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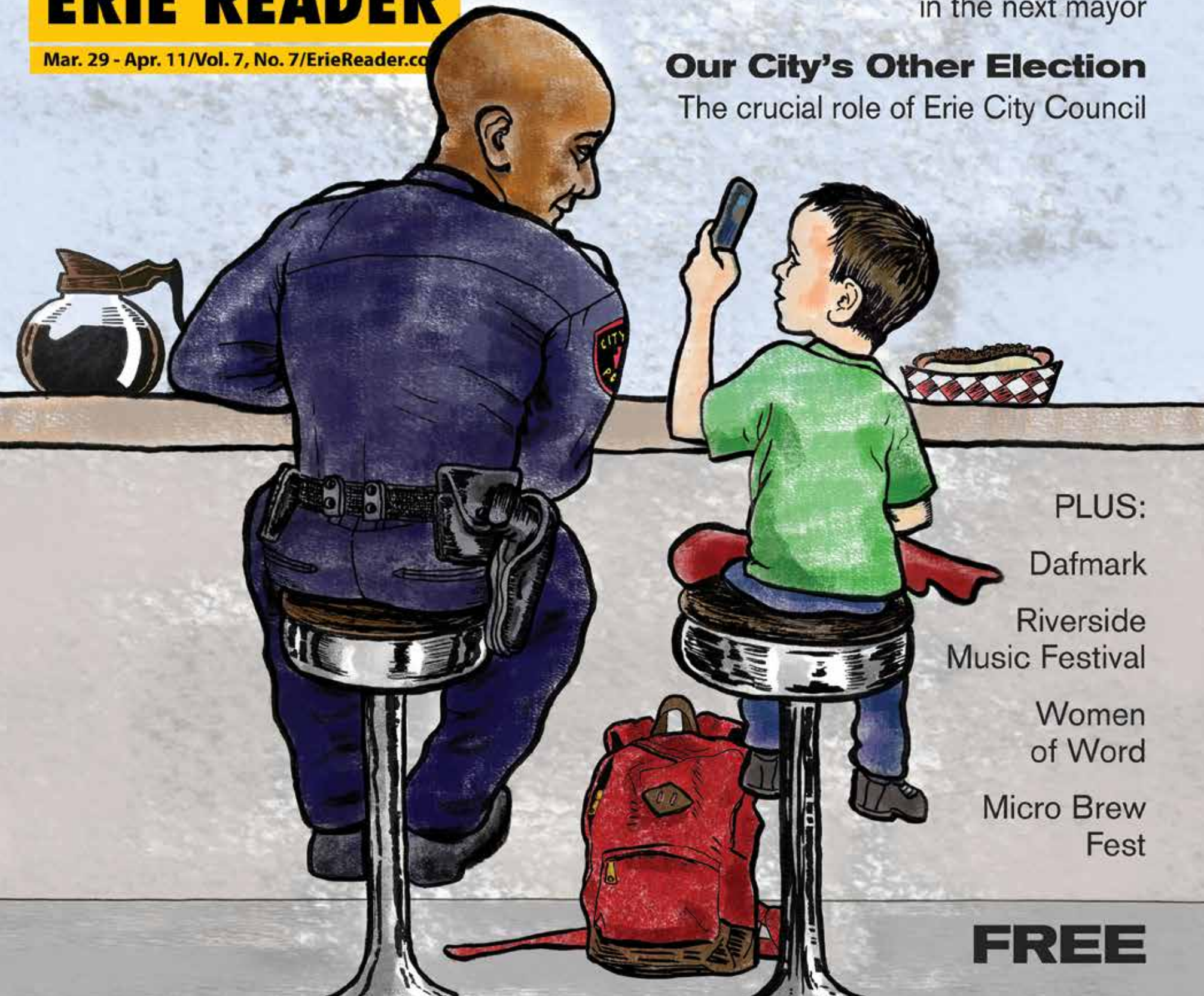
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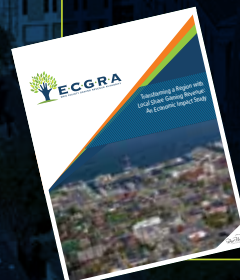
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The Erie Reader is the local voice for news, arts, and culture, and is Erie's only independent, alternative newspaper. Founded in 2010, the Reader has quickly become the region's award-winning source for arts coverage, a strong cultural compass, and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



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From the Editors

Sometimes we all need a little health care.

For an entire week recently, one of our staff members had a nagging cough. It wasn't the first time a slight sickness has crept up this season. Coughing has kept him up at night, wreaking havoc on his sleep schedule. That lack of sleep made his body weaker every day. The rollercoaster of temperatures outside certainly wasn't helping, either. After a long winter season, stresses at home and elsewhere were taking a toll on him.

What he needed was some good old fashioned health care.

After the spectacular failure in the House of Representatives on Friday, March 24, the Affordable Care Act is still standing. Despite President Trump and House Speaker Paul Ryan's best-laid plans, Republicans have neither repealed nor replaced the act known as Obamacare.

This was understandably seen as a major loss for the Republican leadership. At last look, Trump's approval ratings stood at 36 percent, lower than President Obama's ever were.

We're not exactly sure what will cure ratings like that, but we're sure it'll be covered.

Remedies come in all forms. Some might view our city's ills as a nagging cough, while others consider them symptoms of a chronic diagnosis. One possible cure is new city leadership. In this issue, we welcome back former Erie Mayor Rick Filippi with a new edition of "Exile on State Street." Describing which qualities our next leader needs at this crucial time, he offers up a rallying cry to inspire our next generation of leaders.

While we will certainly continue our discussions about the upcoming mayoral election, this issue also looks at another immensely important impending decision: who will be on Erie City Council. Ben Speggen outlines a few particulars of this election, such as the sheer quantity of contenders and the unique situation presented by empty seats as well as candidate team-ups.

In "The Police and the Public," Lisa Gensheimer examines community-law enforcement group seeks to build trust and curb violence in our city. Tracing a 15-year-old court case involving police brutality, she draws a line between a personal tale of jurisprudence and present-day efforts by the police department to make their force fairer for the entire community.

