states have no minimum marriage ages and estimates that an average of almost 25,000 children age 15 and under are permitted to marry every year ("estimates" because some states do not keep records by age). Child marriage is often allowed in the U.S. if parents approve, although no such exemption is made in foreign policy, largely to curb developing nations' "family honor" marriages -- which often wreck girls' chances for self-actualizing. (However, "family honor" is still, in some states, the basis for allowing U.S. child marriages, such as with "shotgun" weddings.) [Unchained At Last via Washington Post, 2-10-2017]

Compelling Explanations

Creative: (1) Glenn Schloeffel, vice president of the Central Bucks school board in a Philadelphia suburb, recommended that science books be viewed skeptically on "climate change" because teenage "depression" rates have been increasing. Surely, he said, one factor depressing students is reading all that alarming climate-change data. (2) Seattle's Real Estate Services rental agency has informed the family

of the late Dennis Hanel that it would not return Hanel's security deposit following his January death because Hanel had not given the lease-required "notice" giving up his apartment. (He had cancer, but died of a heart attack. Washington state law requires only that the landlord provide an explanation why it is keeping the deposit.) [Philadelphia Magazine, 2-14-2017] [Crosscut Public Media (Seattle), 2-15-2017]

Runaway Math

John Haskew, who told investigators that he was "self-taught on the banking industry," evidently thought he might succeed making bogus wire transfers to himself from a large (unidentified) national bank, in the amount of \$7 billion. He pleaded guilty in February in Lakeland, Florida. (He said he thought he "deserved" the money.) (2) Katherine Kempson, 49, deciding to pay "cash" for a \$1.2 million home, forged (according to York County, Pennsylvania, deputies) a "proof of funds" letter from the Members 1st credit union. Home sales are, of course, highly regulated formalities, and several attempted "closings" were halted when her money kept not showing up. One deputy told a reporter, "I'm guessing that she probably didn't think it through." [WFTV (Orlando), 2-3-2017] [York Daily Record, 2-3-2017]

The highest bail amount ever ordered in America -- \$4 billion for murder suspect Antonio Willis -- was

briefly in play in Killeen, Texas, in February, set by Bell County's elected Justice of the Peace Claudia Brown. Bail was reduced 10 days later to \$150,000 by a district court judge, prompting Brown to acknowledge that she set the "\$4 billion" to call attention to Texas' lack of bail standards, which especially punishes indigent arrestees with little hope of raising even modest amounts when accused of minor crimes. [Fox News, 2-13-2017]

Wait, What?

Researchers including Rice University biochemist John Olson revealed in a February journal article that one reason a man avoided anemia even though he had a gene mutation that weakened his hemoglobin was because he has been a tobacco smoker -- that the carbon monoxide from smoke had been therapeutic. His daughter, with the same gene mutation, did develop anemia since she never smoked (although Olson suggested other ways besides smoking to strengthen hemoglobin, such as by massive vitamin C). [Rice University via New York Post, 2-16-2017]

Several death-penalty states continue to be frustrated by whether their lethal-injection "cocktails" make death so painful as to be unconstitutionally "cruel," and Arizona's latest "solution," announced as a Department of Corrections protocol, is for the condemned to supply their own (presumably less unpleasant) drugs. (There was imme-

diately objection, noting that such drugs might only be available by black market -- and questioning whether the government can legally force someone to kill himself.) [The Guardian (London), 2-15-2017]

People With Underdeveloped Consciences

Just before Christmas, Tammy Strickland, 38, was arrested in Polk County, Florida, and charged with stealing 100 toys from a Toys for Tots collection box. (2) In February, thieves unbolted and stole a PlayStation from the children's cancer ward at Wellington Hospital in New Zealand. (3) Judith Permar, 56, who was found dead, stuck in a clothing donation drop-off box in Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania, in February (a result, police said, of trying to "steal" items), had driven to the box in her Hummer. [Bay News 9 (St. Petersburg), 12-20-2016] [New Zealand Herald, 2-10-2017] [Philly.com, 2-7-2017]

Recent Alarming Headlines

■America's Top Fortune Cookie Writer Is Quitting Because of Writer's Block" (Time magazine, 2-3-2017). "Vaginal Pain Helps Exonerate Man Accused of Murder" (Miami Herald, 2-8-2017) (emergency medical technicians treating his sister corroborated his alibi). "Dresden Protest Against Anti-Islam Pegida Group Banned Over Snowball Fight Fears" (The Independent (London), 1-24-2017) (previously in Dresden,




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NEWS & VIEWS

Germany, religious-freedom demonstrators chose "tossing snowballs" as appropriate for ridiculing Pegida).

Phallic News From Overseas

Earlier, He Would Have Been Worshipped: In February, doctors at Narayana Health City in Bangalore, India, were successful in a five-hour, 20-specialist surgery normalizing an infant born with the chromosomal abnormality "polymelia" -- which resulted in four legs and two penises. Doctors praised the parents, from rural Puladinni village, for recognizing the issue as "medical" and not as "superstition." (2) In February, police in southern Bangladesh arrested a family that used a fake penis to convince neighbors that the family had the powers of genies ("djinnns"). The villagers had known the family had a girl, but overnight the genies had "changed" her into a "boy," thus frightening the villagers into making offerings to the family. [CNN, 2-10-2017] [Agence France-Presse via Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2-8-2017]

Least Competent Criminals

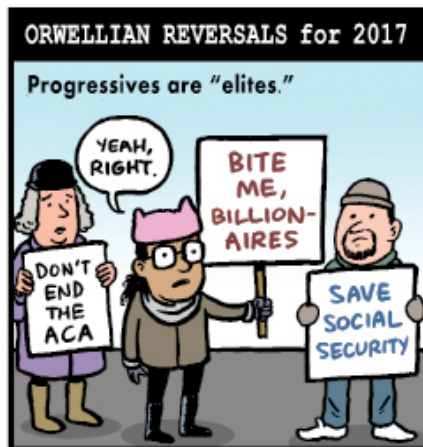
Willie Anthony, 20, and Jamarqua Davis, 16, were arrested in Kan-

napolis, North Carolina, in February after, police said, they broke into a Rent-a-Center at 2 a.m. and stole a big-screen TV. After loading the set into one car, they drove off in separate vehicles, but in their haste, smashed into each other in the parking lot. Both men subsequently drove the wrong way down South Cannon Boulevard, and both then accidentally crashed separately into other vehicles, allowing police to catch up. [WCNC-TV (Charlotte), 2-8-2017]

The Passing Parade

Nelson Foyle, 93, is believed to be Britain's longest-time patron of the same pub (the Dog and Gun in Salisbury, England), and fellow drinkers recently bought him an honorary "lordship" title to mark his 80th year on the establishment's barstools. (2) An art collective in a Los Angeles storefront re-created (for a two-week run in January) a retro video store that featured only boxed VHS editions of the movie "Jerry Maguire" -- about 14,000 copies. [NPR, 2-14-2017] [LA Weekly, 1-14-2017]

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Clearing the Air

The dark cloud cast by Erie Coke Corporation



Erie Coke Corporation sits in full view from both Presque Isle's North Pier and the bayfront's South Pier along Port Access Road.

By: Katie Christ

Say you have a stomachache. You've tried over-the-counter stuff, but nothing's working. You go to your doctor. She asks a few questions about your diet or your current circumstances. She recommends a change or prescribes something – tells you to check back if things don't improve. Probably no big deal.

Now say you have a *good* doctor. She remembers that you had comparable complaints a few years ago.

Now say you have a *great* doctor. Not only does she recall your previous symptoms; she also remembers reading about others who were similarly suffering. Something's not right, and she knows it. She does some research – not jumping to any conclusions, but also not wanting to dismiss any possibilities.

Wanting, in other words, to connect the dots.

This isn't really a story about a stomachache. Then again, a medical metaphor is hardly a stretch.

It is, however, a story about connecting the dots. We humans tend to be a little myopic; to be captivated by problems one at a time, and miss how they're related.

We swallow news snippets – volumes

of them – in quick succession. So societal symptoms that ought to have our undivided attention instead get processed piecemeal, like so many stomachaches.

This is a story about Erie Coke Corporation (ECC), at the foot of East Avenue. Except that it's also a story about Tonawanda Coke Corporation (TCC). The connections outweigh the differences.

Both sites have released more carcinogenic benzene into their surrounding communities than is deemed legal or safe. For years. Both sites have battled with federal and state environmental agencies. For years.

And both communities have struggled to connect the dots.

SISTER SITES

Their websites are nearly identical, though Tonawanda's says "Quality through Consistency," and Erie's reads "Quality through Consistency and Commitment." Lucky us.

Both sites commenced coke operations around a century ago. J.D. Crane purchased the Tonawanda plant in 1978, beginning its run as Tonawanda Coke Corp. J.D. Crane purchased the Erie plant in 1987, beginning its run as Erie Coke Corp.

Crane died in 2014. His grandson, Paul

A. Saffrin, has taken over.

Then there's Mark Kamholz. As the *Erie Times-News* pointed out last October, "Tonawanda Coke was convicted in criminal court in 2013 of 14 environmental crimes, among them the emission of benzene. Its environmental manager, Mark Kamholz, *formerly the longtime environmental manager at the Erie plant as well*, was convicted of hiding problems from an inspector and sentenced to a year in prison." [emphasis added]

And, of course, both companies are named for the cities that house them. Former Tonawanda Supervisor Anthony F. Caruana said TCC "has given a 'black eye' to the community and caused it to lose potential new businesses," according to *The Buffalo News*.

It's worth noting here that stories of pollution and corporate egregiousness are regularly picked up by the Associated Press, then circulated in multiple out-of-town news outlets. In other words, "Erie Coke Corp." can become synonymous with "Erie," giving pause to those who might otherwise consider vacationing, relocating, or setting up shop here.

