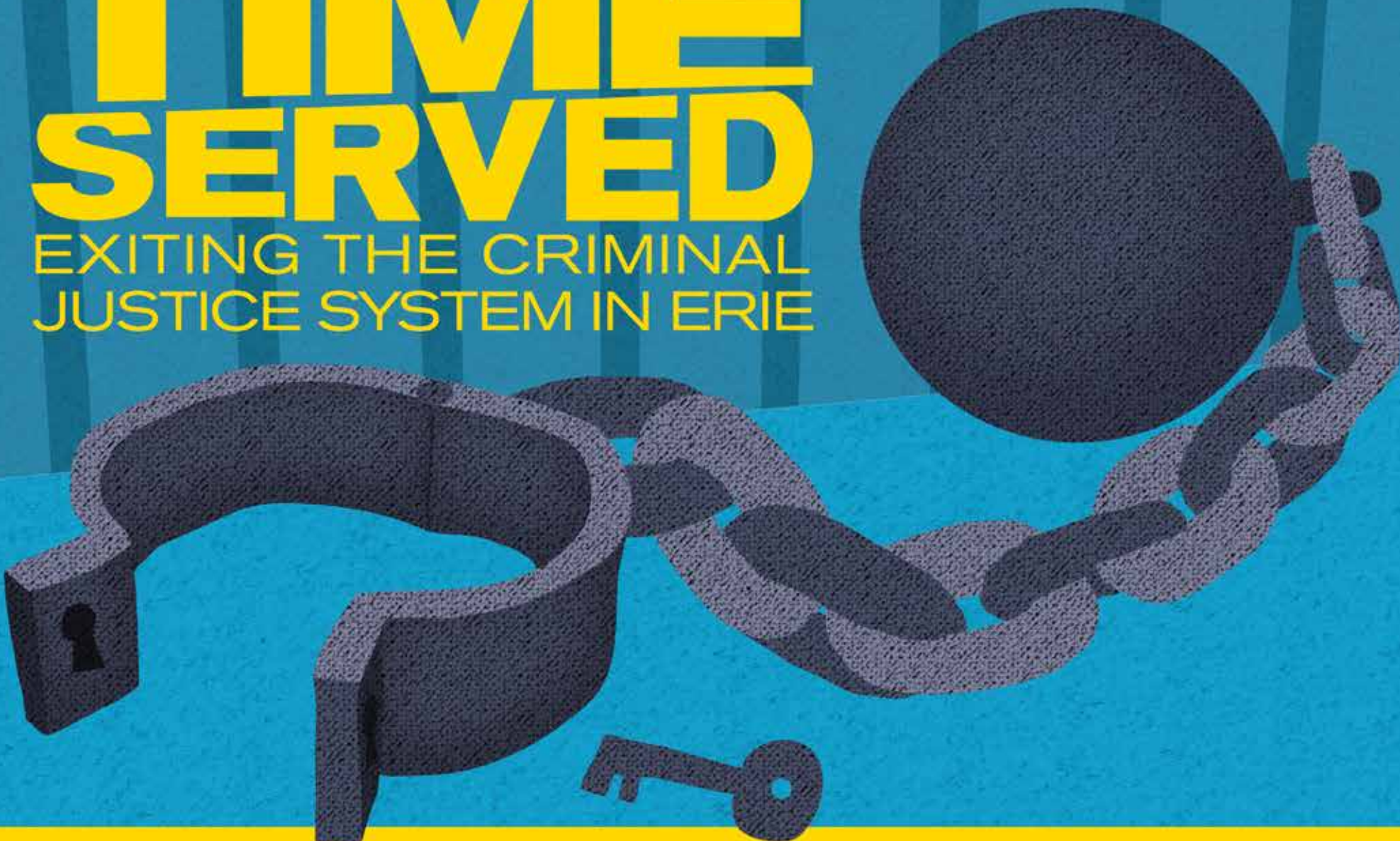


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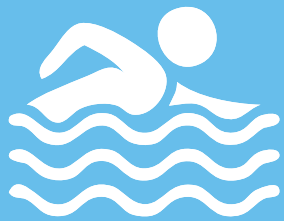
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## From the Editors

Changes lurch ahead as eyes turn to Erie.



Looking west at the intersection of 10th and State on a blustery March morning.

It's getting colder and harsher out there. Winter breezes burn our faces well into the month of March, while memories of another abnormally warm winter linger. Lake Erie spends more and more time unfrozen and the once ubiquitous snow mounds melt away in a few days. But of course, this kind of climate change in a few short years is nothing we need to worry about, is it?

Changes can come in increments large and small. These days, it seems like we're being bombarded with new developments on an hourly basis. There's a political climate change we're getting swept up in as well. The new baseline for normality is growing further out of reach. Did any of us imagine that we'd be here this time last year?

With that shifting conversation, eyes continue to turn to Erie. Our city has become the de facto stand-in for the Rust Belt as a whole, the spokesmodel for a new, changing face of America. This brings attention both bitter and bold.

After a number of thoughtful, well-researched pieces in *The Atlantic*, the CBSNews.com feature on Erie painted a bleak portrait of our town. Focusing on a small handful of local Trump supporters, the takeaways were foreboding. Against melodramatic music, working-class laborers described Erie as a "sinking ship." One of the subjects interviewed, union president Scott Slawson, cleared the air recently in an interview with Kai Ryssdal for Marketplace.org. Slawson shared his strong apprehensions about the Trump administration, in one segment of their yearlong project

centered on Erie titled "The Big Promise." A little more than a week prior, NPR's *Frontline* had stitched together a piece similar to CBS's,

full of desolate visions of a city whose glory has long since faded.

Erie also got some unfortunate attention thanks to comments from absentee Congressman Mike Kelly. A video surfaced of the representative claiming that President Obama is staying in Washington, D.C. to run a "shadow government." That, paired with York, Pennsylvania State Senator Scott Wagner's recent remarks calling the Erie School District "disgusting," add to the list of embarrassing and tone-deaf comments from some of our elected officials.

Though these individuals

Eyes continue to turn to Erie. Our city has become the de facto stand-in for the Rust Belt as a whole, the spokesmodel for a new face of America.

often garner the biggest headlines, there's a large segment of our population that deserves our attention. Examining the growing issue of recidivism, Dan Schank takes a look at some of the key groups helping ex-convicts successfully re-enter society. It's a process that takes time, effort, and care.

In the next two weeks, we'll see St. Patrick's Day, the first day of spring, and the start of March Madness. A strange hat trick after the Ides of March that might help the month go out like the proverbial lamb as the weather gets more and more liveable.

Little by little, changes can be made for the better.

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## Just a Thought

Wild mercy



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their landscape as invaluable.

Later in our New Zealand trip, we're staying with Lesley, near the Southern Alps. She tells us about her years of working in Antarctica, struggling to find the words to depict such singular beauty. She's also lived elsewhere abroad, but clearly prefers her phenomenal island.

Lesley recommends a visit to Castle Hill, sacred to the Maori and deemed a "Spiritual Center of the Universe" by the Dalai Lama. She highlights its enormous slate-colored boulders against glowing grassy hills, its mythic presence, and how *Narnia* was filmed nearby.

"I can't believe this is where I live!" she says excitedly. Then asks about our homeland.

We tell her we live near Lake Erie, the shallowest of the Great Lakes,

KATIE CHRIEST

**By: Katie Christ**

**W**e're standing in a kitchen with the morning light streaming in. Big old wood-framed windows look out on a small but entirely cultivated garden space, where a kitty appears before squeezing its chubby body in through the cat door.

This is the home of our Airbnb host, Jan, who has joined us this morning. Our three voices reverberate through the high-ceilinged, airy room, as we confess our shared dependency on bitingly dark coffee, and wait for its magic to develop inside a well-used French press.

Jan asks how long we plan to stay in the area, then suggests things to see in that personal, spontaneous way that makes me want to give Airbnb's creators a hug. I mention the brochure in our room for an organization dedicated to preserving the dawn chorus of songbirds, and Jan lights up, telling us proudly how successful they've been in reversing trends of endangerment.

Naturally, as so often happens in

Airbnb exchanges, Jan asks about where we're from, too. We tell her we live on Lake Erie, in Pennsylvania, not far from Canada (we find ourselves stressing the Canada proximity a little more emphatically, on this post-inauguration trip). Then we describe Presque Isle – its enchanting loveliness, its phenomenal avian diversity, and its importance in migration.

I bring up websites on the phone to show Jan Presque Isle's sensuous shape, and a few photos of the hundreds of bird species that have relied on its sanctuary.

Jan beams. "You live near this place?" she asks in amazement. "Oh, I would love to see it!"

By now, I've represented the peninsula so ravishingly that I'd love to see it, too.

But here's the kicker: Jan's house is on the South Island of New Zealand. Like, *the* New Zealand. That place internationally renowned for some of the most hyperbole-inspiring, gorgeously unspoiled, gloriously dramatic scenery in the world.

And it's entirely deserving of this

reputation. Turquoise glacial lakes and rivers, skyscraper waterfalls, glaciers among pristine snowcapped peaks, lushly verdant rain forests where plants grow out of plants growing upon plants, blond grasses shimmering on hillsides, and seas crashing into the islands' edges as if they're aching to come ashore.

And now Jan, a part-Maori native Kiwi, genuinely longs to see our Presque Isle.

This encounter holds new meaning as I read a March 10 report in the *Erie Times-News* about how local conservation projects "could be in jeopardy if budget cuts proposed by the Trump administration are approved. They call for slashing the \$300 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative budget to \$10 million as part of a proposed 17 percent cut to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration budget."

I can't help but think of the South Island: wild, unbridled, and largely protected by joint efforts between conservation officials, lawmakers, and citizens who wisely recognize

**We tell her we live near Lake Erie: our part of a network that provides 20 percent of the earth's surface fresh water. We try to verbalize what it feels like to witness such humbling power from the shore of our own spiritual center.**

and thus dazzlingly affected by the tumult of wild storms. We describe standing on the cliff overlooking our part of a network that provides 20 percent of the earth's surface fresh water. We try to verbalize what it feels like to witness such humbling power from the shore of our own spiritual center.

"Ooh!" Lesley exclaims. "That must be so amazing! How lucky that you live near there."

It is, we tell her. It is.

Let's let our representatives know that we'd like to keep it that way.

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

## A New Shared Vision for Erie

Mayoral candidate Joe Schember builds on ideas to transform our city.



MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

**Former Erie City Councilman Joe Schember (right) and his wife, Rhonda Mahoney Schember, greet the crowd during his mayoral announcement at the Warner Theatre.**

By: Joe Schember

**J**obs. Crime. Education. These are the three concerns I hear most frequently while meeting with Erie residents.

I am running for mayor because I can't continue to watch as people leave Erie for better jobs. I can't watch another story on the evening news about our children shooting each other or overdosing. I can't watch our neighbors struggle to invest in their homes while houses, schools, and streets crumble around them. I can't watch families move to the suburbs in search of a better education for their children.

I have to do something. I can, and I will.

Erie is at a crucial turning point. I am not a career politician. My private sector, executive-level leadership experience has prepared me to transform Erie into a thriving community with good family-sustaining jobs and welcoming neighborhoods. I'll use my experience leading hundreds of employees to build a results-driven administration. My 40 years in

finance and five years chairing the City Council Finance Committee have prepared me to manage the city's \$75 million budget while strategically implementing *Erie Refocused*.

Some of Erie's largest employers have recently announced over a half-billion dollars in investments in our city. These announcements include Erie Insurance, UPMC Hamot, Scott Enterprises, St. Vincent Hospital, and Velocity Network. No city Erie's size has this much private investment happening. And, there is more to come!

In order to maximize the impact of these investments, we need strong public/private partnerships. The result will be more jobs, an expanded tax base, a vibrant Bayfront, a thriving downtown, safe neighborhoods, and attractive housing options. It's a lofty vision, but I've spent my career building relationships with local leaders who can make this happen. I've managed large scale transformations in the financial services industry. I know how to do this. We need to do it now.

The violence in our community is committed by individuals who see no hope or opportunity in their future. So, rivalries and retaliation take over. I'll never forget the night I rode with an Erie police officer. We went from one crisis to another from 9 p.m. until 4 a.m. We never stopped once, even for coffee. It's a side of Erie I had never seen. I witnessed firsthand the importance of police-community relations.

Our police are dedicated men and women who put their lives on the line to protect us every day. They do more than enforce the law. They have started innovative programs like the Police Athletic League to build relationships. We need to provide them with current technology, so they can spend more time patrolling and less time trying to get a fire hose of information into a garden hose. We also need innovative programs, like the one in East Cleveland, to ex-

pand the diversity of our force. As mayor, I will work closely with Erie's police to keep you safe.

Bishop Dwayne Brock often says, "Nothing stops a bullet like a job." This motivates me to work with programs like Erie Together, Unified Erie, Bishop Brock's Eagle's Nest, Mel Witherspoon's Summer Basketball League, and Rodney Cray's Stay Focused for the Future to provide opportunity for our inner-city youth.

Erie's kids deserve a leader who will speak up for them. Whether I am reading to kindergarteners at Lincoln Elementary School or teaching financial literacy to Strong Vincent juniors and seniors, I can see the potential and brightness in their eyes. They are Erie's future. That's why, as mayor, I must continue to be involved.