So as we reach the welcome end to flu season, let's hope we can rest up. Spring might just begin warming our lives a little more every day. We can fill our lungs with a breath of fresh air and start on our own healing process, whatever that may be.

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Just a Thought

Speaking from experience



Eye-catching color in this West 10th Street garden is like planted poetry.

I worked at night, that's how I filled many days.

I'd often end up at the Erie Bookstore, then housed in the ground level of Lovell Place, with welcoming light from high windows. I loved to meander among the used books and imagine who'd held them before, where they'd been taken in carry-ons, what they'd stirred in previous readers.

Poetry Scene used to be held there on Friday nights, and one night I nervously got up and read my clumsy lines to a group of generous fellow language lovers. My sweaty

fingers trembled the printed-out page I'd brought to read from, smearing last-minute edits I'd made. But I got through it, and understood better the courage a poet must gather, even when alone at a desk.

One afternoon at the Erie Bookstore, I opened Alan Michael Parker's book of poetry *Days Like Prose*, and stood there in awe as words arrowed into my heart. I bought a copy for myself and the man I was falling in love with – and now two copies live in our house.

Parker has since become widely renowned in the world of letters. But 20 years ago, when this debut collection was published, he lived in Erie and taught at Penn State Behrend. Surely our landscape had something to do with his transcendent words.

In a few selected lines from "Alchemy," Parker writes:

On the first good day of yard work winter pours from my body

*soaks my shirt with its brine.
... My fingers wriggle in new work-gloves,*

itching to do a little digging, to join the earthworm's long, dark translation of the world.

... Here for a moment, mine is a small lot: I only turn the soil, and often fail to recognize what I uncover.

... the garden begins as a patch of dirt: anything can happen.

As an apartment-dweller I longed for my own small lot, especially in spring. I'd walk by purposeful homeowners out working in their yards, their winter-pale cheeks flushed with fresh air and exercise and renewal. But I'd never thought of yard work as poem fodder.

You could say that poetry elevates the mundane. But more accurately, poetry reminds us that there's no such thing as the mundane. That a riot of sensory and emotional details surround us at any given moment. Ours for the taking, if only we would notice.

You could say that poetry elevates the mundane. But more accurately, poetry reminds us that there's no such thing as the mundane. That a riot of sensory and emotional details surround us at any given moment. Ours for the taking, if only we would notice.

No wonder April is National Poetry Month. Writing a poem is an almost-too-easy avocation in spring, in the midst of blooming and birdsong and rampant rebirth.

But I never get the rake or shovel or hoses out for the first time of the year without thinking of Parker's "Alchemy." And remembering how I once longed to be who I now am.

Anything can happen, indeed.

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

By: Katie Chriest

For years I lived downtown on West 10th Street, in an old apartment carved out of an older house. Someone once asked what I liked about living there. "The trees," I replied unhesitatingly. Tall and stately and established, those trees and the dwellings they shaded created an authentic, soulful atmosphere; the polar opposite of character-free prefab suburban townhouses that developers erect ad nauseam.

In spring, especially at the turning of a month, the street would be lined with castoffs on garbage day, some of which I'd have dragged home for repurposing, if I'd had anywhere to store them. Someone was always moving out, and someone was always moving in. But despite the transience, the area still felt like a neighborhood – one where you could wander for hours. And because

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Exile on State Street

What the City of Erie needs in the next mayor



NICK WARREN

By: Rick Filippi

Anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm. – Publilius Syrus

Well, it's good to return to the *Erie Reader* after an almost 16-month absence. And what better time? The upcoming spring primary, at least for the City of Erie, has epic consequences. I could not just stand by and let this happen without giving some input.

And whether you agree with me or not, I hope that when I write a few articles on this subject, you will at least consider some of the ideas which I think are critical to the city electing its next chief executive.

In the coming issues, I intend to focus on the primary qualities and attributes that the next mayor must exhibit. And, the purpose of my pieces will not be to advocate one particular candidate. You, the Erie reader, can be the judge of that. However, I am hoping to stimulate an insightful, if not critical analysis of what the candidates have to offer, since this may be Erie's last shot – for at least another generation if not more – for a mayor to turn the ship around and lead us to prosperity.

There are seven candidates running for the city's highest elected office. Frankly, I believe it is one of the strongest fields in an open race in a lifetime. It's arguably stronger than the field I ran against in 2001.

All of these candidates bring different qualities and attributes to the table. But what are the most important? Actually, what is the most important? Let's take a look at the quality most necessary in the next mayor: LEADERSHIP.

There are many definitions of leadership. However, I believe it's best to look at a recent practical example to reflect on how we don't have it now and what we must look forward to in the future mayor.

The next mayor needs to lead, not only the City of Erie, but its related entities, as well as all of Erie County and northwestern Pennsylvania. Without a real representative in Congress, and with the local legislative districts gerrymandered beyond reason, the mayor of Erie must be looked upon as that individual with the driving vision to move us forward. The mayor must be able to assume a leadership role that might not necessarily be within his or her technical "job description," but rather one of far more extensive and

meaningful import.

A particularly poignant example of this is in the City of Erie School District's impending financial collapse. For those who don't realize it (and for reasons I don't fully understand), the city and the Erie School District share the same boundary. The district is run completely independently of city government, yet both derive their taxes from the same base. It's no secret that this, coupled with myriad other issues, has led Erie School District to slash spending, cutting teacher and administrative positions and deferring maintenance on schools over the recent several-year period just to survive.

Most recently, the district, ably led by Superintendent Jay Badams, presented a recovery plan to the state Department of Education since the city school system is in a "financial watch" status. The district's plan was soundly rejected by state Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera, who essentially told the district to tax its way out of the crisis.

Well, anyone who owns property in the city knows this is not a viable option. Further, this demonstrates an alarming level of ignorance on the part of state officials regarding the

steps taken in the last several years to balance the district's budget, and the unfair and inequitable longstanding tax burden on city residents, especially compared to the suburban districts surrounding the city.