IN OTHER NEWS

In 2008, *USA TODAY* released "The Smokestack Effect: Toxic Air and

America's Schools." The widely acclaimed, award-winning report singled out Wayne Middle School in Erie as one where benzene levels were especially high.

But a follow-up report released in February of 2009 by the Pennsylvania DEP concluded, "From their single sample, *USA TODAY* ranked Wayne Middle School as one which may have unacceptable health risks to the student. However sampling by DEP for the stated pollutants of concern (benzene and naphthalene) does not indicate an unacceptable risk to the students attending the school."

"Acceptable risk" is somewhat encouraging. Unfortunately, this study was performed before Erie Coke's more recent benzene emissions violations.

Also unfortunately, the school is not the only place where health concerns are well-founded. In June of 2010, Mark Sommer of *The Buffalo News* visited Queen Street, near Erie Coke.

"Nine," Sommer wrote. "That's the number of people who have contracted cancer on Queen Street, a single block of 15 houses located near the Erie Coke plant."

"The tally by longtime residents Steve and Chris Narusewicz includes their 19-year-old daughter, Sara, diagnosed last year with papillary thyroid cancer; Steve's father, who died from prostate cancer; and a brother who succumbed to colon cancer."

"The high incidence of cancer and other health issues near the coke foundry is one of many similarities between this plant and Tonawanda Coke," Sommer explained.

Meanwhile, frustrated by unreliable results from outside sources, Tonawanda residents took testing matters into their own hands. [Please see "Tonawanda's Citizen Scientists" on page 18.]

LAWMAKERS RESPOND TO "FLAGRANT DISREGARD"

On Oct. 14, 2009, Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) wrote a letter to J.D. Crane, imploring him to meet with Tonawanda community members, who'd reached



Located on the main vein of the eastern bayfront shoreline, Erie Coke Corporation sits adjacent to schools, businesses, and populated neighborhoods.

out to Crane to no avail.

"Residents of the Town of Tonawanda and the surrounding area are experiencing numerous health problems potentially resulting from toxic benzene and other emissions from Tonawanda Coke," Schumer wrote. "Serious diseases are occurring at irregularly high rates among Tonawanda residents."

Then Schumer brought up Erie Coke: "[ECC] is currently being sued by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Pennsylvania DEP. This action was taken after the Pennsylvania DEP found that smoke from the ovens at the Erie Coke plant exceeded federal pollution limits at least 31 times since May 7, 2008. In addition, Erie Coke Corporation was recently fined over \$6 million by the Pennsylvania DEP for 'flagrant disregard' of environmental laws."

Anticipating the usual conversation-ending jobs argument, Schumer concluded: "I have long championed manufacturing in western New York and I value Tonawanda Coke's importance as an employer in the region, but it is clear that to protect public and worker health something must be

done and those residents who are affected must be listened to."

In June of 2010, Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) "requested that the Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) conduct a public health assessment to determine if emissions from the Erie Coke Corp.'s coke-making facility has or will cause harm to the health of people living near the facility," according to Casey's blog. "Many Erie residents believe they have suffered a wide range of health problems, ranging from headaches to cancer, due to the plant's emissions."

A few months before, on March 10, 2010, the Erie Coke plant had released an enormous noxious cloud (there's a troubling video on YouTube). Days later, then-Senate candidate Joe Sestak issued a statement commending then-City Council President Jim Thompson for calling for an investigation.

Sestak chastised Sen. Arlen Specter for "vot[ing] to gut the Clean Air Act, allowing such out-of-date plants to continue pumping pollution into the air and even expand operations.

... Investment in clean energy creates seven times the number of jobs as investment in fossil fuels, and yet Sen. Specter's lack of support is a major reason the landmark green jobs bill is bogged down in the Senate while millions of Americans are out of work."

Coincidentally (or not), J.D. Crane gave campaign contributions twice to Arlen Specter, according to LittleSis.org, a nonprofit watchdog database "detailing the connections between powerful people and organizations," and tallying corporate influence on politicians. Among other donations, Crane also contributed \$20,500 between 2004-7 to the National Republican Congressional Committee, "devoted to maintaining and increasing the 232-member Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives."

This is not to say that Democrats are interested in clean air and Republicans are not. For instance, both the EPA and the Clean Air Act came into being under President Nixon, who also sought to halt dumping polluted dredge waste into the Great Lakes.

Nevertheless, Republican legislators have certainly ben-

efitted from donations of ECC and TCC-generated money. So we must wonder how that influences their response to corporate violations.

SHUT DOWN ... ALMOST

In May of 2010, the DEP "ordered Erie Coke Corp. and company CEO J.D. Crane to cease operations within 72 hours after [the DEP] revoked the facility's air permit for violating state environmental laws," according to GANTNews, a CNN affiliate.

DEP's northwest regional director, Kelly Burch, is quoted by GANTNews: "Since 2006, DEP has inspected Erie Coke's facility numerous times. Those inspections have revealed a pattern of defiant behavior and complete disregard for the health of our citizens and the quality of our natural resources. Our inspections indicate that the coke ovens at the facility are cracked and emitting pollutants."

That 2010 DEP order replaced two other orders within the previous two years, both of which were appealed by Erie Coke, and neither of which had yet resulted in full compliance or payment of an assessed "\$6.1 million penalty for emissions violations."

A reprieve was granted through June 18, 2010 by the state Environmental Hearing Board. Shortly before the deadline, ECC signed a consent decree, agreeing to pay \$6 million in fines and to bring the plant into compliance with state and federal clean air regulations. Operations never halted.

CONSENT DECREES

It's worth pausing here to define a consent decree, which thefreedictionary.com does quite plainly: "A settlement of a lawsuit or criminal case in

which a person or company agrees to take specific actions without admitting fault or guilt for the situation that led to the lawsuit."

Really, we ought to be quite familiar with consent decrees, since Erie Coke just signed another one a few months ago.

Last September, Erie Coke was sued again by the EPA. As the ETN reported, "The suit claims Erie Coke since November 2010 'failed to minimize leaks of benzene' by failing 'to identify and seal' several pieces of equipment. The plant also has 'continuously failed to identify potential sources of benzene emissions,' according to the suit. The claims are based on environmental inspections at the plant in November 2010 and March 2015."

In December, a federal judge approved a new consent decree requiring Erie Coke to pay a \$500,000 penalty and improve comprehensive benzene emission monitoring.

Consent decrees require no admission of fault or guilt. Therefore, in some ways, they can be even more outraging to the communities affected by them.

On Oct. 9, 2016, the ETN made the Erie Coke lawsuit the subject of their impassioned "Our View":

This latest complaint raises questions about enforcement in Erie. Why did it take regulators so long to discover that Erie Coke had not been identifying and reporting potential sources of benzene as far back as 1991?

Erie Coke has a right to due process. The public is also due a more thorough explanation of the information contained in the most recent complaint.

More useful than fines would be health-impact studies like those demanded in response to Tonawanda Coke's pollution. Erie residents have a right to know if working at or living near Erie Coke has placed their health in danger simply by breathing.

Such a study is taking shape

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Photo Credit: A local student displays art at The Erie Arts Endowment booth during JEFFERSON State of the State 2017



Coke is a fuel that rose to prominence in western Pennsylvania during the 1800s, and is derived from coal, having its impurities removed in order to increase its carbon content.

quality study results also indicated that the TCC facility was the most important factor in the high air concentrations of benzene.”

Tonawanda Coke Corp. was determined to be the primary cause of carcinogenic benzene in the air that residents were breathing.

But since the community demanded that TCC adhere to emissions standards, and since regulatory agencies and data could no longer be ignored, things have changed dramatically.

A follow-up to the Tonawanda Community Air Quality Study, released after “four years of air monitoring,” reported dramatic “reductions in the ambient concentrations of benzene and other air pollutants within the Tonawanda community,” which “were the result, in part, of operational modifications made by the Tonawanda Coke Corporation (TCC) in response to NYSDEC and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (USEPA) inspections of the facility and subsequent federal and state enforcement actions against TCC.”

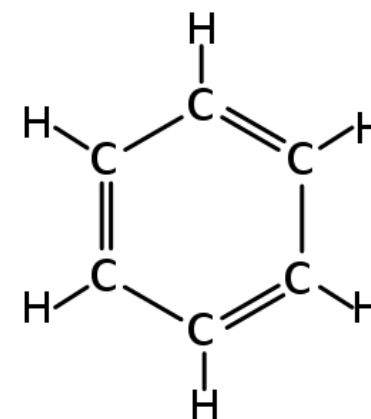
A second follow-up was released this past December, after eight years of air monitoring, which showed further reductions in benzene concentration. Improvements were once again attributed in part to TCC operational modifications.

PEOPLE OVER POLITICS AND PROFITS

The Trump administration’s decision to control what the American public learns about environmental and agricultural science underscores the need for unprecedented community efforts. During a panel discussion on Jan. 26 hosted by Drexel University’s Academy of Natural Sciences and PennEnvironment, Sen. Casey urged concerned citizens to make our voices heard like never before.

Casey spoke casually, and without political platitudes, as a concerned Pennsylvanian who believes in the word “commonwealth”; a concerned American who believes in democra-

SO WHAT IS BENZENE?



The National Center for Biotechnology Information defines benzene as a “Toxic, volatile, flammable liquid hydrocarbon byproduct of coal distillation,” which “causes central nervous system damage acutely and bone marrow damage chronically and is carcinogenic. ... EPA has classified benzene as known human carcinogen for all routes of exposure.”

The NCBI identifies the following effects:

- Acute (short-term) inhalation exposure of humans to benzene may cause drowsiness, dizziness, headaches, as well as eye, skin, and respiratory tract irritation, and, at high levels, unconsciousness.