I will collaborate with the superintendent and school board to advocate for fair funding from the state. Long term, we must work together to expand the tax base for the benefit of our schools and city. As a leader, the mayor must be committed to helping residents acquire the education and skills they need to succeed.

I'll be an active, visible leader, who seeks diverse viewpoints. Every decision will be based solely on what is best for the people of Erie. I will continue my lifelong commitment to serving you, because for me, being mayor isn't about having power and prestige, it's about empowering others.

Some people say that Erie is a "sinking ship." I disagree. The people of Erie have too much grit and determination to be ruled out. I believe that through commitment, collaboration, and compassion, we can bring jobs and people back to the City of Erie. As Erie's next mayor, I have the skills to make this happen.

Together, we will build opportunity for all.

*Joe Schember served as an Erie City Councilman and Relationship Manager at PNC Bank. For more on Joe Schember's mayoral candidacy, visit [joeschember.com](http://joeschember.com), email [joe@joeschember.com](mailto:joe@joeschember.com), and visit his campaign headquarters at 1301 State Street.*



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## News of the Weird

### Life-saving salmonella and the Wild West bandit of Harrisburg

By: Chuck Shepherd

#### Exploiting Villains

In February, two teams of South Korean researchers announced cancer-fighting breakthroughs by taking lessons from how two of medicine's most vexing, destructive organisms (diarrhea-causing salmonella bacteria and the rabies virus) can access often-unconquerable cancer cells. In journal articles, biologist Jung-joon Min of Chonnam National University described how his team "weaponized" a cancer-fighting invader cell with salmonella to stir up more-robust immune responses, and nanoparticle expert Yu Seok Youn's Sungkyunkwan University team coated immunizing cells with the rabies protein (since the rabies virus is remarkably successful at invading healthy cells) to reach brain tumors. [ArsTechnica, 2-9-2017] [Science Magazine, 2-10-2017]

#### Unclear on the Concept

Gemma Badley was convicted in England's Teesside Magistrates' Court in February of impersonating British psychic Sally Morgan on Facebook, selling her "readings" as if they were Morgan's. (To keep this straight: Badley is the illegal con artist, Morgan the legal one.) [The Gazette (Middlesbrough), 2-21-2017]

Michigan is an "open carry" state, and any adult not otherwise disqualified under state law may "pack heat" in public (except in a few designated zones). In February, an over-

ly earnest Second Amendment fan, James Baker, 24 (accompanied by pal Brandon Vreeland, 40), believed the law was an invitation to walk into the Dearborn police station in full body armor and ski mask, with a semi-automatic pistol and a sawed-off rifle (and have Vreeland photograph officers' reactions). (Yes, both were arrested.) [Detroit Free Press, 2-6-2017]

Wells Fargo Bank famously admitted last year that employees (pressured by a company incentive program) had fraudulently opened new accounts for about 2 million existing customers by forging their signatures. In an early lawsuit by a victim of the fraud (who had seven fraudulent accounts opened), the bank argued (and a court agreed!) that the lawsuit had to be handled by arbitration instead of a court of law because the customer had, in the original Wells Fargo contract (that dense, fine-print one he actually signed), agreed to arbitration for "all" disputes. A February Wells Fargo statement to Consumerist.com claimed that customers' forgoing legal rights was actually for their own benefit, in that "arbitration" is faster and less expensive. [Consumerist, 3-1-2017]

#### News That Sounds Like a Joke

Ex-Colombo family mobster and accused hitman "Tommy Shots" Gioeli, 64, recently filed a federal court lawsuit over a 2013 injury at the Metropolitan Detention Center in New York City. He fell and broke a kneecap while playing ping-pong (allegedly be-

cause of water on the floor), awaiting sentencing for conspiracy to commit murder. The New York Post also noted that the "portly" Gioeli, who was later sentenced to 18 years, was quite a sight at trial, carrying his "man purse" each day. [New York Post, 2-7-2017]

#### Great Art!

French artist Abraham Poincheval told reporters in February that in his upcoming "performance," he will entomb himself for a week in a limestone boulder at a Paris museum and then, at the conclusion, sit on a dozen bird eggs until they hatch "an inner journey," he said, "to find out what the world is." (He apparently failed to learn that from previous efforts, such as the two weeks he spent inside a stuffed bear or his time on the Rhone River inside a giant corked bottle.) He told reporters the super-snug tomb has been thoroughly accessorized, providing for breathing, eating, heart monitor and emergency phone except, they noted, nothing on exactly how toileting will be handled. [The Guardian (London), 2-21-2017]

#### The Job of the Researcher

A National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration "bioacoustic research" team recently reported recording and listening to about 2 million underwater sounds made over a four-month period by various species of dolphins ("whistles," echolocation "clicks," and "burst pulses") and can, they believe, distinguish the sounds to match them to a particular dolphin

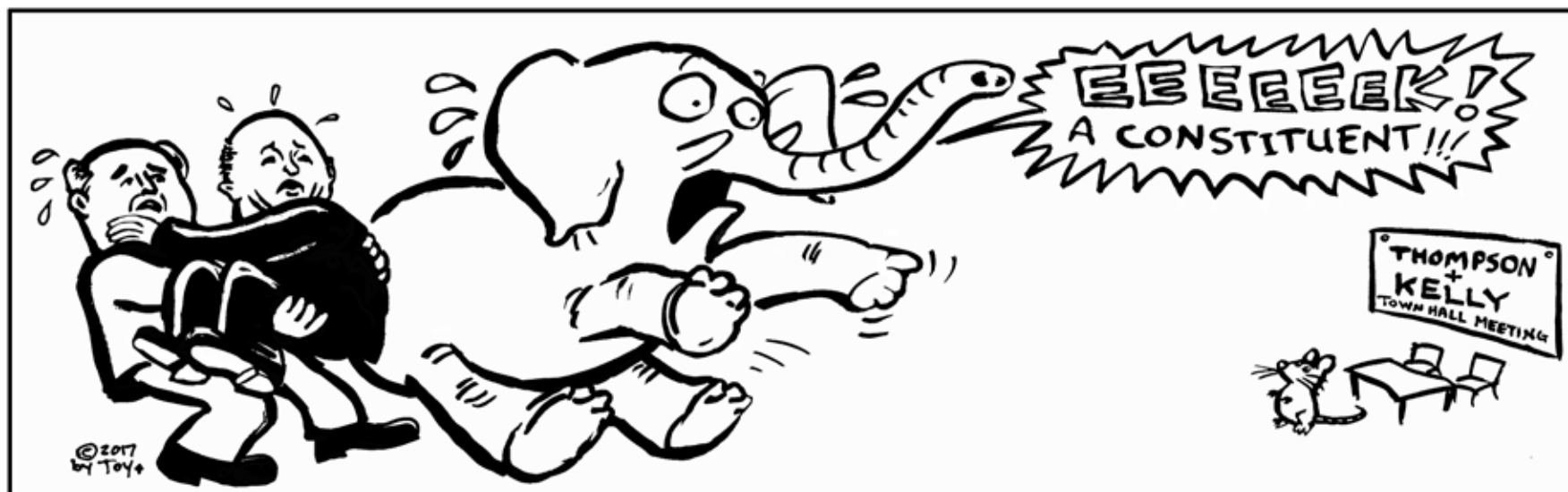
species (among the five most prevalent) with 84 percent accuracy. The team built a computer algorithm to also make estimating dolphin populations much easier. [Hakai Magazine, 2-16-2017]

#### The Continuing Crisis

Compelling Explanations: (1) Oklahoma state Rep. Justin Humphrey, justifying his proposed bill to require a woman seeking an abortion to first identify the father, told a reporter in February that the father's permission is crucial because, after all, the woman is basically a "host" who "invited that (fetus) in." (2) After the North Dakota House of Representatives voted yet again in January to retain the state's Sunday-closing "blue laws," Rep. Bernie Satrom explained to a reporter: "Spending time with your wife, your husband, making him breakfast, bringing it to him in bed" is better than going shopping. [The Intercept, 2-13-2017] [Valley News Live (Fargo), 2-1-2017]

Small-Town Government: The ex-wife of Deputy Sheriff Corey King of Washington County, Georgia (largest town: Sandersville, pop. 5,900), filed a federal lawsuit in January against King after he arrested her for the "crime" of making a snarky comment about him on Facebook (about his failure to bring the couple's children their medicine). King allegedly conspired with a friendly local magistrate on the arrest, and though the prosecutor refused the case, King warned the ex-wife that he would still

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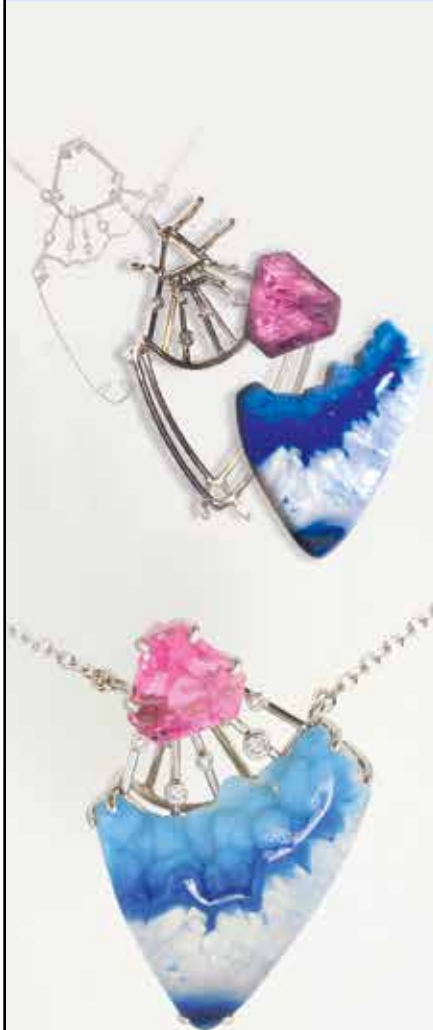
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**NEWS & VIEWS**

re-arrest her if she made "the mistake of going to Facebook with your little (excrement) ... to fuss about." [WMAZ-TV (Macon), 2-7-2017]

**Leading Economic Indicators**

In a first-person profile for the Chicago Tribune in February, marketing consultant Peter Bender, 28, recalled how he worked to maximize his knowledge of the products of company client Hanes and not just the flagship Hanes underwear but its Playtex and Maidenform brands. In an "empathy" exercise, Bender wore bras for three days (a sports bra, an underwire and a lacy one) fitted at size 34A (or "less than A," he said). "These things are difficult," he wrote on a company blog. "The lacy one," especially, was "itchy." [Chicago Tribune, 2-21-2017]

**News You Can Use**

"Fecal transplants" (replacing a sick person's gut bacteria with those of a healthier one) are now almost routine treatments for patients with violent abdominal attacks of C. diff bacteria, but University of California researcher Chris Callewaert says the concept also works for people with particularly stinky armpits. Testing identical twins (one odoriferous, the other not), the researcher, con-

trolling for diet and other variables, "cured" the smelly one by swabbing his pit daily with the sweat of the better-smelling twin. The Callewaert team told a recent conference that they were working on a more "general" brew of bacteria that might help out anyone with sour armpits. [New Scientist, 2-10-2017]

**The Weirdo-American Community**

Stephen Reed, the former mayor of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, pleaded guilty on the eve of his January trial on corruption counts stemming from the approximately 10,000 items of "Wild West" and "Americana" artifacts worth around \$8 million that he had bought with public funds during 28 years in office. For some reason, he had a single-minded obsession with creating a local all-things-cowboy museum, and had purchased such items as a stagecoach, stagecoach harnesses, a "Billy the Kid" wanted poster, a wagon wheel and a totem pole. Somehow, he explained, as he was leaving office after being voted out in 2009, the items he had purchased (theoretically, "on behalf of" of Harrisburg) had migrated into his personal belongings. [Washington Post, 1-26-2017]

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## Hear the Call

What the gift of your time means to our community

By: Margo Wolfe

The theater is dark, but there is always a group of people inside; fixing a door, vacuuming the hallway, stocking refreshments, reading over a script for the next show, preparing for another show.

Backstage, a woman, a volunteer actor, sits quietly, harnessing all of her energy for the stage. The week before, she had been in a hospital bed, devastated that she would miss a performance. She never misses a performance. Shows do not get canceled and tickets are not returned. This is a pure form of sacrifice: making sure that you continue to perform and outperform each time, so that the audience who needs to step away from their lives and laugh for a moment can do that without the burden of knowing your burdens.

These are volunteers; artisans who do this work for the betterment of our city, providing not just entertainment but a cultural discussion that is necessary for human survival. By no means are they the only ones who volunteer their time, energy, strength, and sometimes their own money to a cause that means so much to them that they will sacrifice to make it happen. Habitat for Humanity, ServErie, The Free Store, and countless other volunteer groups perform services and provide aid to make life better for our residents, to make the city a little cleaner, a little safer.

Volunteers have always been the lifeblood of nonprofit organizations. These volunteers do simple tasks like stuffing envelopes and entering data into a spreadsheet. They also do complex tasks like organizing events and fundraisers; and they know, most of all, that they are better people for it because it feeds their souls.

This is what Erie needs. I believe this is the only way we can survive. With our city thrust into the news recently, we have become aware of the negative attention. It was okay as long as we were bashing our own city, but not so nice when others do it. Complacency seems to be lifting and more people are pulling back the curtain to reveal the economic constraints, societal boundaries, and

entrenched nepotism that has stalled our progress.