And where has the current mayor been during this entire crisis? As usual, content to sit on the sidelines claiming this is not his fight. Not his fight? How could anything be further from the truth?

A real leader would recognize the critical nature of this impending disaster and how, with a defunct school district, there will be no viable way to implement the city's new comprehensive plan, or even just improve the 40-year slide that the city has found itself in. No, a real leader would recognize the significance of this issue and lend his or her leadership and political clout to the fight. What does it matter that the mayor or City Council does not run the school district? The city is fighting to remain relevant, and for its life. The survival of the school district is essential to the city's long-term future.

To his credit, Erie School Board President Frank Petrungrar Jr. eloquently stated the issue in a March 1 *Erie Times-News* article: "It's not just about the school district, it's about the city. If the school district fails, the city is going to fail. There is no one who is going to want to move here with families, or open businesses, if we don't have a thriving school district. The taxes keep going up and we're just pushing people out of town. It's just not working."

Frank Petrungrar gets it. Joe Sinnott does not. The next mayor must get it.

The next mayor needs to understand and appreciate all of the workings of our region and how they interrelate. The next mayor must understand that advocating for things which might not be in the city budget or in his or her "disciplines" is one of those crucial elements that define leadership. The mayor must recognize that the position brings with it the mantle of the leader of northwestern Pennsylvania, and with that the duty to exercise clout and lobby for those things critical to the survival and prosperity of our region.

NEWS & VIEWS

Let's face some real facts. Jay Badams has done an incredible job throughout this debacle. However, he is not an elected official. He does not have political clout. To her credit, Kathy Dahlkemper has shown a willingness to support the cause. However, the mayor, who should exercise significant clout with Democratic Governor Tom Wolf, is completely AWOL on the issue.

Imagine a staff member, which the secretary of education is, sending a letter to Lou Tullio, Joyce Savocchio, and I'd like to think even myself, essentially telling the school district to go pound salt and raise taxes? It would never have happened from the administrations of Democratic governors if the mayor of Erie had any leadership role on the issue and was exercising political clout.

I am not saying that the district would have gotten everything it want-

The mayor must recognize that the position brings with it the mantle of the leader of northwestern Pennsylvania, and with that the duty to exercise clout and lobby for those things critical to the survival and prosperity of our region.

ed, or even anything, but surely a Democratic governor would have realized, with an upcoming re-election bid, the political danger in dissing the mayor of Erie. Here, since we had no leadership on the issue, the governor has essentially done that.

The reality is that the next mayor must exhibit an understanding of the issues that are critical to the survival and prosperity of our region. In doing so, the next mayor must have the courage and tenacity to lead, even on those issues that might not be commonly thought of as in his or her wheelhouse. These are not calm seas that our city finds itself in.

When adrift in rough waters, we need a captain who can steer our ship to a safe harbor. That is why we, as residents of Erie, need to look for LEADERSHIP as the primary quality in the next mayor.

Rick Filippi can be contacted at atty.filippi@gmail.com.

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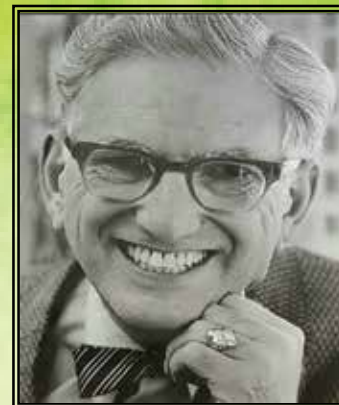
 

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Our City's Other Election

The crucial role of Erie City Council



NICK WARREN

By: Ben Spegen

Most political talk in Erie today focuses on the change about to occur at 626 State Street. More specifically, most of that talk centers around who'll occupy the fifth floor of City Hall after November's general election.

In case you haven't read past issues of the *Erie Reader*, followed *Erie Times-News* coverage, or tuned in to Erie News Now or WJET-TV, or have been residing under a rock at Wintergreen Gorge, or burying your head in the sands of Presque Isle, Erie will elect a new mayor this year.

We find ourselves here because Erie Mayor Joe Sinnott, after besting Democratic incumbent Rick Filippi in the 2005 primary election, is completing his third and final four-year term as mayor. Sinnott, who's been vocal about remaining neutral during this election, ran unopposed in both his second and third bids to lead City Hall.

But political talk of 626 State Street isn't limited to the fifth floor.

As May 16's primary election date draws nearer, more people are turning their attention to Council Chambers. And while the field of candidates running for mayor is crowded (we started with 10, but find ourselves now at nine with Republican Al Zim-

mer dropping out), the ballot for City Council is twice as packed.

And although serving as a City Council member is a part-time position compared to the mayor's full-time, who gets elected is just as critical.

Why? City Council will either help affirm and push a newly-elected mayor's agenda, serve as a foil to plans they see detrimental, or do nothing at all.

That is, in a mayor-council form of government, a

Kevin Otteni (top left) is joined by John Reitingger (top right) and Liz Allen (bottom right) to form the slate collectively known as "Erie's Next City Council." Michael Haas (bottom left) is one of 16 Democrats vying to be on the ballot in November.

council passes legislation and provides oversight, checking and balancing an executive. Or, if apathetic, they can stay out of the way of a mayor and an agenda.

So, if you care about who wins the mayor's seat, you should care about who fills the four seats up for grabs on a seven-seat council. Because if your mayoral candidate wins, you'll want him or her to have support. Or if your candidate loses, you'll want to ensure someone on council still hears your voice.

Four vacancies exist for three reasons.

The first open seat results from Democratic Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr.'s inability to seek re-election, having reached his term limit. Two other incumbents – current Council President Casimir J. "Kaz" Kwitowski and Jim Winarski, both Democrats – are seeking re-election.

Lastly, incumbent Democrat David Brennan – to the surprise of many voters – announced he would not seek re-election.

So that leaves three potential outcomes: Both incumbents win their bids for election alongside two newcomers; one incumbent wins his bid for re-election alongside three newcomers; both incumbents lose their re-election bids and Erie sees four newcomers take to the bench.