- Chronic (long-term) inhalation exposure has caused various disorders in the blood, including reduced numbers of red blood cells and aplastic anemia, in occupational settings.

- Reproductive effects have been reported for women exposed by inhalation to high levels, and adverse effects on the developing fetus have been observed in animal tests.

- Increased incidence of leukemia (cancer of the tissues that form white blood cells) have been observed in humans occupationally exposed to benzene.

The Tonawanda Community Air Quality Study, released in October 2009, had “measured ambient concentrations of hazardous air pollutants,” and “the results identified elevations of several chemicals, including benzene, linked to the Tonawanda Coke Corporation (TCC). The air quality study also identified areas with an excess lifetime cancer risk associated with TCC benzene emissions.”

Benzene is likewise the pollutant that Erie Coke Corp. has been sued for emitting. – K.C.

in Tonawanda. Later last October, the *ETN* reported, “Researchers plan a groundbreaking study that monitors the health of up to 38,000 residents of suburban Buffalo near Tonawanda Coke Corp., which has a similar plant in Erie,” in order “to see if emissions from the coke plant have increased the rates of cancer, heart disease, lung diseases, and kidney diseases in people who live in the Town of Tonawanda, City of Tonawanda, and Grand Island.

“The \$11.4 million public health study will be paid for by Tonawanda Coke as part of federal order after the company was convicted in 2013 of violating the Clean Air Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The company was also fined \$12.5 million and placed on five years’ probation.”

ETN then gently reminded Erieites of what should be obvious by now: “The study could be of interest to residents of northwestern Pennsylvania because the same company owns and operates both the Tonawanda Coke plant and the Erie Coke plant at the foot of East Avenue. Both plants have been cited by the Environmental Protection Agency for the emission of benzene, a known carcinogen.”

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

In January of 2016, the New York

State Supreme Court rejected TCC’s appeal in the class action civil case filed by “neighbors of the plant ... seeking damages on two fronts: for the loss in property values and for loss of quality of life, both caused by Tonawanda Coke’s ‘negligent release of chemicals into the atmosphere,’” according to *The Buffalo News*.

Residents near TCC had raised concerns about “cancer, neurological and autoimmune diseases, allergies and respiratory irritation, and asthma and other respiratory disorders,” according to the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), which conducted a health outcomes review “based on the public health implications of the [Tonawanda Community] air quality study and requests from community members.” [emphasis added]

In other words, collective complaints from members of the community, particularly those living nearest the TCC site, were integral in catalyzing an examination by the NYSDOH. And the results were remarkable.

“The air quality study showed that the concentrations of benzene and formaldehyde were much higher in the Tonawanda area than in other areas with industrial and urban monitoring data in New York State, excluding New York City. The air

FEATURE

cy; a concerned parent who wants children to have air that's safe to breathe.

He and fellow panelists also emphasized clean energy's superior economic and employment potentials. But we're not going to get there overnight.

Meanwhile, Erie needs jobs. Now. No disputing that. And even in Tonawanda, community organizer Jackie James-Creedon insisted that her group's intention "was never to shut down Tonawanda Coke, but to work together with them to clean up their operation. We asked them to be good neighbors and they would not even grant us the human courtesy of talking to us."

The choice between a jobs-providing

corporation and clean air is typically painted in black and white by politicians who are owned in part by the companies they defend. But in reality, the choice is more gray, like the noxious cloud many witnessed over Erie Coke in March of 2010. No one should have to see such a sight again.

And certainly, no city should suffer the misdeeds of a corporation found perpetually negligent, which has seemingly decided that the health and vitality of its surrounding community is less important than turning a profit.

It's time to clear the air, Erie.

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

TONAWANDA'S CITIZEN SCIENTISTS

Western New York's Citizen Science Community Resources (CSCR), founded in 2014, describes its mission as encouraging people to "use the power of scientific data to create healthier communities and a more just society."

CSCR grew out of the efforts of Tonawanda resident Jackie James-Creedon, who, along with other locals, worked with the Clean Air Coalition of Western New York to hold Tonawanda Coke Corp. and environmental manager Mark Kamholz "responsible for emitting benzene, particulate matter, and other dangerous chemicals into surrounding neighborhoods. [CACWNY] combined community-based science, collaboration with government agencies, and ongoing public pressure from community members and local media to achieve their goal."

Back in 2005, frustrated by a lack of scientific research, these citizen scientists formed a "bucket brigade," using a "5-gallon bucket from Home Depot, plastic baggies, and a hand-held vacuum to test their air."

After discovering high levels of benzene, the group wielded their data to pressure the NYS DEC and EPA to conduct a year-long study, which corroborated their evidence: "Benzene levels were 75 times higher than the EPA guideline and Tonawanda Coke Corp. ... was the predominant source of emissions."

TCC and Mark Kamholz were indicted in 2010, but Tonawanda's citizen scientists continued their efforts. In 2012, they dug samples of their soil to be tested, once again finding dangerous levels of harmful chemicals embedded there.

And in 2013, TCC and Kamholz were found guilty of "14 criminal charges violating the Clean Air Act and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act."

CSCR's website reads, "It all started with just a few neighbors sitting around a table discussing their individual health struggles and their collective right to a cleaner environment."

Incidentally, in December of 2016, TCC CEO Paul Saffrin donated \$1 million each through his foundation (formerly J.D. Crane's) to Daemen College and Explore and More Children's Museum, a move quickly criticized by the CSCR, according to *The Buffalo News*.

In a press release, CSCR director James-Creedon said, "We don't deny that these donations were made to two worthy causes. But given the circumstances of how this money was made, wouldn't it be logical to donate this money to the people that have been harmed by this company's pollution first?"

In Tonawanda, it's taken constant pressure, courageous outspokenness, and heartfelt neighborliness to keep a corporation in check. But it's working.

In these extraordinary times, we need to recognize our own power – our own obligation – in keeping our community safe, healthy, and vibrant. No leader we elect – and certainly no profit-minded CEO – will solve these issues for us, unless we demand it. Tonawanda has provided the precedent. Now it's up to us. – K.C.

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Spotlight on Erie

March 1 – 14, 2017

Thursday, March 2

**Art. Check. Beer. Check.
Music. Check.**



March is upon us and with the Arts and Drafts Festival starting on the 2nd, this month is bound to come roaring in like the proverbial lion. For music, art, and beer lovers, this will certainly be a positive thing. The spring edition of this well-loved and thoroughly dynamic event will descend upon the Brewerie at Union Station for three days of all things local and artsy.

Those familiar with this event will be pleased to hear – and see – the work of a “rotating cast of characters,” explains music director, Justin Tapper, but he adds that there are many new musicians performing at this edition. Newcomers include Spooky Minus Spooky, a one-man band, who is “old school jazz meets new wave”; Brooke Ashley Surgener, who combines songwriting and musicianship into cosplay; Dara Appling, a “singer-songwriter with an operatic feel at times” and, Tapper concludes, “Pine Diary with Jess Royer who is pure soul in my eyes.”

The sonically illuminating spring edition of Arts and Drafts tends to be a little more subdued in amplitude. Artists play inside the establishment as opposed to taking the stage outside for the fall festival. Acoustic music will mostly be the name of the game, Tapper explains, but this spring he has decided to incorporate some electric-based instrumentation as well. On the quieter side, of course. “It’s a new format,” he says, but be assured that all music is original: “The artists all play original stuff. That’s what people are here to see. We don’t have anyone playing covers.” This is a showcase of the Erie music scene’s best and brightest, and Tapper is adamant that there is nothing like this festival in the city. It unites the uniqueness and vibrancy of many creative individuals, and allows non-performers to experience this tight-knit, diverse community. “This is all about local talent and bringing the best of the Erie music and art

scene to the table in one place,” Tapper says. And this place isn’t just any run-of-the-mill event space. The Brewerie at Union Station was the first local craft beer bar in the city, and the owners picked a glorious historic building to call home. “The owner of Brewerie and Drew Kaufmann got together and thought this spot was a really good place to house art and music events,” Tapper explains. “The fact that the festival has blossomed into something that’s bursting at the seams, and that we can tie in a local establishment and their love of beer and art, is amazing.”

For those who are more visually inclined, the art on display will be exciting and representative of Erie’s fascinating artists. “There’s such an eclectic group of artists in Erie that do so many different styles of art, using so many different kinds of media,” Tapper says. “It’s amazing to see everything on display and to hear all these musicians all in one place in this great atmosphere, with great food, and great beers.” – Miriam Lamey

6:30 p.m. on March 2 & 3; 5:45 p.m. on March 4 // The Brewerie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. // 454.2200

Thursday, March 2

**Genuine Irish Music
at Mercyhurst**



Ireland’s culture and history are rich, deep, intriguing, and have a whole branch of traditional music just itching to be explored. On March 2 at Mercyhurst’s Mary D’Angelo Performing Arts Center, the music of southern Irish band Caladh Nua will conjure up the Emerald Isle and provide a window into this country’s traditions.

Caladh Nua is a Gaelic phrase meaning “a new or safe port or anchorage,” and the quintet will ground audiences in traditional yet innovative Irish folk music sounds. The members hail from Irish counties Carlow, Waterford, Ker-

ry, and Kilkenny, and all band members play a variety of instruments including banjo, fiddle, accordion, and bodhrán, an Irish frame drum described as “the heartbeat of Irish music.”

For a taste of the band’s talents, check out the high energy, accordion-heavy song “Tie the Ribbon, Queen of May” – also perhaps an apt introduction to Caladh Nua given the recent warmer Erie weather. Acoustically-driven “The Windmill Set” presents a similar rapid pace and energy, but more layers of instruments give the tune an introspective feel. “Farewell to You” showcases the beautiful, reedy vocals of Lisa Butler, who also plays the fiddle, against the backdrop of pretty and melancholy lyrics.