We already have several people stepping up and offering their expertise and energy to political positions, when they wouldn't have thought to do so before. Except for the mayor, most positions are unpaid or only include a small stipend. They do not seek monetary enrichment, but a chance to elevate new voices and enact significant change. This, too, is a sacrifice and one that needs to be acknowledged, like the volunteers who do work in our city every day.

You are welcome to sit back, drink a beer, and watch a game. You are most certainly entitled to it and you earned it because you worked so hard throughout the week. But the truth is, you are needed. These organizations are taxed with too much work and not enough hands.

But what you are missing when you don't volunteer is so much more. The momentum you get when you participate in service is astronomical; it does more for our overall psyche and sense of community. It binds us together and in this divisive climate, we could use each other to lean on.

If we want our city to survive – thrive even – if we want to show the rest of the country and maybe even ourselves that we can make this happen, then we need to do more than post ideas on Facebook; we need more than 12 people willing to give up their time to run for office; we need more than the various churches and nonprofits attempting to clean up neighborhoods and build programs for children.

We need everyone. Each person needs to be part of the equation. We need to do this to feed our collective souls. And when you say you don't have time or the energy, then remember that woman who left for the theater and got ready for a show on the same day that she was released from the hospital. Because after her magnificent performance and sacrifice, you have no excuse.

*Margo Wolfe, Ph.D. has been an active volunteer in the Erie community for over 20 years. She can be reached at wolfe029@gannon.edu*

Do you know someone under 40 who is shaping the future of Erie?

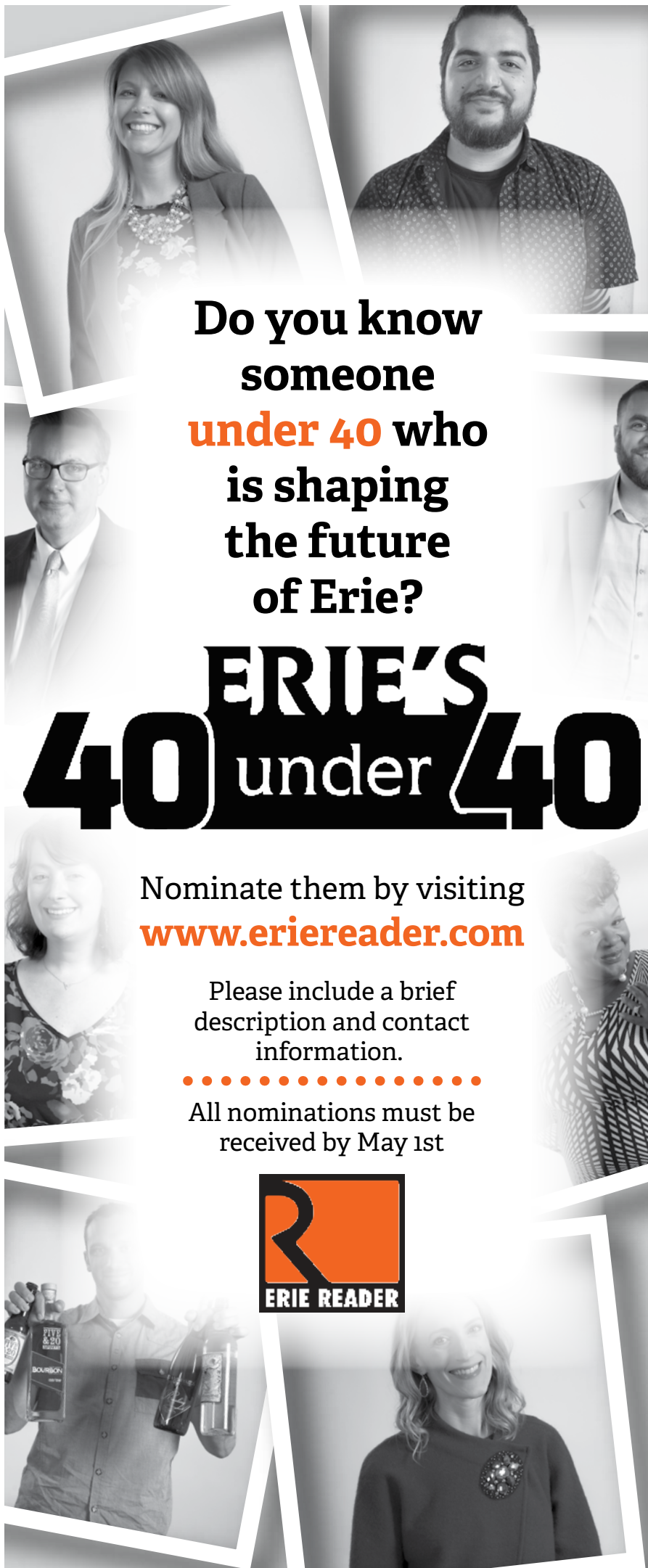
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All nominations must be received by May 1st





## The Cooking School

Dishing up deliciousness and lessons in your own kitchen



A versatile and mobile chef, Meghan Mehler helps prepare desserts for an Eagle Scout celebration at Holy Cross Church in Fairview, PA.

NICK WARREN

By: Marnie Mead

**H**ave you ever wanted to learn to cook, but didn't know where to start? Or maybe you just want to invite a few friends over for an amazing dinner, but the cupboards are bare, and so is your confidence in the kitchen.

If so, then Meghan Mehler can whip up just the recipe for a successful meal for you. Mehler is the owner of The Cooking School, a culinary education that comes to your kitchen. Or, if you just want to watch live "Food Network" in your home, she can do that, too.

"The options are endless as to what we can do," said Mehler, who gives private lessons, group lessons, family gatherings, theme dinners, and team-building exercises around food.

Mehler began The Cooking School in September, but has a long history in the culinary arts. She started in seventh grade serving and cleaning up after parties. By high school, she had her own catering business. She went to culinary school in Pittsburgh and transferred to Mercyhurst University, from which she graduated. She has

worked at the Kahkwa Club, Aviation Club, and Hopper's Brew Pub (the latter two are now closed). She took the next 15 years off to focus on being a mother to Madeline and Jacob and wife to Jack Mehler.

"I entertained constantly," she added. "That's where I get to use food as my outlet."

Once Madeline and Jacob were independent, Mehler returned to Mercyhurst to teach. But she knew she had more to offer than university classes. She had partnered with her now-college-aged daughter in Venus Apothecaries and taught cooking classes at the now-defunct Frankie & May Fresh Grocer in Erie.

Until the summer of 2016, Mehler's path was about as clear as trying to figure out dinner in the middle of Wegmans – so many choices, so little direction. Working with a like-minded group of entrepreneurial women, Mehler was able to pick and choose her ideas to develop a fully cooked plan. She wanted to mix her passion for teaching with her love of cooking. She wanted to do it where people are most comfortable – in their own

kitchens.

Since then, Mehler has brought The Cooking School to county government for lunch-and-learns, a bachelorette party, a birthday party, a travel group, and corporate team-building events.

The mix speaks to the broad range, and ages, of interest. The classes can be as hands-on as the participants want. If you just want to watch Mehler's expertise, then you can sit, sip, and watch. If you pay attention, you might pick up a tip or two. "Giving these tips adds to the whole experience," she said.

The "experience" is wholly yours. Together, you plan a personalized menu. A trip to Italy coming up? Get in the mood with a "Night in Italy." Mehler does all the shopping and brings the ingredients to your home to cook. One of the best parts? She cleans up afterward so there's no messy kitchen to contend with after your guests leave.

She can work in almost any kitchen, but like most chefs, will bring her own (sharp) knives.

For corporate events, the food is the

centerpiece. But there's a side dish of growth and education. The idea has its foundation in her experience with Mercyhurst's food service management class. There, the students aren't trained to be chefs, but they do spend 15 weeks working in teams to understand all aspects of the restaurant service – from the kitchen to the front of house.

"I was looking at these kids learning off of each other," she said. "I saw an opportunity to take people out of the work space, and they have to work in ways they are not used to [in a kitchen]. It changes the way you look at and work with each other."

In other words, the boss may be terrific at setting timetables, but is

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The classes can be as hands-on as the participants want. If you just want to watch Mehler's expertise, then you can sit, sip, and watch. If you pay attention, you might pick up a tip or two.

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terrible at getting a meal to table. An administrative assistant may not be able to make widgets, but can manage co-workers to prepare a meal in under 30 minutes.

"It's a different atmosphere than sitting in an office," she said.

In the next year, Mehler plans to dish up some pop-up experiences. She recently launched her website, [thecookingschoolerie.com](http://thecookingschoolerie.com).

Contact Meghan Mehler and The Cooking School via email at [chefmehgan@thecookingschoolerie.com](mailto:chefmehgan@thecookingschoolerie.com), at [thecookingschoolerie.com](http://thecookingschoolerie.com) and on Facebook at The Cooking School.

Marnie Mead can be contacted at [mmead@eriereader.com](mailto:mmead@eriereader.com) and you can follow her on Twitter @makeiterie.



## Time Served

Exiting the criminal justice system in Erie



NICK WARREN

The razor wire fence lining the edge of 18th Street is just one of the barriers separating inmates at the Erie County Prison from the outside world.

By: Dan Schank

### The Problem of Recidivism

I'm about to throw a lot of statistics at you, so let's begin with an important one. About 90 percent of the people currently serving time in a Pennsylvania state correctional institution will eventually be released.

That number comes from a detailed 2013 report on recidivism from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. "Recidivism" is the term used to address a criminal's likelihood to re-offend. In 2013, the report found that six out of 10 ex-offenders would end up rearrested or re-incarcerated within three years. And more than half of those returns would occur within one year of release.

If you find those numbers alarming – and you probably should – there are more encouraging trends as well. Of those reoffending, the majority are (thankfully) not committing violent crimes. An estimated 51 percent of rearrests were for property or drug offenses, while 17 percent were for violent offenses. Murder accounts for only 1.3 percent of rearrests. Age also plays a significant role – a 21-year-old is more than twice as likely to re-offend as someone over the age of 50.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1.53 million prisoners were

in state and federal facilities by the end of 2015. An additional 4.65 million adults – roughly one out of every 53 people – were on "probation, parole, or some other form of post-prison supervision" during that year. Most of those people will eventually exit the criminal justice system. And when they do, they'll need to find employment, permanent housing, and medical care. In a city like Erie, where good jobs are often hard to find *without* a criminal record, re-entry can be tremendously difficult.

Fortunately, a growing coalition of concerned local citizens – including public officials, community activists, religious leaders, law enforcement officers, small business owners, and ex-offenders – are working to address these needs. They don't always agree with each other, and a healthy debate has emerged about which approaches make the most sense. Although the good work being done in Erie is too vast for a single article, here is a quick introduction to a few noteworthy efforts.

### The Erie County Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA)

Assistant U.S. Attorney Marshall A. Piccinini characterizes the prob-

lem of recidivism in our community very effectively: "When you've got more than 1,250 people coming from the federal, state, and local systems back to Erie County every year, and between 60 and 70 percent we know are likely to re-offend, we've got to do better to reduce that number."

Through Unified Erie, our county's multifaceted plan to reduce violence, a dialogue began three years ago to address this problem. Piccinini explains the process: "With the leadership of the United Way – Mary Bula in particular – we started meeting every other Friday for a period of many months and brought together teams of folks, including transitioning clients (or ex-cons), the service providers, probation officers, and other people who are in tune with these

"When you've got more than 1,250 people coming from the federal, state, and local systems back to Erie County every year, and between 60 and 70 percent we know are likely to re-offend, we've got to do better to reduce that number."

challenges."

These meetings allowed Unified Erie to focus on two tiers of assistance for ex-offenders. First, they considered tangible needs, which Piccinini identifies as "shelter, clothing, education, drug and alcohol treatment, job skills, employment, and transportation." Next, they considered intangibles, like an ex-offender's need for "individuals in their lives to walk alongside them as they exit prison."

This led to the formation of the Erie County Services and Support Alliance (ECRSSA), which opened last September in downtown Erie. The project is funded through a \$1.2 million grant from the United Way and the Erie Community Foundation, which was awarded to the Greater Erie Commu-

nity Action Committee (GECAC). On a rainy Wednesday in March, ECRSSA's director Sheila Silman introduced me to the services they provide for Erie County residents exiting federal, state, and county prisons.

ECRSSA's case management team focuses primarily on two things: resource coordination and intensive support. According to Silman, resource coordination is often quite simple: they're helping low-level offenders "to draft a resume or to get onto job-related websites. And many of them don't have an email address, so we get them connected to free email." Because many ex-offenders lack practical items like birth certificates, social security cards, and photo IDs, major obstacles can arise on the path to employment.

The intensive support at ECRSSA is geared toward people who are considered medium-to-high risk for parole purposes. These clients are typically either violent offenders or people who have multiple non-violent offenses. In some cases, they may be trying to transition out of the Erie Community Corrections Center, but lack access to adequate housing. For these individuals, ECRSSA offers more long-term counseling and mentorship. "Typical case management eligibility in our community has been focused around the seriously mentally ill," says Silman. "Or people who are homeless and in need of housing. This is very different – we're trying to provide support to people who are returning, to help correct those thinking patterns and to improve their decision-making skills. Because many have burned their bridges beyond belief."