If history has taught us anything, it's that the edge typically goes to an incumbent for various reasons, among them name recognition, an established bloc of voters, and campaign machines that needn't be started from scratch. But in a crowded field, names can get buried. And with more options, voters might consider looking elsewhere.

The options within those three outcomes become more varied and



MATTHEW BASHIA-AGHA

complicated, with 17 people – incumbents included – vying for an open council seat. As it stands at this writing, the Democratic field features 16; the Republican, one.

Dan Nick is the sole Republican. And although the city's more than two-to-one Ds to Rs voter registration edge, party affiliation plays a lesser role – if only slightly – in council seats.

While Erie saw its last Republican mayor in the early sixties when Charles Williamson held the seat before Democrat Lou Tullio went on his historic 24-year run (clearly before Erie had term limits), a Republican last cast a vote on council in 2013. But that comes with an asterisk. Republican John Evans served on council from June 2012 to December 2013 but as an appointee. Before that, the last Republican to serve on council, Denise Robison, was elected in 1990.

Still, a 30-year difference makes, well, a difference.

On the Democratic side, the ballot will look like this: Kathleen Schaaf, Jim Winarski, Gary Grack, Casimir J. "Kaz" Kwitowski, Michael Keys, Liz Allen, John Steiner, Mark Aleks Aleksandrowicz, Brad Ford, Kevin Pastewka, Rob Mahrt, John Reiting-er, Kevin Otteni, Adrian D. Ewing, Michael Haas, and Freda Tepfer.

And while that may seem like a lot of candidates to research and get to know, Erie has seen similarly crowded fields in the past, with nearly 20 folks bidding for a seat in 1997.

Aside from serving as the balance to the executive office, doing the research matters because the pool is diverse in background and experience. It also matters because Erie lacks ward-based representation, meaning that while each candidate represents the entire city, he or she does not represent the one out of six wards in which he or she lives.

Big-picture enthusiasts have made the case that it's better that each council member represent the entire city; others have argued certain sections of the city have been unfairly underrepresented because candidates from certain wards have a better chance (read: more financial support) to win.

Regardless, an opportunity exists to elect anywhere between two to

four new representatives. And that opportunity matters because it will help shape the composition of council for potential voting blocs.

New to Erie politics this year – and specific to City Council – is a slate of candidates running together. On March 15, Liz Allen, Kevin Otteni, and John Reiting-er collectively announced their bids for City Council as Erie's Next City Council.

The trio of newcomers are rallying behind *Erie Refocused*, the

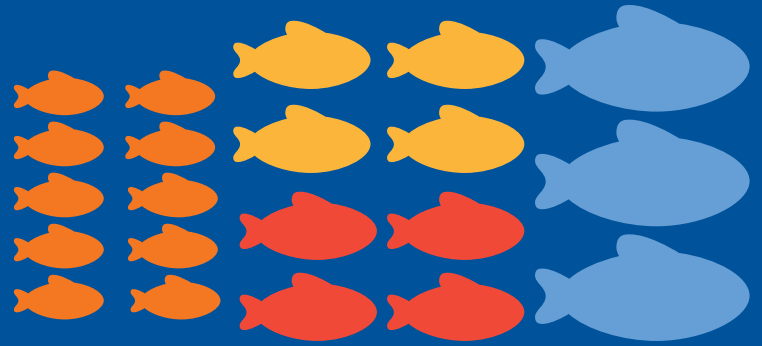
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city's recent comprehensive plan submitted by the Alexandria, Virginia-based planning firm czb, LLC, which was commissioned by the Sinnott administration. Although the three pledged to work together to help Erie's next mayor carry out *Erie Refocused*, each acknowledged during their announcement that their decision to run together as a slate did not mean that their votes would always align on every issue.

As crowded as the field may be and as new as elements like slates are, the City Council race matters. Seven people – with potentially up to four new faces – will be charged with overseeing the promised platform of whoever occupies City Hall's fifth floor. In Erie's case, government is important from the top of City Hall all the way down to the first floor in Council Chambers.

Ben Spегgen can be reached at bSpегgen@ErieReader.com and you can follow him on Twitter @BenSpегgen.

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News of the Weird

Parking slopes and April's expectations

By: Chuck Shepherd

Location, Location, Location

A highlight of the recent upmarket surge in Brooklyn, N.Y., as a residential and retail favorite, was the asking price for an ordinary parking space in the garage at 845 Union Street in the Park Slope neighborhood: \$300,000 (also carrying a \$240-a-month condominium fee and \$50 monthly taxes). That's similar to the price of actual one-bedroom apartments in less ritzy Brooklyn neighborhoods like Gravesend (a few miles away). [DNAInfo, 3-6-2017]

Compelling Explanations

Saginaw, Michigan, defense lawyer Ed Czuprynski had beaten a felony DUI arrest in December, but was sentenced to probation on a lesser charge in the incident, and among his restrictions was a prohibition on drinking alcohol which Czuprynski acknowledged in March that he has since violated at least twice. However, at that hearing (which could have meant jail time for the violations), Czuprynski used the opportunity to beg the judge to remove the restriction altogether, arguing that he can't be "effective" as a lawyer unless he is able to have a drink now and then. (At press time, the judge was still undecided.) [MLive.com, 3-10-2017]

Fine Points of the Law

Residents in southern Humboldt County, California, will vote in

May on a proposed property tax increase to fund a community hospital in Garberville to serve a web of small towns in the scenic, sparsely populated region, and thanks to a county judge's March ruling, the issue will be explained more colorfully. Opponent Scotty McClure was initially rebuffed by the registrar when he tried to distribute, as taxpayer-funded "special elections material," contempt for "Measure W" by including the phrase "(insert fart smell here)" in the description. The registrar decried the damage to election "integrity" by such "vulgarity," but Judge Timothy Cissna said state law gives him jurisdiction only over "false" or "misleading" electioneering language. [North Coast Journal (Eureka, Calif.), 3-7-2017]