Having played concerts around Europe and in Canada, Caladh Nua is not to be missed in Erie. Anyone looking for a safe, genuinely Irish sonic haven amidst the raucous St. Patrick’s Day revelry will be charmed and thrilled by this band’s poignantly homey sound. – Miriam Lamey

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

Saturday, March 4

**The Old Main Plays in
Erie for the First Time**



Founded in June of 2014, The Old Main – a talented, New York-based folk-rock band – will perform at the Kings Rook Club on Saturday, March 4, with Dara Appling.

“We are super excited to meet some new people and share our music with a new crowd,” said The Old Main’s guitarist Seth Becker.

Taking its inspiration from Tom Petty, Bob Dylan, and The Eagles, this group considers itself a “modern high-energy band.” They strive to keep the audience on their toes with new surprises.

“We try to keep our show fresh with new material, to keep it interesting for us and our listeners,” Becker added.

Staying true to their roots in New York’s Adirondack Mountains, the band incorporates an “old time sound” into its upbeat music, with a combination of acoustic guitar, mandolin, banjo, and other instruments.

The group’s first album, *Arlene*, was released in spring of 2016. Becker said it was well-received and explained that the band members are now working on their next one. They hope to finish recording it soon to release it later this year.

“Erie will never be the same,” one Facebook user wrote on the event’s page. “The Old Main rocks.” – Tracy Geibel

10 p.m. // Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. // \$7 // [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)

Monday, March 6

**Carnifex Brings Menacingly
Artful Metal**



The Entertainment Collective is bringing another huge show to Basement Transmissions, this time with the metal stylings of Carnifex, Rings of Saturn, Lorna Shore, and She Must Burn.

San Diego deathcore quintet Carnifex, whose name is Latin for “butcher” or “executioner,” stands out from the typical deathcore crowd with their use of piano and keys. This is most prevalent in the song “Slow Death,” wherein the keys bring the heavy guitars to an abrupt halt and change the tone of the song to something more eerie, menacing, and artful. After a brief hiatus in 2013, Carnifex has come back with two more studio albums, *Die Without Hope* (2014) and *Slow Death* (2016), both of which reached the top 100 on the U.S. album charts as well as top five on the U.S. hard rock charts.

From the San Francisco Bay Area comes Rings of Saturn. The band’s ex-

CALENDAR

tre technical style could be considered a fusion between heavy metal and math-rock (or mathcore, if you want to be a genre Nazi), while they jokingly call themselves “aliencore.” The avant-garde style has worked well for them, though, as their latest album *Lugai Ki En* peaked at number 126 on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart.

The rest of the bill consists of Lorna Shore, She Must Burn, and the only local act of the night, Obelus. Don't miss this great chance to see some excellent national and local metal acts, to bang your head, and to have a great time. – Tommy Shannon

6 p.m. // *Basement Transmissions*, 145 W. 11th St. // \$20 // all ages // facebook.com

Wednesday, March 8

South Korean Shock-Cinema Comes to Erie

If you want to see the most interesting developments happening in film today, you need to check out South Korea. For over a decade now, the South Korean film industry has been experiencing a boom of creativity, with filmmakers like Joon-ho Bong, Sang-ho Yeon, Ji-woon Kim, Sang-soo Im, Ki-duk Kim and many others making original, provocative, and challenging films, some of which have even achieved mainstream American success. However, no Korean filmmaker is



more famous in the States than Chan-wook Park.

Park became well known after his so-called “Vengeance Trilogy”: a series of films all centered around the concept of revenge. These included *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance*, *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance*, and most famously, *Oldboy*, which has gone on to develop a strong cult following since its 2003 release; one that even inspired an American remake. *Oldboy* in particular was a boundary-pushing film that sought to explore taboos within society in a very blunt, shocking manner while also subtly poking fun at modern society. Park would go on to do the same thing with his next films, *Thirst* and *Stoker* – his first movie made by an American production company.

His newest film, *The Handmaiden*, is the story of a young Korean woman who is hired as a handmaiden for

a Japanese heiress, but she is secretly involved in a plot to defraud her. It seems that Park is continuing on his path of provocative, taboo-shattering, boundary-pushing cinema. If you're at all interested in what one of the most exciting and creative figures in world cinema has in store for us, head to the Erie Art Museum and see *The Handmaiden* for yourself. – Forest Taylor

Doors at 6 p.m., film at 7 p.m. // Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St. // \$5 // erieartmuseum.org/events-film

Thursday, March 9

The Goddamn Gallows Swing Back to Town

If you've ever seen the Goddamn Gallows live, you're probably excited to hear that they're coming back to Erie. The nomadic quintet were a well-known favorite at The Crooked i. The former State Street bar, once the epicenter for original music in Erie, closed its doors on March 30, 2014. The Goddamn Gallows were the final band to grace the stage that night.

Brace yourselves, because they're coming back.

Darcy's Pub and Grub will host the band's return, at “The Local” stage downstairs.

The band plays a unique blend of punk rock, bluegrass, and metal. Live performances by the Gallows are



high-octane frenzy, wild parties fueled by the visceral energy the band exudes. Their shows are booze-soaked rampages. Literally. You might want to bring a towel, because things tend to get a tad rowdy. Shows prove to be endlessly fun, unforgettable experiences, winning over fans of every genre. The heavily tattooed band employs non-traditional instrumentation, complete with banjo, washboard, and accordion parts. The raucous flavor provides an almost surreal atmosphere, a haunted circus of hysteria at every turn.

Along with the Gallows will be a band with an some good name recognition. NP Presley & the Ghost of Jesse Garon is an eight-piece from Lexington, Kentucky with a rock and roll pedigree. Frontman NP Presley happens to be first cousin once removed to the king

MUSIC

Caladh Nua

Mar. 2 — 7:30 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Sean Patrick & The Newgrass Revolution

Mar. 3 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Julio Quezada and Friends

Mar. 4 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Anchor In at Oasis Pub, 3122 W. Lake Rd. jazzerie.com.

Ultimate 80's Video Mix Party with DJ Mad Matt

Mar. 4 — 7 to 11 p.m.
McCoy's Barrelhouse and Grill, 1013 State St. facebook.com/mccoysbarrelhouse.

The Old Main and Darah Appling

Mar. 4 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Gem City Revival

Mar. 5 — 1 to 4 p.m.

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

Carnifex

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

Emanuel Ax Performs Beethoven: A Performance and Conversation

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

Emanuel Ax

Mar. 9, 10 — noon
Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

The Goddamn Gallows

Mar. 9 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Darcy's Pub & Grub, 3746 W. 12th St. facebook.com/goddamngallows.

Emanuel Ax: Fridays with the Phil

Mar. 10 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. eriephil.org.

Giant Panda Guerilla

Dub Squad, Personal Blend and Natask

Mar. 10 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Bleeps N Bloops

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

Erie Philharmonic Symphonic Concert Emanuel Ax

Mar. 11 — 8 p.m.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. erieevents.com.

The Fat Catz

Mar. 11 — 10 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

These Two & Me

Mar. 12 — 1 to 4 p.m.
Arundel Cellars, 11727 E. Main Rd. arundelcellars.com.

Ridgewood, Welman, Mallory Run, Archway and Ramona Come Closer

Mar. 13 — 7 p.m.
Basement Transmissions,

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

History of the Harpsichord

Mar. 13 — 7:30 to 9 p.m.
Gannon University's Yehl Ballroom, 109 University Sq. gannon.edu.

D'Angelo Department of Music: Faculty Recital Series

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

DANCE

Matters of the Heart

Mar. 3, 4 — 8 to 10 p.m.
Lake Erie Ballet, 1020 Holland St. lakeerieballet.org.

FOOD & DRINK

Arts & Drafts Fest

Mar. 2, 3, 4 — noon to midnight
The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. facebook.com/groups/52566917579.

Blended Spirits Ranch Annual Dinner Dance

Mar. 11 — 5:30 to 11 p.m.
Ambassador Conference Center Crystal Ballroom, 7794 Peach St. facebook.com/BlendedSpiritsRanch.

Mind, Body, Beer

Mar. 14 — 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St. facebook.com/ErieAleWorks.

FILM

Walking With Dinosaurs: Prehistoric Planet

Ongoing — 11 a.m. & 1 & 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West

Ongoing — noon & 4 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Journey to Space

Ongoing — 2 & 5 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Hell or High Water

Mar. 1 — 7 p.m.

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

The Perils of Pauline (1947)

Mar. 2 — 8 to 10 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

The Met: Live in HD Rusalka

Mar. 4 — 12:55 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

The Handmaiden

Mar. 8 — 7 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Victoria

Mar. 8 — 7 p.m.
The Movies at Meadville, 1155 Highline Dr. sites.allegheeny.edu.

Zodiac

Mar. 9 — 8:30 to 11 p.m.
Edinboro University Pogue Student Center, 405 Scotland Rd. facebook.com/pg/edinborofilmseries.

The Met: Live in HD La Traviata

Mar. 11 — 12:55 p.m.



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FRI 03/17
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SAT 03/18
ST. PAT'S BASH

SAT 03/18
BROCCOLI SAMURAI + ELM

[DOWNSTAIRS] AUDIOTONIC

[UPSTAIRS] FRI 03/24 FORMULA 5

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[DOWNSTAIRS] ZACK ORR DJ SET

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#GoBoro



of rock and roll himself, Elvis (NP's mother, Paula Marie Helton, was Elvis' cousin, touring with him in the '70s). The rest of the band is named for Elvis' twin brother, Jesse Garon, who died at birth.

The band plays a classic, throwback style of rock and roll, also featuring the vocals of Heather Parrish.