Much of ECRSSA's work involves aligning people with other organizations in the community. At the end of September, they coordinated a Re-entry Workforce Summit at the Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel, which included lectures, workshops, and a job fair. Local companies like Engineered Plastics Inc. and Grimm Industries expressed interest in hiring responsible ex-offenders. ECRSSA also works closely with Erie County Care Management to refer clients to places like Stairways Behavioral Health, Corry



Counseling Services, and the Barber National Institute for mental health needs.

ECRSSA's work is often done in partnership with Unified Erie's controversial call-in program, which has been the source of great debate in our community. The program identifies people who show up repeatedly in incident reports and official arrest data, and invites them to take part in a dialogue at a local church with members of clergy, law enforcement officers, ex-offenders, and the fam-

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**The Total Change Program is also working in partnership with Bonnell's Collision, which donated several computers for vocational training and has begun to offer employment opportunities in their body shop.**

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ilies of victims of violent crime. Individuals who decline to participate will be targeted for more aggressive legal enforcement, which has led members of the NAACP and the African American Concerned Clergy to raise concerns that the program could increase incarceration rates for non-violent offenders or incentivize racial profiling.

This is a case with good faith arguments on both sides of the issue. Bishop Dwayne Brock, NAACP Erie Chapter President Tiffany McCloud, and County Councilman Andre Horton

have all raised substantive objections to Unified Erie's call-in framework. For example, during a public forum in early February, Horton suggested that its funding could be diverted to Erie's multiple neighborhood centers, which have been providing opportunities in vulnerable communities for many years. On the other hand, it may be too soon to tell whether or not the call-in approach will lead to increased incarceration or racial profiling, and Unified Erie has made a concerted effort to bring in diverse perspectives from outside of law enforcement. ECRSSA began its work only six months ago, and the call-in project is still in the early stages. Hopefully, as these dialogues continue, some common ground can be found over time.

**Climate Changers, Inc.**

Don't be fooled by the name – the work being done by Climate Changers, Inc. doesn't have anything in common with our disturbingly mild winter. The name refers to a non-profit dedicated to helping ex-offenders (as well as people living in extreme poverty) to change the "climate" that led them to make poor choices.

To cultivate meaningful change, founder Frederick Esquire Williams and CEO Curtis Jones, Sr. have created a three-phased system known as the Total Change Re-entry Program. Phase one begins prior to release, as inmates prepare to re-enter society. According to Williams, "the level of freedom for an individual exiting in-



carceration is far too great for them. In prison, all you have to be is compliant." Accordingly, they begin by discussing the transitions that ex-offenders often face when they're no longer under the strict surveillance of a prison. At the same time, they prepare inmates with the practical documents they'll need upon release.

Phase two of the program is currently in the works through a facility that is being expanded on East 11th Street, in close proximity to the Emmaus Soup Kitchen and the Erie City Mission. Williams describes the facility as a "one-stop shop," designed to provide a variety of services at one location through various community partnerships. Drug and alcohol treatment will be offered by UPMC. Safe Harbor Behavioral Health will provide counseling services, as well as programming designed to promote effective parenting. G.E.D. training, tutoring, and testing will come from GECAC. Finally, the facility will also serve as a residence that can house up to 14 ex-offenders in need of shelter. Williams estimates that 70-75 people are making use of their services already – and that number is sure to expand.

Climate Changers, Inc. recently received a \$150,000 promissory note from Brent Davis of B. Davis Enterprises, LLC. The funding arrives in conjunction with Operation Jump Start, Davis' 12-week apprenticeship program designed to introduce ex-offenders to the construction trade. The Total Change Program is also working in partnership with Bonnell's Collision, which donated several computers for vocational training

and has begun to offer employment opportunities in their body shop.

Phase three of the Total Change Re-entry Program will ensure that tools remain accessible to participants over an eight-year period following release. Although the program is still fairly new, Climate Changers, Inc. envisions long-term mentorship with strong community connections. According to Williams, "if we're going to make the community better, it's going to take a collective initiative from many different businesses – from many different genres – working together to solve these problems in the city."

This combination of diversity and collaboration seems essential to addressing the problem of recidivism. Making it work will require hard work and tough, adult conversations. Concerned people in Erie might not always come to a consensus, and public debate about these issues is tremendously important. I don't want to sound overly optimistic as I conclude – there are a myriad of deeply rooted institutional problems within our criminal justice system. But there does seem to be substantial local momentum – an eagerness for reform that reflects the multifaceted needs of the whole community. Sometimes that eagerness takes the form of dissent, and sometimes it takes the form of direct action. Ex-offenders returning to Erie County can't expect to be greeted with open arms, but they can count on plenty of helping hands.

Dan Schank can be contacted at [dschank@eriereader.com](mailto:dschank@eriereader.com).

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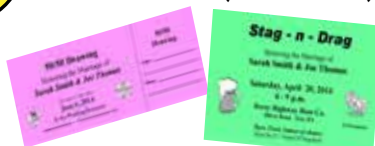
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# Spotlight on Erie

March 15 – 28, 2017

**Friday, March 17**

## All An Act Revisits *The Middle Ages*



**T**alk about an encore presentation. All An Act Theatre won't only stage A. R. Gurney's *The Middle Ages* again, but will also be using the exact same cast as its original 2006 production.

"A3 was very small when we first produced the show in 2006," explained *Ages* director and actor David Mitchell via email. "We were too young a company to have really built an audience or a following, let alone have people come out in midwinter to see us. We knew we had a very special show and unfortunately, attendance was underwhelming.

All An Act Theatre won't only stage A. R. Gurney's *The Middle-Ages* again, but will also be using the exact same cast as its original 2006 production.

"In 2013, we'd decided that for All An Act's 10-year anniversary in 2014, we'd take an audience survey, and see if there were any shows people had missed and would like to see us bring back," he added. "*The Middle Ages* was voted number four. Larry [Lewis, A3 managing director] and I agreed the interest validated its return. It just took us a couple of years to get there."

Amy Welker Rowe, who once again performs as Eleanor Gilbert, said via email that the play "is more about relationships. The relationships between parents and children and between two people who love each other, but never can seem to make it work."

Defining the show as a dramedy, Rowe concluded, "I hope that potential audience members will both laugh and cry and be able to see themselves in the characters we portray." –

Gregory Greenleaf-Knepp

7:30 p.m. March 17, 18, 24, 25, 31, April 1, 3 p.m. March 18, 26, April 2 // All An Act Theatre, 652 W. 17th St. // \$12 for adults, \$10 seniors/students // For more information, visit [allanact.net](http://allanact.net) or call 450.8553 or 449.6554

**Friday, March 17**

## Mercyhurst University Presents *Raw Edges*



**F**or 19 years, the Mercyhurst University dance department has showcased student choreography through its annual spring performance. This year, the tradition continues.

From March 17 to 19, the dance department invites the public to *Raw Edges*, a unique show that will feature the choreography of 16 upper-level dance major students, who have spent months preparing routines that address complex topics like obsession, death, and mental illness.

Student choreographers auditioned in December and began rehearsals shortly after in early January. With some guidance from department faculty, it's students who create the show. They are responsible for choices in costume, lighting, music, and more.

This year's choreographers have found inspiration in art and poetry. They've used resources both in and outside of the dance department, working with psychology and biology professors and involving the Mercyhurst student choir in the performances.

During intermissions, students will speak with the audience through interactive "Talk Back" sessions. They will recall and describe their individual artistic processes and explain how they turned their ideas into original choreographed routines.

The 16 student choreographers are supervised by faculty members No-

elle Partusch, Mark Santillano, and Solveig Santillano. – Tracy Geibel

4:30 p.m. on Friday, 2 and 7 p.m. on Saturday, 2 p.m. on Sunday // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. // \$15 adults, \$10 seniors and students, \$5 ages 12 and under // 824.3000 // [miac.mercyhurst.edu](http://miac.mercyhurst.edu)

**Saturday, March 18**

## Love, Light, and Healing Psychic Fair Explores the Metaphysical



**I**t is said that energy cannot be created or destroyed; it shifts and moves from one form to another. One way to experience different types of energy is to see how it can be channeled by mediums, psychics, and other like folk – many of whom are coming together at Erie's Love, Light, and Healing Psychic Fair at the Ambassador Conference Center on March 18. In fact, "this is a great event for anyone with a curiosity or appreciation of metaphysical and spiritual interests," summarizes organizer Elizabeth Ernst, herself a tarot card reader and no stranger to all things psychic.

Ernst explains that the \$5 admission fee will give guests access to many lectures and classes throughout the day, though some have additional charges up to \$20. Readers will be offering psychic consultations, tarot spreads – to which a guest can ask a specific question, or simply receive an overview of the future – and mediums will be available to channel past lives or loved ones who may have departed the physical realm. Additionally, there will be 35 vendors providing energy healings, metaphysical items, handcrafted goods from local artisans, and authors' wares.

Ernst adds that this is Erie's largest psychic fair. "As a whole," she says, "we hope that our guests will walk away with the confirmation that life does not end here and that our life

paths are all meaningful." Attendees will also have the opportunity to see a bellydance performance and participate in a mini lesson, learn about Reiki and other forms of energy healing, and join a gallery reading at 11 a.m., where mediums address a group and give messages to the a select few with whom they find common spiritual ground. – Miriam Lamey

10 a.m. // Ambassador Banquet & Conference Center, 7794 Peach St. // \$5 // [heartandsoultarot.com](http://heartandsoultarot.com)

**Saturday, March 18**

## Three Rappers Bring Their World Tour to Erie



OG MACO

**B**efore they wrap up their Desperado World Tour, OG Maco and Young Greatness with special guest Levi Carter will perform Saturday, March 18 at Basement Transmissions.

The 24-year-old Atlanta rapper OG Maco (Maco Mattix) is well known for his 2014 hit debut single "You Guessed It," which made the Billboard Hot 100 and now has more than 54 million views on YouTube. He's quickly gained fame – already acquiring more than 35,000 Facebook likes and 90,000 Twitter followers.

From New Orleans, Young Greatness (Theodore Jones) is probably best known for "Moolah," a popular single that spent weeks on the Billboard Hot 100 and was remixed by Lil Wayne and Yo Gotti last year. The rising hip-hop artist's 2015 hit about his hustle "just to get that moolah" earned him more than 25 million views on its official music video. His Facebook page's incredibly brief biography reads: #MoolahSeason. But perhaps this is fitting for the 34-year-old artist who is now reaping the rewards of his hard

work.

Realizing his passion and his potential at a young age, special guest Levi Carter, 22, hopes to quickly make a name for himself. The rapper's debut album *Antisocial* included "Finessed" and "You Not Gang," which both have garnered more than 60,000 views on YouTube. More recently, he released *The Presence of a Lord* with "No Wife" and "Paid in Full." Carter grew up in Virginia listening to Jay Z and now considers Lil Wayne one of his favorite rappers.

General admission is \$20, but attendees can join a VIP meet and greet with either OG Maco or Young Greatness for \$75. — Tracy Geibel

6 to 11 p.m. // Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. // \$20 // Facebook.com/Basement.Transmissions

**Wednesday, March 22**

**A New Voice in French Cinema Comes to Erie**

Mia Hansen-Love is a treasure to the world of cinema. At only 35 years old, she has already made her mark in film with deeply personal and heartfelt stories. From the gut-wrenching tales of *All is Forgiven* and *The Father of My Children* to energetic and relatable films like *Goodbye, First Love* and *Eden*, Hansen-Love



THINGS TO COME

has proved to be a vital new voice in French cinema. Now her newest film, *Things to Come*, is coming to Erie.

The story is about a high school philosophy teacher who suddenly finds that she has to reinvent her life after her husband announces that he is leaving with another woman. The film stars Isabelle Huppert, who just received an Academy Award nomination for her brilliant performance in *Elle*, and I have no doubt that this film will feature the same complex emotional intensity that Huppert has become known for.

However, for me, the most intriguing aspect of this film is the director. I was first introduced to Hansen-Love's films when I watched *The Father of My Children*, which then led me to check out *Goodbye, First Love*. I could tell that the latter was a deeply personal story, but she made it relatable enough that I felt an instant connection with the main character. One of the hardest things for a director to

do is to merge the personal with the universal, and the fact that a director so young was able to do that was astounding to me.

So be sure to check out this exciting director's newest film at the Erie Art Museum. There's no doubt in my mind that she'll become one of the leading figures in French cinema in the years to come, if she isn't there already. — Forest Taylor

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

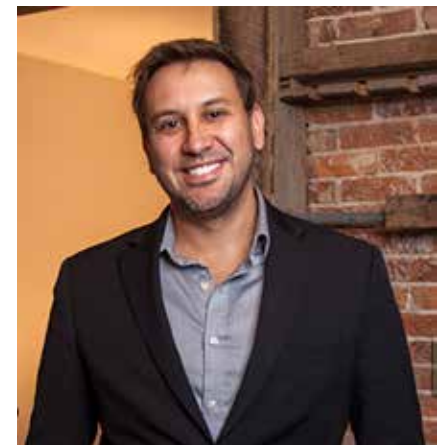
**Friday, March 24**

**Host of Nashville Flipped to Speak at Home and Garden Show**

In anticipation of the warmer weather, the Erie Home and Garden Expo at the Bayfront Convention Center will prepare you for spring cleaning and summer projects.