Can't Possibly Be True

News of the Weird has written several times (as technology progressed) about Matt McMullen's "RealDoll" franchise the San Marcos, California, engineer's richly detailed flexible silicone mannequins that currently sell for \$5,500 and up (more with premium custom features). Even before the recent success of the very humanish, artificially intelligent (AI) android "hosts" on TV's "Westworld," McMullen revealed that his first AI doll, "Harmony," will soon be available with a choice of 12 "personalities," including "intellectualism" and "wit," to mimic an emotional bond to add to the sexual. A recent

University of London conference previewed a near future when fake women routinely provide uncomplicated relationships for lonely (or disturbed) men. (Recently, in Barcelona, Spain, a brothel opened offering four "realdolls" "disinfected after each customer" though still recommending condoms.) [Forbes, 2-28-2017]

Scientists at Columbia University and the New York Genome Center announced that they have digitally stored (and retrieved) a movie, an entire computer operating system and a \$50 gift card on a single drop of DNA. In theory, wrote the researchers in the journal Science, they might store, on one gram of DNA, 215 "petabytes" (i.e., 215 million gigabytes enough to run, say, 10 million HD movies) and could reduce all the data housed in the Library of Congress to a small cube of crystals. [Wall Street Journal, 3-3-2017]

An office in the New York City government, suspicious of a \$5,000 payment to two men in the 2008 City Council election of Staten Island's Debi Rose, opened an investigation, which at \$300 an hour for the "special prosecutor," has now cost the city \$520,000, with his final bill still to come. Despite scant "evidence" and multiple opportunities to back off, the prosecutor relentlessly conducted months-long grand jury proceedings, fought several court appeals, had one 23-count indictment almost immediately crushed by judges, and enticed state and federal investiga-

tors to (fruitlessly) take on the Staten Island case. In March, the city's Office of Court Administration finally shrugged and closed the case. [New York Times, 3-8-2017]

Ironies

A chain reaction of fireworks in Tultepec, Mexico, in December had made the San Pablito pyro marketplace a scorched ruin, with more than three dozen dead and scores injured, leaving the town to grieve and, in March, to solemnly honor the victims with even more fireworks. Tultepec is the center of Mexico's fireworks industry, with 30,000 people dependent on explosives for a living. Wrote The Guardian, "Gunpowder" is in "their blood." [The Guardian (London), 3-10-2017]

Miscellaneous Economic Indicators

"Bentley" the cat went missing in Marina Del Rey, California, on Feb. 26 and as of press time had not been located despite a posted reward of \$20,000. (A "wanted" photo is online, if you're interested.) (2) British snack food manufacturer Walkers advertised in February for a part-time professional chip taster, at the equivalent of \$10.55 an hour. (3) An Australian state administrative tribunal awarded a \$90,000 settlement after a cold-calling telemarketer sold a farm couple 2,000 ink cartridges (for their one printer) by repeated pitches. [Fox News, 3-8-2017] [Leicester Mercury, 2-23-2017] [The Age (Melbourne), 3-9-2017]

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NEWS & VIEWS

Perspective

American chef Dan Barber staged a temporary "pop-up" restaurant in London in March at which he and other renowned chefs prepared the fanciest meals they could imagine using only food scraps donated from local eateries. A primary purpose was to chastise First World eaters (especially Americans) for wasting food, not only in the kitchen and on the plate, but to satisfy our craving for meat (for example, requiring diversion of 80 percent of the world's corn and soy just to feed edible animals). Among Barber's March "WastED" dishes were a char-grilled meatless beetburger and pork braised in leftover fruit solids. [TreeHugger.com, 3-3-2017]

Undignified Deaths

Smoking Kills: A 78-year-old man in Easton, Pennsylvania, died in February from injuries caused when he lit his cigarette but accidentally set afire his hooded sweatshirt. (2) **Pornography Kills:** A Mexico City man fell to his death recently in the city's San Antonio neighborhood when he climbed up to turn off a highway video sign on the Periferico Sur highway that was showing a pornographic clip apparently placed by a hacker. [NJ.com, 2-28-2017] [Metro News (London), 3-6-2017]

Least Competent Criminals

Oops! An officer in Harrington, Delaware, approaching an illegally parked driver at Liberty Plaza Shopping Center in March, had suspicions aroused when she gave him a name other than "Keyonna Waters" (which was the name on the employee name tag she was wearing). Properly ID'ed, she was arrested for driving with a suspended license. [WMDT-TV (Salisbury, Md.), 3-6-2017]

The Passing Parade

In his third try of the year in January, Li Longlong of China surpassed his own Guinness Book record by climbing 36 stairs while headstanding (beating his previous 34). (Among the Guinness regulations: no touching walls and no pausing more than five seconds per step.) (2) The online live-stream of the extremely pregnant giraffe "April" (at New York's Animal Adventure Park) has created such a frenzy, and exposed the tiny attention spans of viewers, that, as of March 3, they had spent a cumulative 1,036 years just watching. (Erin Dietrich of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 39 weeks pregnant herself, mocked the lunacy by livestreaming her own belly while wearing a giraffe mask.) (By press time, Erin had delivered; April, not.) [Huffington Post, 3-10-2017] [BBC News, 3-3-2017]

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Harrisburg Happenings

\$15 million dollars and more unanswered questions

By: Sen. Dan Laughlin

This month, I would like to explain why I recently voted in the Senate Labor & Industry Committee against a \$15 million transfer from the Unemployment Compensation Fund to the Service and Infrastructure Improvement Fund (SIIF), and address misinformation presented in a recent statement by a labor organization.

While the proposed transfer to the SIIF is a move that appears to have the best of intentions, there are still too many unanswered questions and unresolved issues that made me question and ultimately vote against this proposal.

For four years, the Department of Labor & Industry tapped the UC Fund for a total of \$178 million for technology upgrades. That spending is now under review by the state Auditor General. All we know for sure is that money was spent and the work was not completed. That led the governor to shut down three Unemployment Compensation Service Centers late last year after the Legislature refused to transfer another \$57 million into SIIF without receiving assurances that the money was spent responsibly.