The packed night will also feature Olean, New York's riotous swamp metal four-piece, Dredneks, along with Erie's own Matt "Broke" Boland. All bands being consummate performers, an evening of high energy rock is sure to be in store. — Nick Warren

9 p.m. // Darcy's Pub & Grub, 3746 West 12th St. // \$5 // facebook.com

Friday, March 10

Number One Band on the Billboard Reggae Chart to Perform



GIANT PANDA GUERRILLA DUB SQUAD

On Friday, March 10, two Rochester-based bands will take the stage in Erie.

The Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad (GPGDS) will perform with Personal Blend at the Kings Rook Club.

Undoubtedly one of the region's most beloved reggae bands, GPGDS recently reached the top of the reggae charts. The band's *Make It Better*, released in September of 2016, debuted at number one on the Billboard Reggae Chart. It was their second release to earn that spot.

"We had a purpose to prove to ourselves recording this album. We wanted to know that we could put our heads down and do good work fast," said bassist and vocalist James Searl. "It was a great release artistically. It uniquely sounds the most progressive of anything we have ever done while also sounding the most like our first album."

Since forming in 2001, the GPGDS has released several albums, but its latest includes some of its best work.

The other band to perform at the show is Personal Blend, a reggae-rock group that promises to bring a "feel-good, party vibe." Personal Blend's seven members, who released their first album *Skin Deep* in August of 2016, have opened for Spiritual Rez, The Movement, and others.

Following the "downstairs rager," guests are invited upstairs for an after-party featuring NatasK & Matisflex. — Tracy Geibel

9 p.m. // Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. // \$7 // facebook.com

Friday, March 10

Erie Playhouse Stages The Glorious Ones



The Erie Playhouse will perform *The Glorious Ones* on Friday and Saturday, March 10 and 11, at Gannon University's Schuster Theatre.

Based on the book by Francine Prose, beloved Broadway duo Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens are responsible for bringing the story to life as a musical.

The Glorious Ones has "one hand on the crotch, and one hand on the heart," Ahrens says.

The crude and comical but also somewhat serious and heart-touching musical tells the story of an acting troupe that searches for fame. Things go awry when the group is forced to leave France because its performances are deemed too offensive and lustful. A lead character and founder of the small troupe, Flaminio Scala, doesn't react well to this decision and worries about what it means for his acting career.

Directed by Almitra Clerkin, the Erie Playhouse show will feature Kate Amatuzzo as Isbella Andreini, Shawn Clerkin as Flaminio Scala, and Jean Malthaner as Armand Ragusa.

Proceeds from ticket sales will benefit the Alex Clemente Fund and allow the Playhouse to participate in the Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatre Fest's competition, held mid-March in Williamsport. — Tracy Geibel

7:30 p.m. Friday & Saturday // Schuster Theatre at Gannon University, 620 Sassafras St. // \$25 // 871.5368 // erieplayhouse.org/shows/2016-17/the-glorious-ones

Sunday, March 12

A Dozen Erie Artists Against Teen Violence



Now in its fifth year, the Community Call for Peace is a chance for a wide variety of local musicians to unite

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

Elle
Mar. 15 — 7 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Neruda
Mar. 15 — 7 p.m.
The Movies at Meadville, 1155 Highline Dr. sites.allegheny.edu.

VISUAL ARTS

The Art of Resistance: Veterans Respond Visually to War
Ongoing through Mar. 4
Bruce Gallery in Doucette Hall, 215 Meadville St. brucegallery.info.

Mystical Arts of Tibet
Ongoing through Mar. 5 (Closing Ceremony Mar. 4 — 1:30 p.m.)
Allegheny College Doane Hall of Art, 520 N. Main St. allegheny.edu.

Terry Pytlarz: Making a Statement in Black & White Photography
Ongoing through Mar. 8

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

Patricia S. Yahn '50 Juried Art Show
Ongoing through Mar. 24
Mercyhurst University Cummings Gallery, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Kids As Curators 2017
Ongoing through Mar. 26
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Photo Exhibit of Rustbelt New Americans: A Showcase of Erie's Refugee Population
Ongoing through Mar. 26 — 6 to 8 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, 250 West 7th St. firstcovenanterie.org.

Sergei Isupov: Hidden Messages
Ongoing through Apr. 2
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Earth Stories
Ongoing through June 11

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

Photographs by Gary Cardot
Ongoing through June 24
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Tin Plated Dreams: Sculptures by William Brady, Jr.
Ongoing through January 7, 2018
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Here/Now
Mar. 6 through Mar. 12 (Closing Reception and Celebration Mar. 12 — noon to 1p.m.)
Allegheny College Doane Hall of Art, 520 N. Main St. allegheny.edu.

Nathan Sulecki Photographs
Mar. 10 through Apr. 18 (Artist's Reception Mar. 10 — 7 to 10 p.m.)
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St. glassgrowersgallery.com.

Gallery Night
Mar. 10 — 7 to 10 p.m.

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

Second Sundays
Mar. 12 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

THEATRE

A Chorus Line
Mar. 1, 2, 3, 4 — 7:30 p.m. & Mar. 5 — 2 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10 St. erieplayhouse.org.

Silence The Musical
Mar. 3, 4 — 8 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St. paca1505.com.

The Luck of the Irish
Mar. 8, 14, 15 — noon & Mar. 11, 18, 25 — 5:30 p.m. & Mar. 12, 26 — 2:30 p.m. & Mar. 17 — 7 p.m.
Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

National Marionette Theatre Presents: Hansel & Gretel
Mar. 10 — 7 p.m. & Mar. 11, 12 — 1 & 3 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St. paca1505.com.

The Glorious Ones
Mar. 10, 11 — 7:30 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10 St. erieplayhouse.org.

One Cool Friend
Mar. 11 — noon & Mar. 11, 12 — 2 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10 St. erieplayhouse.org.

COMMUNITY/VARIETY
Seneca Allegany Casino Trip
Mar. 1 — 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Tai Chi
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.

Ceramics Handbuilding Class
Mar. 1 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Erie ClaySpace, 1505 State St. eventbrite.com

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.

Cardio Fit and Weight Lifting Class
Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & Apr. 6 — 9:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Barber National Institute Art Show Call to Entries
Mar. 2, 3 — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Mar. 4 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Barber National Institute, 100 Barber Place barberinstitute.org.

Opioid Epidemic in Erie County
Mar. 2 — 1 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Therapeutic Yoga
Mar. 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21, 23, 28, 30 — 4 to 5:15 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

American Short Stories
Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23 — 4 to 6 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

New Horizons

for a good cause. Benefitting Mothers Against Teen Violence (MATV), the concert brings together 12 local acts for one evening.

Headed by Erie City Councilwoman Sonya Arrington, MATV works directly with at-risk youth, trying to curb violence at an early age. The group began the Leadership Empowerment Accountability Diversity (LEAD) program, which meets at the Booker T. Washington Center, offering mentoring and counseling for children between the ages of 10 and 18.

Arrington will open up the event with a few words about the cause. It's an issue deeply close to her heart. In 2010, her son Steve Arrington II was killed, shot outside a local convenience store. This tragedy inspired her to become more involved in her community, leading to the creation of MATV.

The event begins shortly after 4 p.m. with alt-rocker JC Nickles, followed by hip-hop artist Doc Proto. The 12-year-old rap prodigy Yung Skola performs third, followed by seasoned bluesman Rodger Montgomery. After that, classic rockers Strangers and Liars will take the stage, preceded by the retro indie soul outfit, Pine Diary. The Breeze Band are next up, with their danceable blend of soul and R&B. Singer songwriter Heather Devore

will follow, employing her percussive acoustic guitar style. One-man-band Matt "Broke" Boland will dish out his own retro favorites and Americana originals. Noted local emcee C. Brown will do a thoughtful, energetic set as the hip-hop/jam septet, the LEC, closes out the night.

The event is open to those under 18 (with a parent) only until 8 p.m., though festivities run until 9 p.m. — Nick Warren

4 to 9 p.m. // Oasis Pub, 3122 W. Lake Rd. // \$6 // Age 18+ (under 18 must be accompanied by a parent)

Monday, March 13

Welman, Ridgewood Evoke Emo Revival at BT



RIDGEWOOD

Emo revival is in full swing in Erie, with four emotive rock bands tak-

ing the stage at Basement Transmissions.

Welman, from Ann Arbor, Michigan, describe themselves as a "surfy post-something band," which could not be a more accurate summary of their album *Totem*. The 10-track album is filled to the brim with allusions to various subgenres in the indie rock community — notes of early 2000s-esque emo with a dash of shoegaze, and even a hint of screamo in some verses. Fans of anything between American Football and Title Fight should enjoy the jams that Welman creates.

From Minneapolis comes Ridgewood. The four-piece takes on a more pop punk/alt rock approach while still maintaining the defining characteristics of the emo genre. Their 2016 EP *At Least I Have Myself* is a prime example of how artfully they blend the two genres.

Local acts on the show are Erie/Edinboro favorites Mallory Run, and Meadville-based pop punk band Archway. Both groups have recently signed to record labels, Mallory Run being set to release a forthcoming album under Wilhelm Records, and Archway having released their EP *Crossroads* under Panic Records at the end of 2016.

The opening act for the show is Ramona, Come Closer, an incredibly tal-

ented indie duo from Greenville, Pennsylvania made up of Kayla Bickerton and Zach Gill. This show will be the duo's first live performance.

One added element to this event will be a raffle to win two tickets to the sold-out Pinegrove show at Mahall's in Cleveland on May 8th. Raffle tickets start at \$1 and are limited to three per person. So come out to see some great live music, and win the chance to see some more! — Tommy Shannon

7 p.m. // Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. // \$6 // All ages // facebook.com

Tuesday, March 14

Local Writer Holds Book-signing Event

On Tuesday, March 14, Erie native Shawntá Pulliam will hold a book-signing event at Barnes and Noble for her book, *Hell Bent, Heaven Bound*.