Presented by the Erie Federal Credit Union and the Iadeluca Chiropractic Center, the show will feature presentations by the host of the DIY network's *Nashville Flipped*, Erie native Troy Dean Shafer, and numerous local vendors that specialize in new home construction, kitchen and bath remodeling, and landscaping services.

Shafer moved to Nashville after his



TROY DEAN SHAFER

graduation from Penn State Behrend in 2004 with aspirations of becoming a country music star. Instead, he found a career restoring historic homes.

When he purchases the houses, he doesn't know how many issues he will encounter in repairing them, or how costly those repairs will be. But with his knowledge of construction and his interest in historic homes, he is able to rescue the potentially doomed properties by renovating and selling them for a profit.

Perfect for homeowners and do-it-yourselfers, the show will include vendors that are able to discuss both indoor and outdoor projects from carpets and floors to windows and doors.

Free parking is available. Discount tickets can be purchased online prior

**MUSIC**

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

Mar. 15 — 8 p.m.  
Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](http://miac.mercyhurst.edu).

**Gem City Jazz Ensemble**

Mar. 16 — noon to 12:30 p.m.  
Corry High School, 534 E. Pleasant St. [jazzerie.com](http://jazzerie.com).

**Jazz Author Mark Gridley**

Mar. 16 — 7 to 9 p.m.

Yehl Ballroom at Gannon University, 109 University Sq. [jazzerie.com](http://jazzerie.com).

**Dave Callaghan Quartet**

Mar. 17 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
Wegman's Cafeteria, 6143 Peach St. [jazzerie.com](http://jazzerie.com).

**SAS Acoustics featuring Kayti Stadler**

Mar. 17 — 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.  
Colony Pub and Grille, 2670 W. 8th St. [facebook.com/SASAcousticDuo](http://facebook.com/SASAcousticDuo).

**Bobbys Bash St. Patrick's Day**

Mar. 17 — 8:30 p.m.  
Bobbys Place, 1202 W. 18th St. [facebook.com/SlaughterInTheMeridian](http://facebook.com/SlaughterInTheMeridian).

**Chris Higbee**

Mar. 17, 18 — 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com).

**Dirty Pickles St. Patrick's Day Bash**

Mar. 17 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

**Dave VanAmburg and Friends**

Mar. 18 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
Anchor In at Oasis Pub, 3122 W. Lake Rd. [jazzerie.com](http://jazzerie.com).

**OG Maco & Young Greatness**

Mar. 18 — 6 to 11 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. [facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions](http://facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions).

**A Global Walkabout**

Mar. 18 — 6:30 p.m.  
Luther Memorial Church, 225 W. 10th St. [gannon.edu](http://gannon.edu).

**St. Patty's Rock & Punk Party**

Mar. 18 — 8 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.  
Bobbys Place, 1202 W. 18th St. [facebook.com/gimguyunderground](http://facebook.com/gimguyunderground).

**Broccoli Samurai, ELM and AudioTonic**

Mar. 18 — 10 p.m. to midnight  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

**Denny & Heather Acoustics**

Mar. 19 — 1 to 4 p.m.  
Arundel Cellars, 11727 E. Main Rd. [arundelcellars.com](http://arundelcellars.com).

**Trio Nova Mundi, Logan Series**

Mar. 20 — noon to 1 p.m.  
McGarvey Commons in Reed Union Building at Penn State Erie The Behrend College, 4701 College Dr. [psbehrend.psu.edu](http://psbehrend.psu.edu).

**Diva Jazz Orchestra**

Mar. 23 — 7:30 p.m.  
Louis C. Cole Auditorium in Memorial Hall at Edinboro University, 205 Meadville St. [events.edinboro.edu](http://events.edinboro.edu).

**Division Street Machine**

Mar. 24 — 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Downs, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](http://presqueisledowns.com).

**Formual 5**

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

**SAS Acoustics featuring Kayti Stadler**

Mar. 25 — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
The Ugly Tuna, 1010 Peninsula Dr. [facebook.com/SASAcousticDuo](http://facebook.com/SASAcousticDuo).

**Battle of The Bands**

Mar. 25 — 6 to 10 p.m.  
McCoy's Barrelhouse & Grill, 1013 State St. [humansocietyofnwpa.com](http://humansocietyofnwpa.com).

**Geek Army**

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

**Electric Kif, Eric Brewer & Friends and Zack Orr DJ Set Up**

Mar. 25 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

**Flora, This American Song and The Honest Mistakes**

Mar. 25 — 10 p.m. to midnight  
Bobbys Place, 1202 W. 18th St. [facebook.com/ThisAmericanSong](http://facebook.com/ThisAmericanSong).

**Mike & Marie**

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

**David Correy**

Mar. 27 — 7 to 11 p.m.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. [facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions](http://facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions).

**HelioTrio**

Mar. 31 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
Anchor In at Oasis Pub, 3122 W. Lake Rd. [jazzerie.com](http://jazzerie.com).

**DANCE**

**Mercyhurst Dance Department: Raw Edges**

Mar. 17 — 4:30 p.m. & Mar. 18 — 2 & 7 p.m. & Mar. 19 — 2 p.m.  
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](http://miac.mercyhurst.edu).

**The Fairy Tale Stories**

Mar. 25 — 2 & 5 p.m.  
General McLane Theatre, 11771 Edinboro Rd. [eriecvt.org](http://eriecvt.org).

**FOOD & DRINK**

**St. Paddy's Day**

Mar. 17 — 7 to 10 a.m. & 5 to 9 p.m.  
The Brewery at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. [brewerie.com](http://brewerie.com).

**St. Patrick's Day Luncheon and Dance**

Mar. 17 — 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

**Lenten Dinners**

Mar. 17, 24 — 5 to 7 p.m.  
St. Luke Parish, 421 E. 38th St. [slserie.org](http://slserie.org).

**St. Paddy's Day with Mulligan Live**

Mar. 17 — 8 to 11 p.m.  
Lavery Brewing Company, 128 W. 12th St. [facebook.com/laverybrewing](http://facebook.com/laverybrewing).

**14th Annual Maple Taste and Tour**

Mar. 18, 19 — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Various Locations, [pamaple.org](http://pamaple.org).

**UnCorked: Saturday Night Sangria**

Mar. 18 — 2 & 6 p.m.  
North East Area Chamber of Commerce, 44 W. Main St. [nechamber.org](http://nechamber.org).

**Celebrate the Green Wine Pairing Event**

Mar. 18 — 6:30 to 9 p.m.  
Presque Isle Wine Cellars, 9440 W. Main Rd. [facebook.com/piwine](http://facebook.com/piwine).

**Coffee & Consultation Day**

Mar. 24 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Radius CoWork Suite 907, 1001 State St. [radiusco.work](http://radiusco.work).

**Mind, Body, Beer**

Mar. 28 — 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.



## CALENDAR

Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St.  
facebook.com/ErieAleWorks.

### FILM

#### Extreme Weather

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.

#### Prehistoric Planet

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

#### 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.

#### Prisoners of the Lost Universe (1983)

Mar. 16 — 8 to 10 p.m.  
Erie Movie House, 3424  
W. Lake Rd. facebook.  
com/ErieMovieHouse.

#### The Cat O'Nine Tails (1971)

Mar. 17 — 8 to 10 p.m.  
Erie Movie House, 3424  
W. Lake Rd. facebook.  
com/ErieMovieHouse.

#### Women's History Film Fest

Mar. 19 — noon to 9 p.m.  
Mercyhurst University  
Mercy Heritage Room, 501 E.  
38th St. mercyhurst.edu.

#### Things to Come

Mar. 22 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State  
St. erieartmuseum.org.

#### Lumberjack (1944)

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

#### The Met: Live in HD Idomeneo

Mar. 25 — 12:55 p.m.  
Mary D'Angelo Performing  
Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St.  
miac.mercyhurst.edu.

#### National Theatre Live: Hedda Gabler

Mar. 26 — 12:55 p.m.  
Mary D'Angelo Performing  
Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St.  
miac.mercyhurst.edu.

#### Ben Hur

Mar. 26 — 1:30 p.m.  
H.O. Hirt Auditorium in the  
Blasco Memorial Library, 160  
E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

#### National Bird

Mar. 29 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State

St. erieartmuseum.org.

### VISUAL ARTS

#### Kids As Curators 2017

Ongoing through Mar. 19  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State  
St. erieartmuseum.org.

#### First Class Exhibit 2017

Ongoing through Mar. 19  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State  
St. erieartmuseum.org.

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

Ongoing through Mar. 24  
Mercyhurst University  
Cummings Gallery, 501 E. 38th  
St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

#### 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.

#### Nathan Sulecki Photographs

Ongoing through Apr. 18  
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th  
St. glassgrowersgallery.com.

#### 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.

#### Annual Gmitter Scholarship Exhibition

Mar. 20 through Apr. 1  
Bruce Gallery in Doucette  
Hall, 215 Meadville St.  
brucegallery.info.

#### 4th Annual Artist & Craftsman Gallery Show

Mar. 24 — 5 to 9 p.m. & Mar.  
25, 26 — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Women's Club of Erie, 259 W.  
6th St. eriewomansclub.com.

#### Sophomore Review

Mar. 27 through Mar. 31  
Mercyhurst University  
Cummings Gallery, 501 E. 38th  
St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

### THEATRE

#### The Luck of the Irish

Mar. 15 — noon & Mar. 18,  
25 — 5:30 p.m. & Mar. 26 —  
2:30 p.m. & Mar. 17 — 7 p.m.  
Station Dinner

Theatre, 4940 Peach St.  
canterburyfeast.com.

#### The Middle Ages

Mar. 17, 18, 24, 25, 31 & Apr.  
1 — 7:30 to 10 p.m. & Mar. 19,  
26 & Apr. 2 — 3 to 5:30 p.m.  
All an Act Theatre, 652 W.  
17th St. allanact.net.

#### Cinderella

Mar. 23 — 7:30 p.m.  
Warner Theatre, 811 State  
St. erieevents.com.

#### Noises Off

Mar. 24, 25, 30, 31 & Apr.  
1, 5, 6, 7, 8 — 7:30 p.m.  
& Apr. 2, 9 — 2 p.m.  
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10  
St. erieplayhouse.org.

#### Constellations

Mar. 24, 25, 31 & Apr.  
1, 7, 8 — 8 p.m.  
Dramashop on 2nd Floor  
of Renaissance Centre, 1001  
State St. dramashop.org.

#### Sesame Street Live "Make a New Friend"

Mar. 28 — 6:30 p.m. & Mar.  
29 — 10:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.  
Warner Theatre, 811 State  
St. erieevents.com.

### COMMUNITY

#### Qi Gong: Wellness Wednesdays

Mar. 15, 22, 29 — 1 to 2 p.m.  
Lincoln Community  
Center, 1255 Manchester  
Rd. erielibrary.org.

#### Messy Church

Mar. 15 — 5 to 6:30 p.m.  
Stone United Methodist  
Church, 956 S. Main  
St. stoneumc.org.

#### Oriental Painting

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

#### 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.

#### Cardio Fit and Weight Lifting Class

Mar. 16, 23, 30 & Apr.  
6 — 9:30 a.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach  
St. lifeworkserie.org.

#### Adult Craft Time

Mar. 16 — 10 to 11 a.m.  
Millcreek Branch Library,  
2088 Interchange Rd.  
erielibrary.org.

#### Recognition and Management of Dementia

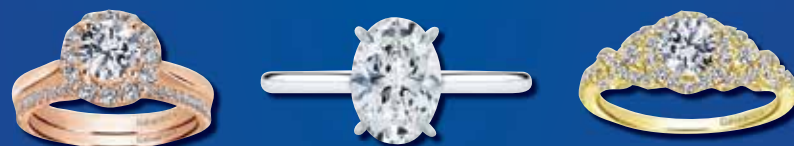
Mar. 16 — 12:30 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach  
St. lifeworkserie.org.

#### A History of the

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THURS 03/16

PAINT & ROCK

FRI 03/17

DIRTY PICKLES

ST. PAT'S BASH

SAT 03/18

BROCCOLI SAMURAI

+ ELM

[DOWNSTAIRS]

AUDIOTONIC

[UPSTAIRS]

FRI 03/24

FORMULA 5

SAT 03/25

ELECTRIC KIF

+ ERIC BREWER & FRIENDS

[DOWNSTAIRS]

ZACK ORR DJ SET

[UPSTAIRS]

THURS 03/30

PAINT & ROCK

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to the event. – Tracy Geibel

Noon to 8 p.m. on Friday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday // Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier // Adults \$7, under age 10 free // [eriehideshow.com](http://eriehideshow.com)

**Friday, March 24**

**Dramashop's Infinite Multiverse of Love**

It's a cast of two, with endless possibilities. From the contemporary



British playwright Nick Payne comes *Constellations*. The play debuted on Broadway in January of 2015, originally starring Ruth Wilson and Jake Gyllenhaal.

It's essentially a love story, with

some quantum multiverse theory thrown in.

The story exists in many parallel timelines. We follow the characters Marianne and Roland, played by Alexandra Holbrook and JJ Hodges, as they meet and fall in love. It's a narrative stitched together from the fragments of time, as each permutation of the characters experience their reality a different way. The conceit of the play, known as the Many-Worlds Interpretation, weaves a creative thread, tracing the concurrent, diverging lives of the same two people. It's an infinitely branching tree, where anything and everything occurs.