It is also important to recognize that the transfer would take resources from the fund used to pay unemployment compensation claims, which further exposes it to insolvency and could ultimately result in an increased tax burden on employers and employees.

No, I simply cannot justify spending another \$15 million until we receive the Auditor General's report, which is expected at the end of April, and should detail past activities and (hopefully) provide assurances that future funding will be responsibly spent.

That certainly does not mean in any way that I am not moved by the plight of workers who face delays in receiving benefits due to the governor's closure of the service centers. I believe that we can – and should – immediately infuse \$3 million into the call centers for overtime. That action would be effective immediately and would provide relief to Pennsylva-

nia's unemployed workers.

By Labor & Industry's own estimates, it will take several weeks to bring back the laid-off employees and reopen the shuttered call centers. The infusion of funding for employee overtime offers immediate relief and can provide a bridge until the Auditor General completes his report.

I would also like to comment on a recently published statement from a local union that indicated that the Erie UC office was basically gutted; and also implied that idled local workers, particularly those impacted by the closure of the GE plant, were being neglected.

The claim that there is only one

This month, I would like to explain why I recently voted in the Senate Labor & Industry Committee against a \$15 million transfer from the Unemployment Compensation Fund to the Service and Infrastructure Improvement Fund (SIIF), and address misinformation presented in a recent statement by a labor organization.

employee remaining at the Erie Service Center is incorrect. The Erie call center is open and running at full capacity with two shifts going. A department official has assured me that there are six dedicated call center employees at SB 3 Business Park dedicated to serving GE unemployment needs and that they are TRA and TAA specialists.

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

Sen. Daniel J. Laughlin can be contacted by visiting senatorlaughlin.com/contact, and you can follow him on Twitter @SenatorLaughlin.

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The Police and the Public

Bridging the divide and creating accountability



TONY WEBSTER

By: Lisa Gensheimer

One month to the day after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Pennsylvania Army National Guardsman Travis Cooley, 22, played pool with some buddies at Big Daddy's, an alcohol-free dance club at 13th and State streets. He says he knew enough not to drink that night. Like many military personnel across the country, his unit was on high alert.

When a fight inside the nightclub spilled into the streets, Cooley says he and his friends headed for the door, distancing themselves from the crowd by crossing the street to the L. Press Parking lot while they waited for a friend. City of Erie police officers, fearing a riot, approached Cooley. "Get the f--- out of here. Do you want to go to jail?" he claims one of them asked.

Turning to walk away, Cooley says he felt an officer grab his Sean John coat – the expensive designer jacket he had saved up for – and snatch it from his back. Claiming it was Cooley who threw down his own coat and then assumed "a fighting stance," four officers slammed him against a burgundy Chevrolet Astrovan and threw him to the ground. Cooley says he twisted and turned to break free, as they taught him to do in his training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Cooley

claims one officer pressed his head into his back and put him in a chokehold, while another beat his head four or five times with a flashlight after he was handcuffed, flat on the ground.

Cooley says what hurt him more than the bleeding gash on the back of his head before he passed out that night was hearing an officer shout "You are not in the military, you f---ing, lying nigger."

Cooley, now 38, says he remembers every detail as if it happened yesterday. I remember it, too. I was on the all-white jury of nine men and three women that eventually convicted Cooley of failing to leave the scene, a misdemeanor that has followed him ever since. The police officer who cracked Cooley's head open and sent him to the emergency room was acquitted of all charges, including aggravated assault, in a separate trial. He resigned from the Erie Bureau of Police, pocketing \$70,000 in back pay.

Turns out Cooley could have avoided a trial altogether by pleading no contest to a summary charge of disorderly conduct, a fact I read for the first time in the newspaper the day after our verdict was announced. But Cooley knew he was innocent. He says he believed a jury would clear his name.

Unfortunately, as I would later discover, our jury never heard a full

his wife and two-year-old son.

I also talked with members of a new community-law enforcement group, a gathering of about 20 law enforcement professionals and concerned citizens that has been meeting every other Friday since August to share their perceptions about racial profiling and excessive force, improve relationships, and take personal responsibility for keeping neighborhoods safe.

Cooley, now 38, says he remembers every detail as if it happened yesterday. I remember it, too. I was on the all-white jury of nine men and three women that eventually convicted Cooley of failing to leave the scene, a misdemeanor that has followed him ever since.

The community group was convened after the U.S. Department of Justice opened a civil rights investigation into the possible use of excessive force by individual officers who arrested Montrice Bolden on June 27 in the parking lot of a local tavern. What to some looked like police brutality was captured by a surveillance cam-

account of Cooley's story.

"This was supposed to be Travis's day in court," his mother, Mary Taylor, told *Erie Times-News* reporter Ed Palattella. "This was the police's day in court."

To understand how encounters like these can undermine African-Americans' trust in the police – at a time when their cooperation is desperately needed to stem Erie's rising tide of gun violence – I tracked down Cooley at his home in Hartford, Connecticut, where he lives with

era and shared on YouTube, sparking protests and opening up old wounds. Was the force justified or was it an example of police misconduct? The ongoing probe by the FBI seeks facts in that case and examines patterns and practices within the Erie Bureau of Police.

Members of Unified Erie, Police Chief Don Dacus, Assistant U.S. Attorney Marshall Piccinini, and representatives from the FBI are participating in the ongoing community discussions, and by all accounts conversations have been sincere, brutally honest, and might just result in significant breakthroughs. The group hosted a public forum on Feb. 20 at Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School, which was recorded by WQLN Public Media and is available online.

Not long after the federal civil rights investigation was announced and the Erie Bureau of Police launched its own internal investigation into the Bolden arrest, three Erie police officers came forward following another incident, reporting that a fellow officer, patrolman Justin W. Griffith, kicked a handcuffed suspect in the face "like he was kicking a ball." The police report said the suspect, Patrick Gehrlein, who is white, spat at officers and said he had AIDS. Gehrlein suffered fractures around his eye and cheek. Griffith was arraigned on a criminal charge of simple assault on Feb. 27. A trial date in Erie County Court is expected in April or May.