In the book, Pulliam explains how she was able to overcome hardship and challenges in her life by trusting in God. Through her journey of faith, she moved "from the drug house to the King's house," as the book's cover reads.

"[The book] was a calling, a purpose for all that I've endured in life," Pul-

Music Project: Strings and Folk

Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & Apr. 6 — 4 to 6 p.m. LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Tom Wilson

Mar. 2 — 7 p.m. & Mar. 3, 4 — 6:45 & 9:30 p.m. Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club, 1402 State St. jrslastlaugh.net.

Marijuana Policy in the U.S.: Past, Present, and Future

Mar. 2 — 7 to 8:30 p.m. Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Paint and Rock Pretty Kitties

Mar. 2 — 8 to 10 p.m. Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Day in Applied Forensic Sciences

Mar. 3 — 9:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. mercyhurst.edu.

Tai Chi

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

Sport & Travel Expo

Mar. 3 — noon to 8 p.m. & Mar. 4 — 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. & Mar. 5 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier eriepromotions.com.

Night Owls Canvas Class

Mar. 3 — 6 to 8 p.m. Claytopia, 924 W. Erie Plaza Dr. heathercash.com.

Erie Otters vs. Niagara

Mar. 3 — 7 p.m. Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

EPIC Volleyball Tournament

Mar. 4, 18 & Apr. 1, 8, 22 — 8:30 a.m. Fort LeBouf High School, 931 North High St. eriesportscommission.com.

Iroquois High School Gently Used Book Sale

Mar. 4 — 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Iroquois High School, 4301 Main St. iroquoiscsd.org.

Winter Stroll in the Park: Long Pond Trail

Mar. 4 — 10 to 11:30 a.m. Pine Tree Pavilion near beach 9 in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Think and Wonder: A Celebration of Dr. Seuss' Birthday

Mar. 4 — noon to 3 p.m.

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

Lake Erie Eagles

Mar. 4 — 1:30 p.m. Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

The Irish Hooley with Seamus Kennedy

Mar. 4 — 6:30 to 11 p.m. Belle Valley Social Hall, 1514 Norcross Rd. seamuskennedy.com.

Erie Otters vs. Sarnia

Mar. 4 — 7 p.m. Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

Humane Society Night at the Otters

Mar. 4 — 7 to 9 p.m. Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. facebook.com/humanesocietyofnwp.

Erie Scratch Classic

Mar. 4 — 9:30 p.m. & Mar. 5 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Rolling Meadow Lanes, 3304 Zuck Rd. facebook.com/ErieScratchClassic.

Western PA Hardwater Tournament Series

Mar. 5 — 5 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. facebook.com/WesternPAFishing.

Erie BayHawks vs. Delaware

Mar. 5 — 2 p.m. Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com

Stuffed Animal Sleepover Storytime

Mar. 5 — 4 to 5 p.m. Iroquois Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. erielibrary.org.

Endgame in Syria: What Comes Next?

Mar. 6 — 7 to 8:30 p.m. Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Fit for Life Fitness Class

Mar. 7, 14, 21, 28 & Apr. 4 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Great Books: Sanding Down From Warrior to Civilian

Mar. 7, 14, 21 — 4 to 5:30 p.m. Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Presque Isle History Series: Misery Bay & Graveyard Pond

Mar. 7 — 6 to 7 p.m. Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Outside the Window: Frogs

Mar. 8 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Oriental Painting

Mar. 8, 15, 22, 29 & Apr. 5, 12, 19 — 5 to 7 p.m. LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Growing an Organic Kitchen Garden with Lisa Baumgardner

Mar. 8 — 7 to 8:30 p.m. LEAF Education Center, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Living with Parkinson's Disease

Mar. 9 — 1 p.m. LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

The Behrend Family, Hammermill and the Outbreak of the Great War

Mar. 9 — 7 p.m. Erie Maennerchor Club, 1607 State St. gcsoe.org.

Ben Bailey

Mar. 9 — 7 p.m. & Mar. 10, 11 — 6:45 & 9:30 p.m. Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club, 1402 State St. jrslastlaugh.net.

VNEA PA State 8-Ball Tournament

Mar. 10, 11, 12. Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras

Pier erieevents.com.

Trivia Night

Mar. 10 — 1 to 4 p.m. Arundel Cellars, 11727 E. Main Rd. arundelcellars.com.

Springtime Snail

Mar. 10 — 6 to 8 p.m. Claytopia, 924 W. Erie Plaza Dr. heathercash.com.

Erie BayHawks vs. Grand Rapids

Mar. 10, 11 — 7 p.m. Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

Poetry Scene Featuring Cee Williams

Mar. 10 — 7 to 9 p.m. Avalon Erie Hotel & Conference Center, 16 W. 10th St. facebook.com/PoetsHall.

Evening Fireside Talk: Coyote & Fox

Mar. 10 — 7 to 8:30 p.m. Rotary Pavilion in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Spring Tonics

Mar. 11 — 10 a.m. to noon Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Spring Fest

Mar. 11 — 11 a.m. Peek'n Peak Resort, 405

CALENDAR



SHAWNTÁ PULLIAM

liam said. "I wanted people to know there's sunshine on the other side of their gloom."

She grew up in Erie with a mother who took drugs and without her father, who was incarcerated for most of her childhood. As a result, much of the responsibility of raising her younger siblings fell on her, which took quite a toll.

She got into fights at school and was ultimately expelled, then attended a reform school. When she put her problems aside and focused on her education, Pulliam excelled, but she hadn't healed emotionally.

At age 21, she had a breakdown, the

result of everything that she had previously avoided addressing. In her one-bedroom apartment in the projects, she finally dealt with all her built-up emotion and rededicated herself to God.

Now Pulliam's life is drastically different. She is the founder and president of Nurturing Hearts, a non-profit that builds supportive leadership and life skills for at-risk girls ages 10 to 18. She's also the owner of Shawntá Pulliam Arise, a business that offers programs and workshops with the goal of motivating and inspiring people to better themselves and to find their way beyond obstacles and hardship.

When she decided to share her story, it only took one year to finish writing.

"Everything flowed, like the tears flowed down my face," Pulliam said. "There was so much that I needed to say."

Later this year, Pulliam will be featured on the Christian Television Network's *It's Time with Herman and Sharron*, and in April, she will speak alongside Les Brown, a renowned motivational speaker, who has been her valuable mentor. In her spare time, she is writing a second book. — Tracy Geibel

6 to 8 p.m. // Barnes & Noble, 5909 Peach St. // shawntapulliamarise.com

Olde Rd. pknpk.com.

Outdoor Survival Skills

Mar. 11 — 12:30 to 3:30 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd.
asburywoods.org.

Winter Stroll in the Park: Erie Bluffs State Park

Mar. 11 — 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Erie Bluffs State Park, 1122 W. Lake Rd.
events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Planning an Herb Garden for Culinary and Medicinal Herbs

Mar. 11 — 1 to 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.
events.dcnr.pa.gov.

War Paint: A Workshop for Makeup Artists

Mar. 11 — 1:30 to 5 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions.

Blended Spirits Ranch Fundraiser and Appreciation Dinner Dance

Mar. 11 — 5:30 to 11 p.m.
Ambassador Conference Center Crystal Ballroom, 7794 Peach Street
blendedspiritsranch.org

Erie's 2017 Saint Patrick's Day Parade

Mar. 11 — 2 to 3:30 p.m.
St. Patrick Church, 130 E. 10th St. facebook.com/erieparadeday.

1940's USO Spring Fling

Mar. 11 — 7 to 11 p.m.
Zem Zem Shrine Club, 2525 W. 38th St. usa-eventer.com.

Girls World Expo

Mar. 12 — noon to 4 p.m.
Zem Zem Banquet & Conference Center, 2525 W. 38th St. girlsworldexpo.com.

MATV Community Call to Peace

Mar. 12 — 4 to 9:30 p.m.
The Oasis, 3122 W. Lake Rd. oasispuberie.com.

Erie Otters vs. Peterborough

Mar. 12 — 5 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

The Work of Hospital Chaplains

Mar. 13 — 10:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Excel I

Mar. 14 & May 19 & June 23 — 9 a.m. to noon
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Fireside Crochet: Ruffle Scarf

Mar. 14 — 6 to 7 p.m.

Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd.
asburywoods.org.

Beach Glass Drilling Shamrock Style

Mar. 14 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.
events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Book Signing with Shawnta Pulliam

Mar. 14 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Barnes & Noble, 5909 Peach St.
shawntapulliamarise.com.

Meet the Practitioners of Integrative Wellness Options

Mar. 14 — 6 to 8:30 p.m.
Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W. 26th St. facebook.com/brasthermgl.

Erie Otters vs. London

Mar. 14 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

Is Sugar Ruining Our Health?

Mar. 15 — 6 p.m.
Millcreek Municipal Building, 3608 W. 26th St. lifeworkserie.org.

Erie BayHawks vs. Salt Lake City

Mar. 15 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com

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CALENDAR

Emanuel Ax Tips the Scales for the Erie Community

MARCH 8-11



By: Matt Swanseger

To quote Erie Philharmonic Executive Director Steve Weiser, Emanuel Ax is "not just a guy off the street" where playing piano is concerned – because that would infer the common street musician is a classically-trained pianist with a recording career spanning 35 years.

Nonetheless, the 67-year-old virtuoso has heretofore made quite the living on the road, from a youth spent climbing the competition circuit to an adulthood spent sitting in with some of the most prestigious orchestras in the world. With his wealth of talent and experience, it would stand to reason that his presence would command a wealth of dollars (usually north of \$50,000). However, in a tremendous gesture to the Erie community, Ax agreed to a four-day residency free of charge, the only stipulation being that his time be managed wisely.