Director Zach Flock described the story, explaining that "the same moment plays out five different ways in the multiverse. So over the course of the play, you see two characters meet and start a relationship, or not. You see them happy, and not. You see many of the possible paths their lives could go down."

It's a fresh concept that is easier to wrap your head around than quantum mechanics. Flock admitted that "once you accept that it's not one definitive story, it's very easy to understand and enjoy."

The challenging script is known as a "two-hander," with a cast of only – you guessed it – two. With such a heavy responsibility on the actors,

Flock knows the production is in good hands, affirming that "Alex and J.J. bring a lot of truth to the roles. They really embody the characters, so it feels real. It doesn't feel 'put on.' In the lighter, comedic moments, and the heavier dramatic moments, they bring a sincerity to the roles that make it easy to relate to and feel for the characters."

The play will be presented without an intermission, as far as this timeline is concerned. – Nick Warren

8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, March 24, 25, 31, April 1, 7, and 8 // Dramashop, Renaissance Centre, 2nd Floor, 1001 State St. // \$5 opening weekend, \$12 online, \$15 at the door (\$5 with student ID) // [dramashop.org](http://dramashop.org)

**Saturday, March 25**

**Electric Kif Brings a New Single to Erie**

"Cosmic funk," an out-there blend of rock, soul, and jazz, will descend upon Erie through the vehicle of Miami natives Electric Kif on March 25 at the Kings Rook Club. "Kif" means "any agent [or music] capable of producing a euphoric condition." Electric Kif's latest single, "Little Louie," is an easygoing, blissed-out funk collage of a song with syrupy bass and keys, and an arching guitar riff. Organ and



ELECTRIC KIF

keys lend a distinctly vintage vibe to the superbly mellow tune.

"'Little Louie' represents the spirit of the Kif. It's one of the groovier songs on the record and the centerpiece of the album's concept and storyline," explains guitarist Eric Escances. "'Little Louie' was the song that actually gave us the creative momentum. It was the first song that we developed together that led us to writing the rest of the album," keyboardist Jason Matthews adds.

In fact, despite the "electric" nature of the band, both in sound and energy level, their tunes have a singularly laid-back sentiment, perhaps due to the fact that the band members are from all over the world, and thus unite their backgrounds. The eclecticism of the group adds a distinct flavor and feeling that should be seen and heard in person to be fully understood.

The band's latest EP, *Heist*, was released this year. Tracks like "Little Louie" and the cheekier, bouncier

**English Language**

Mar. 16 — 1 to 3 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

**Library Explorers**

Mar. 16, 21, 30 — 4 to 4:45 p.m.  
Children's Storytime Room at Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

**Therapeutic Yoga**

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

**American Short Stories**

Mar. 16, 23 — 4 to 6 p.m.  
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](http://jeserie.org).

**New Horizons Music Project: Strings and Folk**

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

**Leadership Christian Academy Spring Open House**

Mar. 16 — 4 to 7 p.m.  
Leadership Christian Academy, 5900 Sterrettania Rd. [facebook.com/Leadership](http://facebook.com/Leadership)

Christian Academy.

**Paint and Rock**

Mar. 16 — 8 to 10 p.m.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](http://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

**Joe McCallion House Select Tournament**

Mar. 17, 18, 19  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieyouthhockey.com](http://erieyouthhockey.com).

**Tai Chi**

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

**Theatreworks USA presents Pete the Cat**

Mar. 17 — 10 a.m.  
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

**Billy Gardell**

Mar. 17, 18 — 6:45 & 9:30 p.m. & Mar. 19 — 6:30 p.m.  
Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club, 1402 State St. [jrslastlaugh.net](http://jrslastlaugh.net).

**Erie Bluffs after Dark**

Mar. 17 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Erie Bluffs State Park, 11122 W. Lake Rd. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

**EPIC Volleyball Tournament**

Mar. 18 & Apr. 1, 8, 22 — 8:30 a.m.  
Fort LeBouf High School, 931 North High St. [eriesportscommission.com](http://eriesportscommission.com).

**Professional Development Teachers Workshop: Go Teach GPS101**

Mar. 18 — 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

**Winter Stroll in the Park: Gas Well Trail**

Mar. 18 — 10 to 11:30 a.m.  
Rotary Pavilion in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

**Love, Light & Healing Psychic Fair**

Mar. 18 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Ambassador Banquet & Conference Center, 7794 Peach St. [facebook.com/events/1278319498877417](http://facebook.com/events/1278319498877417).

**Mindfulness and Meditation Teacher Training**

Mar. 18 & Apr. 1, 22 —

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Plasha Yoga Studio, 3330 W. 26th St. [plashayoga.com](http://plashayoga.com).

**International Night 2017: Snapshot of the World**

Mar. 18 — 6 p.m.  
Gannon University Hammermill Center, 620 Peach St. [gannontickets.universitytickets.com](http://gannontickets.universitytickets.com).

**Erie Otters vs. Guelph**

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

**World Championship Boxing**

Mar. 18 — 7 p.m.  
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

**Jedi Academy**

Mar. 19 — 10 a.m. to noon  
Experience Children's Museum, 420 French St. [eriechildrensmuseum.org](http://eriechildrensmuseum.org).

**Erie BayHawks vs. Westchester**

Mar. 19 — 2 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

**Tai Chi**

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

**Windy Days: Little Leaves Program**

Mar. 20 — 10 a.m. to noon  
LEAF Education Center, 1501 W. 6th St. [leaferie.org](http://leaferie.org).

**Starting a Business 101**

Mar. 20 — 1 to 2 p.m. & 4 to 5 p.m.  
Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Rd. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

**Planetarium Show: Countdown to Easter: Follow the Moon**

Mar. 20 — 7 to 9 p.m.  
Cooper Science Center at Edinboro University, 230 Scotland Rd. [events.edinboro.edu](http://events.edinboro.edu).

**Fit for Life Fitness Class**

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

**Our Final Goodbye: Behind the Scenes Tour**

Mar. 21 — 1 p.m.  
Burton Funeral Home and

Crematory, 602 W. 10th St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

**Health, Human and Public Services Career & Graduate School Expo**

Mar. 21 — 1 to 4 p.m.  
Multipurpose Room in Frank G. Pogue Student Center at Edinboro University, 405 Scotland Rd. [events.edinboro.edu](http://events.edinboro.edu).

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

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

**Presque Isle History Series: How the Peninsula Became a State Park**

Mar. 21 — 6 to 7 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

**Seed Starting**

Mar. 21 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
Edinboro Branch Library, 413 W. Plum St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

**Women's History Month: Life After Edinboro as a Veterinarian**

Mar. 21 — 7 p.m.

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## CALENDAR

“See You at the Corner,” with a sunshine-filled blend of rolling drums, electronic squeaks, and squeals, present an excellent introduction to what they’ll present on the 25th. Eric Brewer and Friends will be supporting Electric Kif. — Miriam Lamey

10 p.m. // Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. // 456.6439

**Saturday, March 25**

### Pop, Rock, Indie Mix-up at Bobby’s Place

One of Erie’s most beloved local music venues, Bobby’s Place, invites us all again to enjoy the hometown sounds of Flora, This American Song, and The Honest Mistakes.

Fresh off the success of their performances at Arts and Drafts, Flora and The Honest Mistakes are two bands you don’t want to miss — and This American Song, Bobby’s Place regulars, never disappoint.

This lineup is as original as the people behind the instruments. Flora’s fresh sound combines the charming vocals we’ve come to love from McKenzie Sprague (Optimistic Apocalypse) and new energetic vibes from a full band. The Honest Mistakes (Joylene Daliea and Chris Ehrich) will



THE HONEST MISTAKES

simply be “playing our own music, as best as we can. We like it. Hope you do, too.” Originally from Baltimore, they bring powerful and happy tunes to Erie that we can’t get enough of. This American Song has been rocking their passionate sound and original lyrics in Erie since they got together in 2012. They have released several digital albums and LPs, recently added a second horn player to their lineup, and continue to rock the house at every show. Everyone is welcome at Bobby’s Place. — Ella Julian

10 p.m. to midnight // 1202 W. 18th St. // 455.9840

Alumni House at Edinboro University, 210 Meadville St. [events.edinboro.edu](http://events.edinboro.edu).

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

**Five Wishes Advance Directive Planning: Part 1**  
Mar. 22 — 1 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

**Colorful Birch Trees Canvas Class**  
Mar. 22 — 6 to 8 p.m.  
Claytopia, 924 W. Erie Plaza Dr. [heathercash.com](http://heathercash.com).

**Fairy Lanterns**  
Mar. 22 — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. [asburywoods.org](http://asburywoods.org).

**Speaker Series Presents Bree Newsome, ‘Tearing Hatred from the Sky’**  
Mar. 22 — 7:30 to 9 p.m.  
McGarvey Commons at Penn State Erie The Behrend College, 4701 College Dr. [psbehrend.psu.edu](http://psbehrend.psu.edu).

**Social Equality Distinguished**

**Professional Lecture Series**  
Mar. 23 — 12:30 p.m.

Edinboro University  
Frank G. Pogue Student Center, 405 Scotland Rd. [events.edinboro.edu](http://events.edinboro.edu).

**Learn Javascript with Paul Sherer**  
Mar. 23 — 5 to 8 p.m.

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

**Literary Festival: Dylan Fest**  
Mar. 23 — 5:30 p.m.

Mercyhurst University  
Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](http://mercyhurst.edu).

**Music of the World, A Creative Arts Residency**

Mar. 23, 30 & Apr. 6, 13, 20, 27 & May 4 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

**Romero Award Presentation and Lecture**  
Mar. 23 — 7 p.m.

Mercyhurst University  
Mercy Heritage Room, 501 E. 38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](http://mercyhurst.edu).

**Pauly Shore**

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

**Frogs**

Mar. 23 — 7 to 8 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

**Home & Garden Expo**

Mar. 24 — noon to 8 p.m. & Mar. 25 — 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. & Mar. 26 — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

**Is the Bible Infallible?**

Mar. 24 — 1 p.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

**Trivia Night**

Mar. 24 — 6:30 p.m.  
Arundel Cellars, 11727 E. Main Rd. [arundelcellars.com](http://arundelcellars.com).

**Erie BayHawks vs. Raptors**

Mar. 24, 25 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

**Dioceses of Erie Men’s Conference**

Mar. 25 — 8 a.m.  
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

**Gull Point Clean-Up**

Mar. 25 — 9 a.m. to noon  
Gull Point Trailhead in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula



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Millcreek Brewing Co.  
Pineapple Eddie Southern Bistro  
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Summerhouse Cafe  
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## There's More Here Than Green Beer

Serving up your St. Patty's weekend



By: **Matt Swanseger**

In his writings about the Prohibition Era, local author John G. Carney remarked, "About the only dry thing in Erie was the inside of a light bulb."

The more things change, the more things stay the same – especially come St. Patrick's Day. Erie "boasts" approximately 12 bars per 10,000 people, among the highest ratios in the country. Many of them will be turning their lights on as early as 7 a.m., so revelers will have plenty of time to get their fill before the filaments flicker out. (Irish or not, don't press your luck, or the only things you'll be kissing are: a) the cement and/or b) the hood of a police cruiser.)

Public intoxication not entertainment enough? Here are some venues that might wheedle a jig out of you.

### LAVERY BREWING COMPANY (128 W. 12TH ST., UNIT 101)

The Laverys are very invested in their heritage, drawing inspiration

for their handcrafted ales and lagers from Irish folklore (e.g., Dulachan IPA, named after a headless Irish goblin) and culture (e.g., La Bealtine American Wheat, named after the spring planting festivals of Ireland and Scotland). Patrons will be transported even closer to the Emerald Isle as The Mulligans fill the air with traditional Irish and pub songs from 8 to 11 p.m. The trio has played everything from preschools to wakes and is known to put on a rollicking show.

### THE BREWERIE AT UNION STATION (123 W. 14TH ST.)

The Brewerrie will cater to both early birds and night owls with its St. Patty's Day celebration. Free music (with The Mulligans) and free breakfast (with the Rocket 101 Morning Crew) highlight the morning session (7 to 10 a.m.). Neo-Celtic folk group Bangerz will play two evening sets, starting at 5 p.m. The Veterans Memorial Pipes and Drums will perform during the intermission at

7 p.m. (Remember: If you have to blame the bagpipes for your headache, you're probably already hung over).

### MOLLY BRANNIGAN'S (506 STATE ST.) & U PICK 6 PUBLIC HOUSE (4575 W. RIDGE RD.)

You're not going to escape the hooligans no matter where you go, so you might as well embrace a proper bunch of them. The Celtic Hooligans enlist the penny whistle, bodhrán (drum), fiddle, accordion, banjo, and guitar in recreating the authentic Irish sound that grandfathered our own American folk and bluegrass traditions. Expect to hear instrumentals and songs about (among other things) whiskey. Both the Molly's (at 1 p.m.) and Public House (at 7:30 p.m.) gigs promise to be straight-up enjoyable.

### THE KINGS ROOK CLUB (1921 PEACH ST.)

Beloved local rockabilly trio Matty B & The Dirty Pickles will take the stage from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. at the Rook. Consisting of guitarist Matty B, drummer Dig-It Dave, and bassist Ben Jammin', the combo stews together early rock n' roll and punk, funk, blues, and jazz influences into energetic sets. Chances are that Sakura Taco Island, purveyors of culinary gold, will have something appropriately-themed cooked up for the holiday.