What Cooley's case tells us

Grateful that Cooley was willing to talk with me by phone after all these years, I pulled out my notes and the newspaper clippings I'd saved from his 2003 trial and began to ask how his experience with police and the criminal justice system affected the trajectory of his life. Maybe this could help explain why other African-Americans in our community are reluctant to work with police.

From the time he was a kid, Cooley wanted to be a police officer, he recalled during our telephone interview. "There used to be a group of police officers who would walk along my block on West Fourth Street. The neighborhood was starting to get out



(Top) Shown here with his wife Tanya and youngest son Ethan, Travis Cooley looks to the future after graduating with a bachelor's degree in human services from Springfield College, in Springfield, Massachusetts. Cooley says his sons Travis Jr. (left) and Trevonne (right), who still live in Erie, mean the world to him. He hopes they stay out of harm's way.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

of control with people coming in from Detroit and Chicago to set up shop and sell drugs. And there were these older cops who walked with us, talked with us, and asked us how we felt about the neighborhood," Cooley said. "They were some of the coolest guys I ever met. It seemed like they really cared about us."

Cooley believed the police force had a culture of family, just like the military he volunteered for considered itself a family. "Values get passed down as they teach new recruits how to treat the general public, the people they swore to protect," Cooley said. "And then I ran into those guys that night on State Street and it was like,

'where did you get your teachings from?' I saw nothing of those older guys in these younger guys."

Cooley learned to respect police from his mentor, David Morris, the legendary Gannon College basketball star and Strong Vincent basketball coach who taught him the value of community service and volunteerism. They spent a lot of time together at the Martin Luther King Center while Cooley was growing up.

"David was everybody's dad. He took me under his wing; he employed me. He didn't owe my family anything. He had a family of his own. He still found time to raise me, teach me to be respectful, and love God," Cooley said, growing emotional. "The way I conduct myself, the way I treat others, he pretty much chiseled me into a man."

When I paged through the transcript of Cooley's trial, I wondered why our jury had never seen this side of Travis Cooley.

As it turns out, according to Cooley, the attorney assigned to defend him hadn't met with him ahead of time to get all the details about what happened. The only thing he seemed to know was what he had read in the newspaper. Cooley tried to fire his attorney before the trial began, but the judge said it was too late.

The trial transcript revealed that despite numerous sidebar discussions called by Judge Ernest J. DiSantis, Jr., both on and off the record, and being given three chances to correct himself, Cooley's defense attorney failed to properly "ask the questions in the right way." Calls for character witnesses who could vouch for Cooley's performance in school and his record of community service were dismissed.

The exception was one woman who gave an eyewitness account of the incident at Big Daddy's. She recalled seeing a police officer push Cooley and grab him by the jacket as he tried to leave the scene. She said Cooley did not assume a "fighting stance" as police officers alleged. He was trying to walk away. She heard the officer call

Cooley a nigger.

At trial, several police officers testified Cooley was taken to the ground and beaten by an officer they couldn't identify by name. All that some officers remembered seeing was a hand, a flashlight, and Cooley's bloodied head. One complained his hair gel had been mussed up while trying to subdue Cooley.

But shortly after the incident, another officer at the scene, corporal Keith Kaschalk, had come forward. He reported to his street sergeant that he saw patrolman Edmund C. Libell assault Cooley. Two days after Cooley's beating, the Erie County District Attorney's Office charged Libell with aggravated assault, simple assault, and recklessly endangering a life. He was suspended from his job without pay.

Then top Assistant District Attorney Robert Sambroak (who later served for three years as an Erie County Judge and died unexpectedly March 2 following a brief illness) turned to the jury and told us to concern ourselves only with the charge against Cooley under the narrow definition of "failure to disperse." Sambroak, known for his calm, matter-of-fact demeanor, assured us the assault case against Libell would be prosecuted later.

After listening to instructions from Judge DiSantis and following nearly three hours of deliberation, during which I and one other woman argued Cooley had been railroaded (it seemed to us the only reason he didn't leave the scene was that police officers held him there against his will, handcuffed on the concrete), we gave in and went along with the other jurors. Cooley was convicted of failure to disperse but was acquitted of resisting arrest.

Cooley paid his fines, and served one year probation and 50 hours of community service after Judge DiSantis, at his own discretion, added the original charge of disorderly conduct.

Three months later, officer Libell was acquitted of all charges, including aggravated assault, simple assault, and recklessly endangering a life. He walked away with \$70,000 in back pay. An hour before then-Erie Mayor Rick Filippi was to announce his decision on Libell's future as a police officer, Libell voluntarily resigned.

At the time, Filippi said he "wanted to stress that Erie's police officers are held to a high standard, and that there has to be a level of confidence in police

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officers by the public” (Tim Hahn, *Erie Times-News* 7/25/03). “People have to feel safe, feel as though police officers are out there to protect the community, to have that level of trust,” Filippi said.

Cooley filed a federal police-brutality lawsuit against the city. But before the case was heard in federal court, Erie City Council approved a \$20,000 settlement with Cooley (Kevin Flowers, *Erie Times-News*, 2/10/05). Cooley told me he signed the settlement to avoid going to trial on a gun charge after he alleges being picked up by some of the same officers who arrested him at Big Daddy’s. He says he was told he could spend 14 years in prison if convicted by a jury. If he dropped his lawsuit against Edmund Libell, he says he was told those charges would disappear. Given his previous experience in court, Cooley says he had lost faith he would get a fair shake from a “jury of his peers.”

According to Cooley, 40 percent of the settlement went to his attorney.

“As soon as I cashed my check at DeLuca’s, I bought a Dodge Caravan, kissed my kids on their foreheads, gave my kids’ mom some cash, and moved to Las Vegas. I wanted to get as far away as possible,” said Cooley. His brother, who lived in Vegas, helped him land a job as a security guard.

“I felt robbed,” Cooley said. “It ruined my life. It cost me my relationship with my kids. I was passed over for promotion and my military career declined.”