With that objective in mind, Ax and Weiser coordinated three days of community outreach events to stoke an interest in classical music that has been gradually building over the past few Philharmonic seasons.

"This could kickstart everything to a whole new level," said Weiser in a video interview with the Millcreek Government Channel. "The goal is to get people out that maybe wouldn't go and get them coming back."

The itinerary begins with a free lecture and performance Wednesday night at the Jefferson Educational Society. On Thursday afternoon, piano hopefuls will be treated to a master class at Mercyhurst University's Walker Recital Hall. Mr. Ax will work with three local students, providing instruction and feedback before a live audience. At noon on Friday, WQLN Radio (91.3 FM) will broadcast Ax's recital as part of its "Live From Studio Q" performance series. That same night, an open rehearsal and meet-and-greet will be held at the Warner Theatre, complete with cash bar and hors d'oeuvres courtesy of Cali's West Catering. It all culminates Saturday night with the

Philharmonic's performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 5, otherwise referred to as the "Emperor" Concerto. Written in dedication to Beethoven's pupil and patron, the Archduke Rudolf of Austria (son of Emperor Leopold II), this opus is every bit as regal as its nickname would imply. Flurries of scales unfurl from the keyboard like banners at a king's coronation, punctuated by triumphant blasts from the orchestra. A beautiful tranquility sweeps over the kingdom in the piece's second movement, with balanced dialogue between the soloist and the surrounding instruments. When the third movement arrives, the proverbial beer run has transpired and the excitement again builds to a crescendo.

Ax has a certain flair for the Romantics – he counts Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn among his favorites. His interpretations of Haydn's piano sonatas earned him two solo instrumentalist Grammys, while his collaborations with Chinese-American cellist and fellow Julliard graduate Yo-Yo Ma garnered an additional five Grammys. Weiser estimates that Ax has performed the "Emperor" concerto thousands of times.

Nevertheless, Ax has cultivated a reputation as one of today's more versatile and broader-minded practitioners of classical piano, taking on 20th century composers such as Hans Werner Henze and Paul Hindemith and contemporaries such as Joseph Schwantner and Christopher Rouse.

It's a rich legacy, but Ax remains gracious and humbly indebted to the music that has paved his path. Content is forever king in the Information Age, and although imperialism has not always been *andante* in the park, in this case we can all be honored to be its subjects.

ERIE PHILHARMONIC CONCERT, BEETHOVEN PIANO CONCERTO NO. 5 & MAHLER'S SYMPHONY NO. 4

8 p.m. on Saturday, March 11 // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // eriephil.org // 455.1375 // \$20-\$52, \$10 students

FREE EVENTS

Wednesday's JES Lecture/Performance: 3207 State St. (call 459.8000 or register online), begins at 7 p.m.

Thursday's Master Class: Walker Recital Hall at Mercyhurst, 501 E. 38th St., begins at noon

Friday's "Live From Studio Q" Performance: Walker Recital Hall, begins at noon.

Friday's Rehearsal/Meet-and-Greet: Warner Theatre, 811 State St. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Jesca Hoop
 Memories Are Now
 Sub Pop



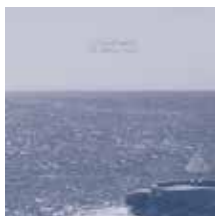
Intelligent, dark, and insightful, *Memories Are Now* is a record filled with rich complexities. Jesca Hoop is a modern folk artist, blending subtly brilliant lyrics with a melancholy alto. Opening with an uncharacteristically synthetic beat, the titular track waltzes in and out of tempo, Hoop's main vocal track backed by a chorus of in-studio harmonies. With a dreamlike voice that exudes a vulnerable tenderness, she takes the listener on a journey filled with hypnotic pizzicato guitar motifs that unfold like an ancient manuscript. Fans of Joanna Newsom or Laura Marling will find this album to be a quick favorite, one to be savored again and again. Followers of Iron & Wine will be familiar with Hoop, as she released an album with Sam Beam in 2016, *Love Letter for Fire*, to well-deserved critical acclaim. *Memories Are Now* is the fourth solo album for the California songwriter. The solemn moods of the album succeed in unforgettable ways. Hoop is able to do so much with the streamlined instrumentation, using echoes and negative space to create reverent atmospheres while telling entrancing stories. – Nick Warren



Cloud Nothings
 Life Without Sound
 Carpark Records



Cleveland's Cloud Nothings return for *Life Without Sound*. With this new effort, the quartet, led by frontman and songwriter Dylan Baldi, have managed to avoid any major nose-dives in quality. While this album may not reach the heights of 2012's *Attack On Memory*, it won't disappoint the band's fans. Known for their aggressive punk and indie rock sound, the band now finds itself crafting tunes with a heavy powerpop influence, more in the tradition of Dinosaur Jr. or Bob Mould. Absent are lengthy, gradually building, fiery jams. The record is not devoid of power, it simply comes in shorter, brighter bursts, as heard at the end of "Up to the Surface." From the beginning of the band's career, fuzz and chaos have been traded increasingly for distinct melodies and articulated riffs. It's a much more positive record than previous works. Tracks like "Modern Act" have a tightly contained pop punk energy, Baldi's vocal delivery a controlled slur. The final track, "Realize My Fate," is by far the rawest of the album's nine tracks, buzzing with a dark, dangerous haze. – Nick Warren



Sinkane
 Life & Livin' It
 City Slang Records



For his sixth record, Ahmed Gallab shows no signs of slowing down. Gallab, the musician behind Sinkane, was born in London and lived in the Sudan, later growing up in Kent, Ohio. Having played in bands such as the Born Ruffians, Of Montreal, Yeasayer, and Caribou, he's made a name for himself around the globe. His worldly history shows in his music. A potent blend of Afrobeat and indie rock, *Life & Livin' It* is undeniably enjoyable. Enveloping the listener within the first few notes, the deep beats of the pentatonic bass groove of "Deadweight" hook the audience immediately. Uplifting funk singalongs like "Favorite Song" and "Telephone" show Gallab's formidable pop abilities with danceable flair. The additional help from the horn section of Antibalas proves to be the perfect ingredient to Gallab's signature sound. Some of the greatest moments come from the eponymous "Theme From Life & Livin' It," a revitalizing celebration that radiates positivity and life. The soft darkness of tracks like "Fire" and "Won't Follow" balance that tone with spectacular results. – Nick Warren



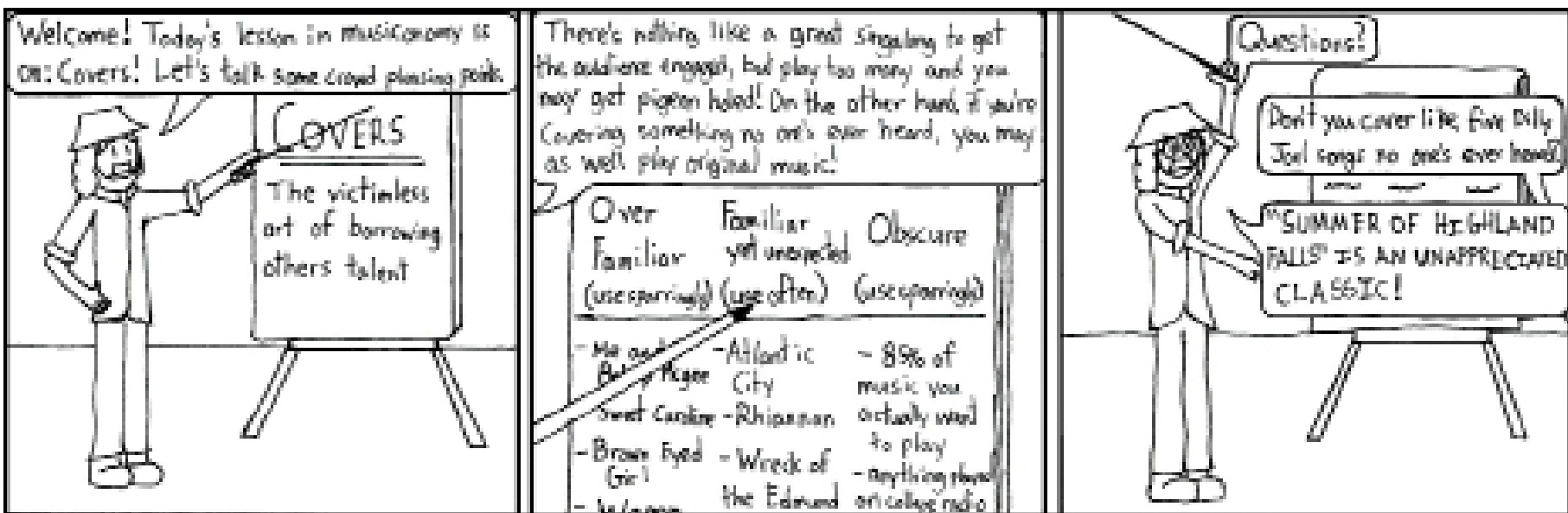
Brenna Bone and Seann Clark
 Acoustic Sessions
 Self-released



The duo of Brenna Nicole Bone and Seann Clark is a powerful combination. The two Erieites have been staples of the local music scene for a little while now. Both play in the band Sonny's Fugitives as well as fronting their own successful projects. Bone recently released her *Growing Pains* EP, while Clark is one half of the group The Mighty Sea (along with violist Abby Barrett). Their styles blend quite well. If Clark's vocals are the smoke, Bone's are the fire. His raspy bass vocals are bursting with character and expertise, able to emote with every growl. Her voice cuts through the mix on the other end of the spectrum, its incendiary twang conveying both pain ("Sandra") and tenderness ("It Was Always You"). The two provide a balance to each other, between the genres of alternative and country. The singers often trade lines within a verse, heard to great storytelling effect in tracks like "Down on the Curb" and the excellent "Promise." There's even a Christmas song included, courtesy of the darkly tinged "Snow Angels," while one of the sweetest moments of the album comes in the Bone feature "Home," a radio-ready piano ballad. – Nick Warren



Tommy in Toon — by Tommy Link



Erie Faces Erie

**Michael
Vickey:**

proprietor,
Nickel Plate
Press

Ed Bernik
photographer

"I've gone back to old ways for my own satisfaction, a revival of craftsmanship that has pretty much been lost."