### BOBBY'S PLACE (1202 W. 18TH ST.)

If you'd rather your St. Patty's Day be served black, Bobby's Bash has you covered. Prepare to be punished with some of the heaviest metal the area has to offer, including Brotherhood

of the Jam (9 to 10 p.m.), Requiem for Oblivion (10:15 to 11:15 p.m.), Obelus (11:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.), and Slaughter

## Public intoxication not entertainment enough? Here are some venues that might wheedle a jig out of you.

in the Meridian (12:45 to 1:45 a.m.).

Saturday's St. Patty's Day Rock & Punk Party will brighten the tonal palette somewhat, with No Person (surf/ska punk), The Cartwrights (alt-rock), JC Nickles (alt-rock/punk), Til the End (90s-style aggressive punk), and goo (experimental punk/lo-fi) splitting the bill – but none of yours (no cover – again, Bobby's Place seems especially averse to green).

### "THE LOCAL" AT DARCY'S GRUB & PUB (3746 W. 12TH ST.)

Feeling like a flogged Molly or a drop-kicked Murphy in the wake of St. Patrick's Day? Then you'll feel a certain kinship with the Tradesmen, a raucous Celtic punk sextet who describe themselves as "a drinking band with a working problem." No less active locally are the Mulligans, who return for more she-nanigans Saturday.

Matt Swanseger can be reached at [mswanseger@eriereader.com](mailto:mswanseger@eriereader.com). You can follow him on Twitter @SwazzySwagga.

*Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.*

#### Mercyhurst North East Open House

Mar. 25 — 10 a.m. to noon

Mercyhurst North East Ridge Health & Safety Building, 16 W. Division St. [northeast.mercyhurst.edu](http://northeast.mercyhurst.edu).

#### Spring Celebration

Mar. 25 — 11 a.m. to noon

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

#### Brian Awareness Day at the Millcreek Mall

Mar. 25 — 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Millcreek Mall, 5800 Peach

*St. events.edinboro.edu.*

#### Frozen Fun Day

Mar. 25 — 1 to 4 p.m.

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

#### 8th Annual Funny Fundraiser

Mar. 25 — 6:30 p.m.

#### Perry Hi-Way Hose Company, 8281 Oliver Rd. [perryhiway.org](http://perryhiway.org). Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

Mar. 26 — 10 a.m. to noon

Experience Children's Museum, 420 French St. [eriechildrensmuseum.org](http://eriechildrensmuseum.org).

#### Princess Ball

Mar. 26 — 3 p.m.

Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center, 7794 Peach St. [erieplayhouse.org](http://erieplayhouse.org).

#### Venous Insufficiency

Mar. 27 — 10:30 a.m.

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

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

Mar. 27 — 4:15 to 5 p.m.

Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Rd. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

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

Mar. 27 — 4:15 to 5 p.m.

Lincoln Community Center, 1255

*Manchester Rd. erielibrary.org.*

#### Presque Isle History Series: Aerial View

Mar. 28 — 6 to 7 p.m.

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

#### Asset Protection and Long-Term Care Issues

Mar. 28 — 6:30 p.m.

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

#### Square Foot Gardening

Mar. 28 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

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

#### Planetarium Show: Eclipse Mania

Mar. 28 — 7 to 9 p.m.

Cooper Science Center at Edinboro University, 230 Scotland Rd. [events.edinboro.edu](http://events.edinboro.edu).

#### Five Wishes Advance Directive Planning: Part 2

Mar. 29 — 1 p.m.

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

## Hidden Messages of the Best and Deepest Kind

Don't miss what Sergei Isupov has to say.



By: **Mary Birdsong**

The ceramic pieces in Sergei Isupov's exhibit *Hidden Message*, in the main gallery of the Erie Art Museum until April 2, don't give up their secrets very easily, if at all. The pieces range from small and intimate to imposingly monumental; their allusions seemingly straightforward at times and, upon closer inspection, feverishly mysterious. In general, an unnerving disjointedness prevails.

The raised arms of the impressively large and muscular bronze-colored torso in "Da Hem, Hem Da" positioned at the entrance to the exhibit send a clear signal that one is about to enter a different world, one that will take the viewer on an unexpected journey through cypher and ambiguity.

"Da Hem" and "Directions" nearby are forcefully vertical human forms creating a stern authoritarian presence. Their placement suggests Isupov plans to overwhelm us with bulk, but he doesn't really need size to challenge our perceptions of the human condition. His works right around the corner do the same with layered stories, none of which are spoken in complete sentences.

Slippery in intent and meaning, his smaller slab-built pieces defy conventional physiology. Animal heads adorn human-like bodies, two humanoids share a body, and animals and humans are joined

by amorphous shapes representing the activities going on between them. In most cases here, nothing can be taken at face value.

"Speech of the Wild Animal," for example, is an enigma. Human legs with extended thighs emerge horizontally from a bear's torso (with its own blue legs). Balanced on the human's ankles is a small female figure garbed in a red and blue dress, white pinafore and white bows in her hair. Perched on top of the thighs is a flattened human head. On the front, a man runs across the face. On the back, a man and women float, coiled into one another. Rather than feet, the woman's legs end in a fish tail. On both sides of the thighs, large painted red arms reach down toward the knees. There are multiple stories here, with layer upon layer of meaning.

Isupov's mastery of clay is unmistakably evident in all of

his works, but more so in those where he stretches the material to its limit, creating fantastical shapes appearing to defy gravity. In "Spark," a small work in which a bride and groom fly above their base, their legs extend six inches out, a technical feat marking him a master builder. That same sense of technical daring can be seen in "Full Moon," where two women's bodies emerge from a man's ripped-open chest, their legs pointing up and down, completely free of supports. As in all his works, here the technical serves the suggestion of manifold stories emerging from one figure, as if his dreams or inner self are ripping their way out of his ordinariness.

Two of his smaller, simpler works, "Sauna" and "Bathing Day," are brief respites for the mind, but still contain noteworthy and beautiful details. In both, two women sit on a bench, the warming stones

across from them glowing and steaming. They differ though, in that in "Sauna," the women seem happy in one another's company and content to pass the time. In "Bathing Day," there is more urgency and sorrowfulness in one woman's face.

The Russia-born Isupov seems to have authoritarianism on his mind quite often. The giant of "Direction" stares down at the viewer with a chilling sternness, and the suggestion of external control is clear in "Dates on Feather Pillow" and "Disrobe," where hands, much larger than the bodies in the works, reach toward the figures to grasp or point. All insinuate an uncomfortable and unwelcome control over humanity, which seems perhaps even more disconcerting in these unsettled times.

Isupov plays with androgyny, dreams, demons, and more. His works can evoke fear, unease, and distress. He gets to

An installation view (top right) showcases the wide variety in Isupov's work. Rows of detailed three dimensional pieces line the Erie Art Museum. "Da Hem, Hem Da" (bottom right) and "Directions" provide a wondrously ominous greeting to gallery visitors. "Speech of the Wild Animal," a colorful piece in porcelain, slip, and glaze offers rich details from every point of view.

the heart of humanity's darkest and most hidden moments. He shows us how while there can be one life, it has many stories. He exposes all the things we carry inside us that no one sees, how we slip back and forth between different kinds of creatures, and how the complexities of life can offer richness but at the same time sorrow and apprehension.

Amid this apparent melancholy, though, is the proposal that once we let those demons out into the light of day, we may be better able to face them, which conjures an optimistic radiance.

So while Isupov's works ask many questions and provide very few answers, it is deeply human, compelling, and satisfying to experience. Don't miss this show.

Mary Birdsong can be contacted at [mBirdsong@ErieReader.com](mailto:mBirdsong@ErieReader.com), and you can follow her on Twitter @[Mary\\_Birdsong](https://twitter.com/Mary_Birdsong).



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS



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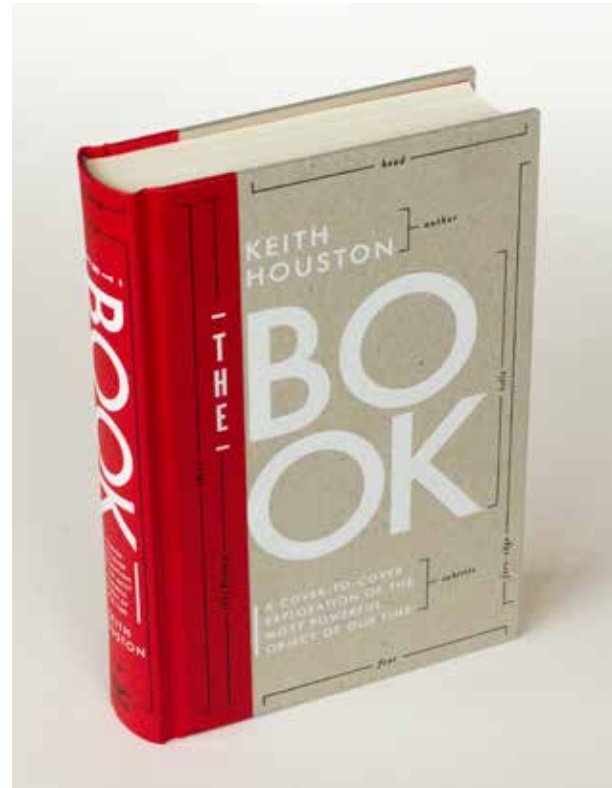
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## BOOK REVIEW

### A Review of *The Book: A Cover-to-Cover Exploration of the Most Powerful Object of Our Time*

Everything you didn't know about the "bookness" of books



Kells; and the opening of the \*Diamond Sutra, the earliest dated, printed book in human history.

Much as I'd like to take credit for already knowing the terms I tossed around in the preceding paragraph, I can't, but Keith Houston is as fine a teacher as he is a writer. The cover of \*The Book constitutes his first lesson, each element labeled so the reader knows immediately what the "hinge" is, as well as the "foot," the "fore-edge," and the "head-cap." His elegant, transparent, witty style makes clear what in less-skilled hands would

By: John Repp

Anyone who cares about books – what they are more than what a particular volume might contain – will relish this book. Incorporating history, detective work, mechanical engineering, archeology, chemistry, animal husbandry, monasticism, metalsmithing, and so many other subjects that listing them would fill this page, Keith Houston has composed a love poem to both "the quiet apex predator that won out over clay tablets, papyrus scrolls, and wax writing boards" and to those earlier forms as well.

This may be the most beautifully designed book I've ever held in my hand. Printed on 81-pound paper with a finish like fine leather, trimmed into octavo quires, and double-cord sewn, it falls open to pages featuring red capitals and dingbats and a sturdy Jenson font derived from 15th-century type-cuts in turn derived from ancient Roman lettering. Full-color illustrations display such riches as a papyrus fragment from a 4th-century copy of \*The Iliad; schematics and photographs of various printing presses; German and Chinese woodcuts; a page from the \*Book of

bewilder and frustrate. He makes each arcane fact, each accident of history, each dead-end or triumph of bookmaking technology exactly as marvelous as it always has been.

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*The Book*, by Keith Houston, W.W. Norton & Co., 2016, 428pp., \$29.95

John Repp grew up near the Palace Depression in Vineland, New Jersey. He has taught writing at Edinboro University since 1991.

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**Thundercat**  
Drunk  
Brainfeeder

★★★★★

Once again bass virtuoso Thundercat (Stephen Bruner) swerves and veers over stylistic lane lines, and once again it is the listener who stands the greater chance of being arrested. Eclectic and beautiful (if sporadic), Bruner's third album jumps from Zappa-esque quirkiness ("Captain Stupido") to daydreamy pop ("Bus In The Streets") to spaced-out arcade lounge ("Tokyo") with apparent ease. The record unfolds in the stream-of-consciousness fashion of someone freshly buzzed, introducing a host of musical ideas that aren't always fully fleshed out, characteristic of vignettes more than songs. Nonetheless, the sci-fi inflected electro-funk of "Friend Zone" and the heavily-under-the-Isley-Brothers-influence "Them Changes" make for great singles candidates. Of course, it's not a party unless Kenny Loggins and Michael McDonald show up halfway through ("Show You The Way"). Tying it all together, though, is the tandem of Thundercat's six-string bass and multilayered vocal harmonies, brilliantly expressive and effective without much need for embellishment ("Lava Lamp"). Fans of broad-minded R&B are highly encouraged to take *Drunk* for a drive.  
– Matt Swanseger



**King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard**  
Flying Microtonal Banana  
ATO Records

★★★★★

In an intriguing sonic experiment, King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard have gone microtonal. Using modified instruments, the Australian septet have decided to venture onto a different harmonic path. Foregoing the traditional western 12-note series (12-tet), the band plays a variety of stringed instruments in 24-tet tuning. This gives them quarter tones, as opposed to semitones (the note divisions commonly associated with guitar frets or piano keys). The effect is an ever-present tension. Like warbly magnetic tape vibrato or an out-of-tune string, it sounds off-putting, though difficult to place. The band's psychedelic stoner grooves are still just as potent, however. Beginning with the uptempo "Rattlesnake" the band gives fans a taste of last year's *Nonagon Infinity* glory. In subsequent tracks, the rhythm shifts down into a hypnotic swirl of smokey riffs. The Middle Eastern flair of the microtonal journey adds distinction to the band's pulsating sound. The hornlike blare of the zurna in "Billabong Valley" is something to behold. Not unlike the album cover's imagery, the tracks contained herein are a snake-charming blacklight fever dream.  
– Nick Warren