Ed Bernik: When did you start collecting type?

Michael Vickey: I bought my first press when I was 13 and started my business full time when I was 19. I started collecting type when I was in 10th or 11th grade, right about the time photo-typesetting was coming in and the printers were getting rid of metal and wood type.

I collected as much as I could. A lot of it came out of the Erie Litho and Printing Company, between Third and Fourth streets on State Street – what's now the Professional Building. They were bought out by Diamond International. They had a wonderful type collection, and didn't throw anything out. Type from them that goes back to the 1870s is in my collection now.

When major printers in Cleveland, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, and Rochester closed, I'd collect as much display type as I could afford. At the time, it was all being sold at scrap prices. I purchased some of my equipment at that time. My Vandercook proof press came from Superior Typesetting in Cleveland. Mangis Typesetting in Pittsburgh had a very rare collection of Europe-

an type and old American type. I was in the right place at the right time – very lucky.

EB: What was your fascination as a kid with printing?

MV: I'm not sure, because no one in my family was a printer. My grandmother from Germany worked in a book bindery, but the fascination with type I can't explain. It's weird – I just love working with metal type.

EB: Now there's a resurgence in letterpress.

MV: The last few years have seen a real interest. Some colleges have book arts programs. The Vandercook proof press has become pretty common in these programs along with handset type. People find it fascinating. You could do the same layout and design on the computer faster and easier, but something makes your mind work a little differently, having the type and blank spaces physically in your hand. Moving

There is a feel to it, and you can see a difference. The fact that it's a craft reveals itself in the piece.

them about to compose a page, and seeing it at actual size.

EB: Is there a beauty to letterpress that you can't achieve on a conventional press?

MV: There is a feel to it, and you can see a difference. The fact that it's a craft reveals itself in the piece. That's what people are attracted to. The pinnacle of letterpress was during the Arts and Crafts movement in the early 1900s. Some of the printer or ink manufacturer advertising from that period is incredible work. You look at it now, and you have to admire the craftsmen who achieved that level of quality and intricacy. I'm doing it because I love working with type, running the press, and seeing the type put an image on the paper. I like the feel of the paper. The printing business has been good to me for 40 years and even though things have changed, I've gone back

to old ways for my own satisfaction, a revival of craftsmanship that has pretty much been lost.

EB: Have some fonts been lost?

MV: Some of the old fonts can't be reproduced even on the computer. Close, but still not the same. One of the advantages that metal type had over what you see now off a computer is legibility and readability. Take one particular typeface: The smaller sizes are actually wider proportionally than the larger because it makes it easier on your eyes. And you can't do that on the computer. You would need a different font for each size, which is essentially what you have with handset type. There are typefaces that have been digitized, which I've done myself for the computer, but it's not the same.

EB: You consulted with Corel Draw as a go-to type guy.

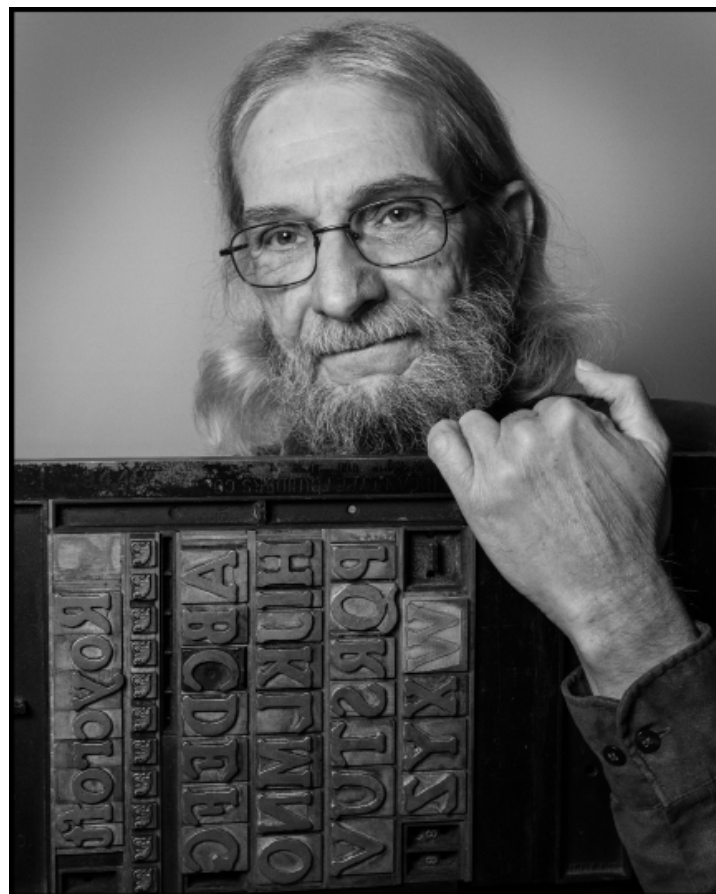
MV: Early on, I saw where the industry was heading and worked with them through version 4.

EB: Are professionals across the country hand-setting type?

MV: Not so much commercially. Most are private presses. I do some commercial accounts' work on letterpress. It's not necessarily easier but in certain cases I know it will look better. I want to print things that people will want to save; that they'll pick up from time to time and enjoy looking at what I've done, not toss it in the wastebasket. A number of people just like me in the letterpress revival share my commitment to craftsmanship.

EB: Sitting here in your shop is like being in an antique printing store. What's the oldest piece that you still use daily?

MV: I have a hand press that was built in Cleveland at Chandler and Price in 1909, a 7x11 platen press. Some of my type cabinets and type go back much earlier, to the 1840s, before the standardized point system. I have a bunch of oddball-type sizes – 17-point, 21-point – each type manufacturer had its own system of measure, so they weren't compatible with each other. By 1892, there was a consolidation of several type founders. An agreement was reached for standardization,



and the American Point System was established, which most English-speaking countries use.

EB: Besides English, you also have other languages.

MV: I have Swedish type from the newspaper in Mt. Jewett, Pennsylvania. A large part of my collection came from the Vincentian Press at St. John Kanty Prep, where they did a lot of printing for the area's Polish community.

EB: You actually do printing internationally.

MV: I've done work for people all over the world, including a really neat project for Oxford University for their bibliophile society last year. It was completely hand-set type and printing. I'll be doing that again next year. I've had visitors from all over the world. A few internet sites plus my own webpage get me out there. Pretty neat.

EB: You're also a nationally-known dulcimer player.

MV: Yeah, I won the Eastern Region hammer dulcimer competition last year as well as the mountain dulcimer, and four times hammer dulcimer for the Florida old-time music championship. My group, The Good for Nuthin String Band, plays regionally and has three CDs.

EB: Who was your mentor?

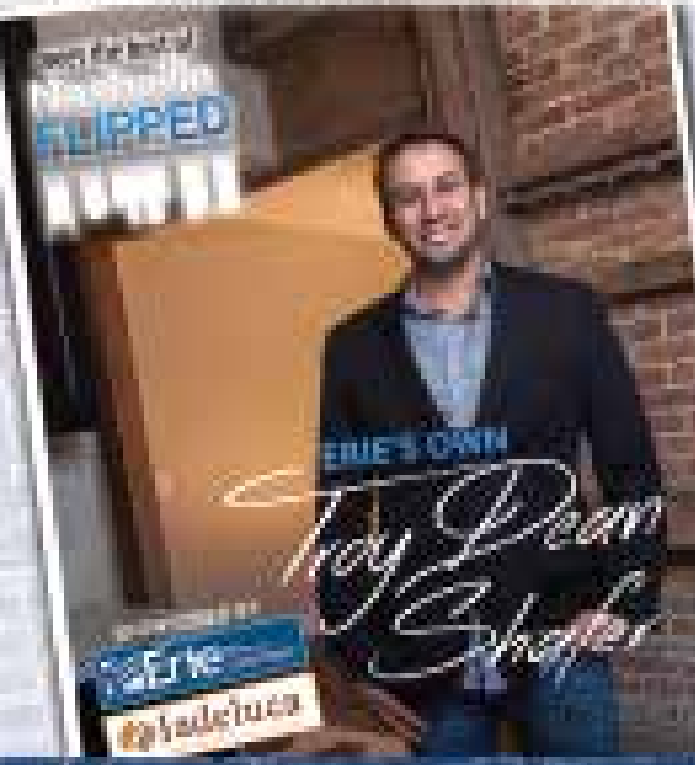
MV: My good friend F. Earl Bonnell, who was from North East, had a private press called the Bunny Press. Earl did strictly hand-set type, printing, and binding on a number of small keepsakes, booklets, and hard-bound books. Very limited editions, 100-300 copies. He was a great person to have as a guide as far as putting type together and looking good. Earl left me his entire collection of equipment, type, and a wonderful library of books about printing.

Not having room or immediate need for the equipment, I put everything in storage. Recently, I moved everything into my shop and one of the last things to come in was a galley that Earl had set, which sat in storage for 30 years accumulating dust. I brought it in and proofed it. When I read it, I thought to myself, "This is one of the most profound things I have ever read." It's a poem called "The Watermill," and I decided to make a little booklet out of it as a tribute to Earl and to commemorate my being a printer for 50 years.

Michael Vickey: Nickel-Plate-Press.com

Ed Bernik: bernikphotography.com

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HOT SEAT

MADNESS



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