**Vagabon**  
Infinite Worlds  
Father/Daughter Records

★★★★★

The unfiltered emotion let out by singer Laetitia Tamko is undeniable and immediately effective. With a vocal tone somewhere between Hop Along and Frankie Cosmos, Tamko finds a perfect resonance with listeners, while remaining decidedly imperfect. It's this honesty shining through that makes Vagabon rise above typical lo-fi indie rock offerings. Tamko is a multi-instrumentalist, playing nearly every note of *Infinite Worlds*. The remarkable result is a debut album that has the unbridled energy of a full band. That energy starts off audibly fierce in the first half of the album. "Mal à L'aise" serves as a dreamy synth-driven intermission against a quiet conversational French backdrop. The fuzzy, rough edges continue through "100 Years," while the last three songs find a much more subdued tone. The plucked, meditative reverence of the final section shows her self-reflective songwriting in a different light that's just as compelling as the first half. The songs grapple with moving on, both mentally and physically, from love and memories. It's a personal record, full of deceptively profound substance.  
– Nick Warren



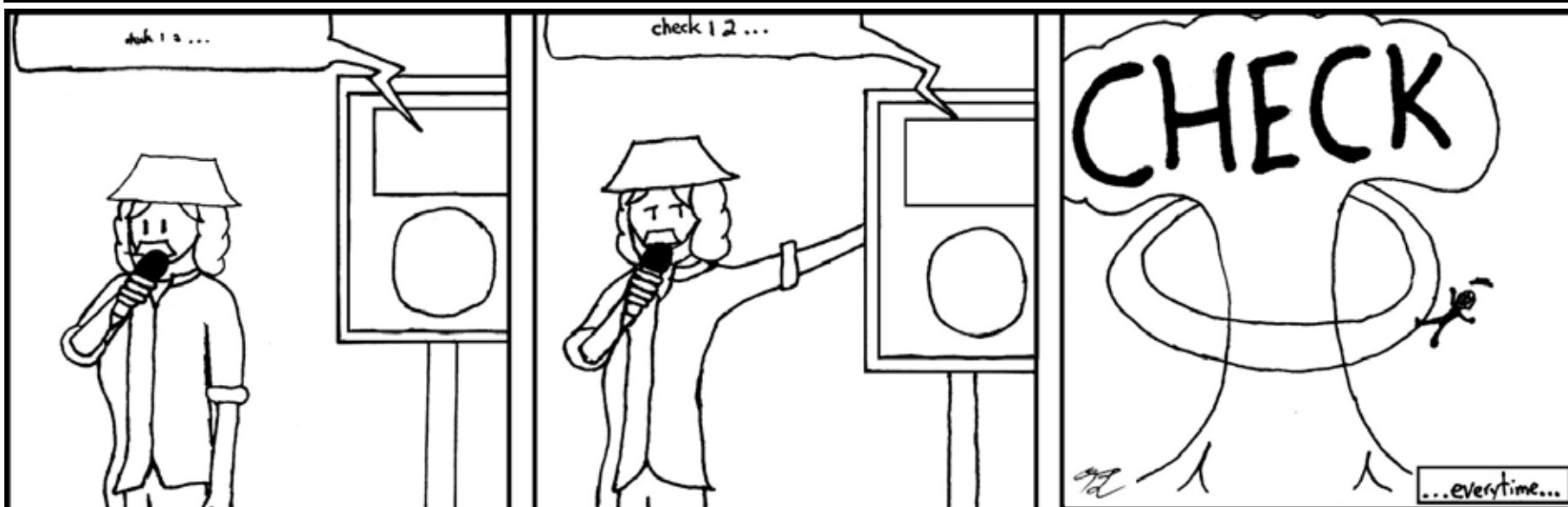
**Sampha**  
Process  
Young Turks

★★★★★

A gorgeous work rife with emotional accessibility, *Process* is one of the most remarkable debut albums in recent memory. That isn't to say that British rhythm and blues artist Sampha Sisay has come out of nowhere. Far from it actually, as his resume includes vocal appearances on works by Beyoncé, Solange, The XX, Kanye West, and Drake. Going into the album, his atmospheric vocal ability was unquestioned, though he was relatively unknown in terms of songwriting. *Process* readily puts to bed any aptitude concerns. There are radio-ready tracks like "Blood On Me," full of intrigue both haunting and danceable. Then you have supremely tender ballads like "(No One Knows Me) Like the Piano," with heartbreakingly beautiful hooks. There's no shortage of sonic variety, with thick layers of brilliant production gracing every track. Lyrically, Sampha deals directly with the loss of his parents. He lost his father in 1998, while his mother passed away only last year, both from cancer. The journey of his grief unfolds, the open vein of poetic sentiment ultimately helping to build an R&B masterpiece.  
– Nick Warren



**Tommy in Toon — by Tommy Link**



# Erie Faces Erie

**Tom Weber:**

filmmaker

**Ed Bernik**

photographer

*"To me, the goal of art isn't to make a ton of money. It's to touch people here in the heart."*

**Ed Bernik:** I'm going to start with the big question. Why do you make films?

**Tom Weber:** Why does any artist make art? My friend David Greenberger says, "You're making something that nobody asks you to make." I make films because it involves writing and sound and images and a lot of different sensory input – and is a really great way of telling a story. Of course, you've got to find the story, and in documentary, that's the hard part.

**EB:** The term documentary film encompasses a lot of sub-genres. You could be historical, investigative, political. Sometimes it cloaks commercial agendas, but where do you focus your efforts in documentary filmmaking?

**TW:** Growing up, it was kind of a golden age of documentary making because public broadcasting was new. At the time, public broadcasting had a lot of money to throw into documentaries, so you had all of these great documentary filmmakers running around. D.A. Pennebaker, who made the Bob Dylan documentary, *Don't Look Back*. The Maysles Brothers, who made *Grey Gardens* and *Salesman* and *Primary* and *Gimme Shelter*. I always aspired to make documentaries as a young person – as a teenager, when I was very into journalism and writing and photographing. When I got a summer job at the *Times-News*, I was looking for a job as a photographer, but they didn't have any. They had an opening for a reporter, so I became a reporter.

**EB:** You tend to focus on what I'm going to call more of the underground arts. Are you doing it because of an anthropological reason, or is it to preserve the times?

**TW:** My grad school research methods classes were all in anthropology, ethnomusicology, cultural anthropology. I was very much trained in this unobtrusive observational style of doing research. I did my doctoral thesis about reggae music as a case study of the record industry. In music we used to have all these little regional scenes around. If you'd go to New Jersey, the bands would sound different from if you'd go to Chicago, and California sounded different, and Texas had their own sound. I just always thought, "Let's shine the media spotlight on the artists that aren't getting national recognition."

I felt the kind of stories that I wanted to tell were in places like ours, and places like Buffalo or Detroit, or the cities around here that are kind of just bigger versions of the same thing.

**EB:** I know you're friends with Peter Case, who's a former Plimsouls guitarist. I saw a little clip on him where he talks about the freedom of playing solo. Do you embrace this same idea in your filmmaking?

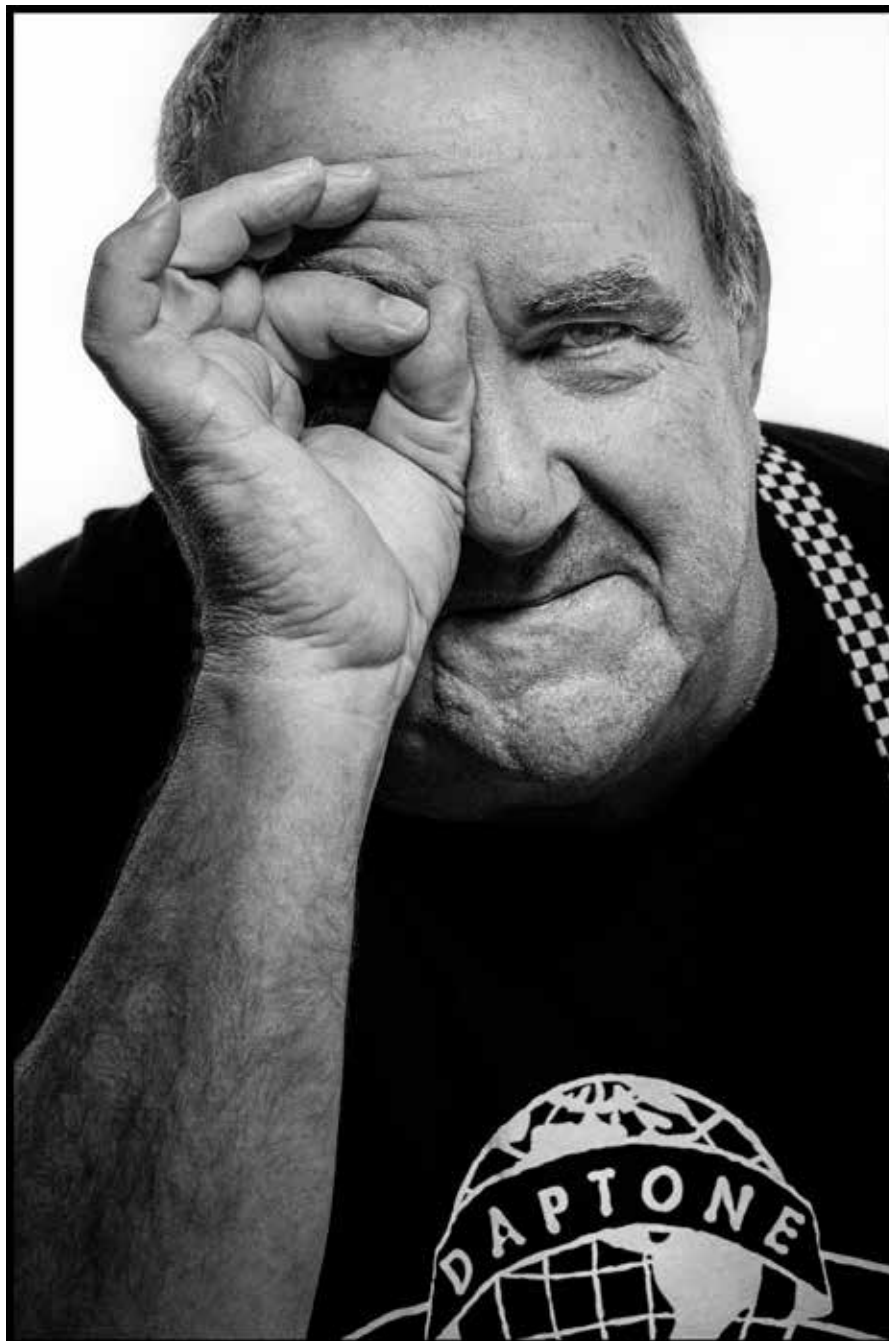
**TW:** My first intensive filmmaking experience was traveling around the country with Peter Case and Dave Alvin and Mary Gauthier and Chris Smither and all these wonderful solo artists who I made *Troubadour Blues* about.

I think there's something really liberating in being a one-man band. You can really put a personal vision on the screen. I do everything myself from having the idea to making the arrangements to driving wherever I have to go or flying wherever I have to go to bring the footage back. It's a case of distilling narrative themes or narrative points out of the conversations I had with the people who were actually doing it, then structuring a film around that.

[Peter Case] is someone I take a lot of inspiration from, because here's a guy who was a misfit in high school, and he dropped out and went to the West Coast and was a teenaged street musician. Peter's been doing that for a long time, pushing 50 years at this point. To me, the goal of art isn't to make a ton of money. It's to touch people here in the heart. That's what I'm all about or try to be.

**EB:** You have a Ph.D. from Bowling Green State in globalization and electronic media. How does that level of education help you in your personal filmmaking?

**TW:** My Ph.D. experience was one of the greatest experiences of my life. It was really painful wrenching a 375-page doctoral thesis out of myself. Critical thinking skills are the best job skills of all, because you can evaluate something based on evidence and make a decision



about it. It's sad that we're not teaching that in school anymore.

**EB:** Is there anything you would tell a prospective young filmmaker? What would you give them as a laundry list to pursue film as a career?

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I think there's something really liberating in being a one-man band. You can really put a personal vision on the screen.

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**TW:** I think what they need is to watch a lot of movies. Ninety percent of film study classes use *Citizen Kane* as the final exam. When I was teaching a film study class, I thought, what's a contemporary film that has the heft of *Citizen*

*Kane*? Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing*, which I think of as Lee's *Citizen Kane*, because he did it when he was 27 years old. It's a brilliant film and nothing he's done since then has really lived up to that level.

As a young filmmaker, if you make *Citizen Kane* as your first movie, put it in the drawer and forget about it for 20 years. Become successful and then bring it out. If your first thing out of the gate is a masterpiece, what do you do to follow it? I think about developing writing skills, thinking skills, and having a sense of history. If you're a young person who has any artistic aspirations at all, you've got to find your own voice. I think that's the most important thing in arts. That willingness to experiment, but also the willingness of the audience to embrace experimentation.

Tom Weber: [tomweberfilms.com](http://tomweberfilms.com)

Ed Bernik: [bernikphotography.com](http://bernikphotography.com)





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