But Cooley didn’t give up. After a couple of years he returned to Erie, and in 2010 volunteered to serve a tour in Iraq, working at the maximum-security prison in Taji. After he left the military, he went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Human Services from Springfield College, in Springfield, Massachusetts. Now he’s studying to take the LSAT exam so he can get into the University of Connecticut Law School. If he succeeds, he’ll go tuition-free because of his wartime service.

In the meantime, Cooley works odd jobs and helps with his father-in-law’s landscaping business. He attributes gaps in his employment to his disorderly conduct and failure to disperse convictions, misdemeanors that remain on his record. He said he still suffers from migraines and has trouble with his back.

(top) Erie Police Chief Don Dacus (at right) speaks at the panel on community and police relations at Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School. (bottom) James Bolden (left), father of Montrice Bolden, poses a question regarding the injuries his son sustained at the hands of the police, as panel moderator Marcus Atkinson looks on.

When he thinks about the deaths of unarmed black men and boys at the hands of police – people like Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and Eric Garner – and reads about continuing violence in Erie, Cooley said he’s concerned for the safety of his two oldest sons, ages 14 and 15, who still live in Erie. “I worry about them running into the police more than I worry about them running into some crazy kids with guns,” Cooley said.

“My advice to parents? Protect your kids, protect your families, and continue to teach your kids how to avoid the police. Stay away from trouble. Don’t even look like you’re in trouble. I almost want to say, ‘don’t look black,’ you know? That’s almost what you have to do.”

Dialog, new initiatives aim to rebuild trust

Over the years, others have come forward with stories questioning police conduct, from racial profiling and harassment to outright assault. Some have been referred to the Justice Department by the NAACP. The family of David Johnson received a settlement of \$410,000 from the city’s insurance carrier, ending a federal civil rights lawsuit filed over Johnson’s 1991 death, which allegedly followed a scuffle with police. In one highly publicized 2009 case, an off-duty patrolman, James Cousins II, publicly mocked a homicide victim’s mother at a bar one night in a racially charged rant, which was recorded and shared on YouTube.

The black community asserts the reality of police brutality must be acknowledged, even if committed by only a few rogue cops.

But if real progress is to be made, everybody must dig in and get to know each other as people, including what they are up against every day – in a conference room instead of a courtroom. The community-law enforcement relations group accepted that challenge six months ago and pledged to keep talking for one year, in the



STEVE LEITZINGER

hopes of rebuilding trust, healing old wounds, and ultimately, working together to reduce violent crime.

“It’s so good for the police and law enforcement to get the perspective of someone who’s been pulled over [in their car] for no reason at all,” said Erie County District Attorney Jack Danieri, who attends the sessions. “But what makes these discussions work is that the community leaders – the mothers who lost someone to violence, the social workers, the clergy, the security guard at a local hospital – that they, too, get the perspective of a police officer. Because if you’ve never been one, and you’ve never had one in your family, how do you know what it feels like to get out of your vehicle at a domestic scene when there’s 30 people on the lawn? How do you know someone is not going to put a bullet in your head as you get out of your car?”

Erie Police Chief Don Dacus said he’s

proud of the men and women on Erie’s police force. He believes they are the best trained in the region, and pointed to a number of programs that are putting police on the ground in the neighborhoods they serve.

When he was sworn in last September, Dacus, a 21-year veteran on the force, said his goals include strengthening ties between the police and community. He said a lack of cooperation from crime victims and the community is keeping police from doing their job effectively.

“They don’t feel that they can trust law enforcement to such a degree that they’re willing to take on the additional responsibilities of being good victims or witnesses for law enforcement when the time comes to prosecute individuals for crime,” Dacus said.

“I want to be visible. I want to put in the extra time, the extra effort, and the extra hours to show them that I

am committed to building those relationships, doing the right thing, and moving the community forward,” he said. “I’m expecting my command staff to follow my lead and be just as proactive and visible.”

In other words, Dacus wants people to know there’s more to police work than making arrests.

There is much to build upon.

His predecessor, Chief Randy Bowers, partnered with Parris Baker, a Gannon University social work professor and member of Erie’s African American Concerned Clergy, to run an intensive diversity training program for all 172 members of the police force.

Bowers made a concerted effort to recruit minority candidates without much success. Currently the force includes five African-American men, two Hispanic men, one Native American man, nine white women, and 155 white men.

During Bowers’ tenure, the department secured a \$600,000 Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to fund community-policing efforts such as neighborhood patrols. Last year the patrols worked in Little Italy, covering the area between West 14th and West 21st streets, between Sassafras and Liberty streets. Dacus said he’s hoping to expand the program in 2017.

“We’ve had very positive feedback,” said Dacus. Six to 10 officers go into the neighborhood with the Erie Bureau of Police mobile precinct, get out of their vehicles, and walk around the neighborhood in four-hour shifts. “We’re engaging with neighbors in general conversations and to find out what their concerns are. We’ve partnered with code enforcement, and other city services, to try and address whatever their needs might be, from trash collection to drugs and prostitution.”

Also last year, city police and the Erie County sheriff’s office, together with Erie attorney Ron DiNicola, revived the Erie Police Athletic League (PAL), which flourished in the 1950s and 1960s and disappeared in the 1970s.

Sheriff John Loomis said, “If we can point our youth in the right direction at a young age, and keep them from going astray and going down a path that may lead to crime, drug addiction, or incarceration, that’s our goal, to get them on a better path.”

Dacus said the Police Athletic League

also placed two city police officers and two sheriff deputies at Pfeiffer-Burleigh School every Wednesday from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., working with 60 children who are deemed at risk. They help them read, do homework, and play sports as time allows.

“We want to keep the officers consistent, so these children have the opportunity to build a relationship with these officers,” Dacus said. “We’ve had several parent nights, where parents can come and engage our officers and ask questions, and just see that these policemen are impacting their children in a positive manner.”

Dacus said he hopes that kind of cop-kid relationship will help them have a different outlook on police when they grow up.

“We want people to understand the police are their biggest fans,” Dacus said. “We’re in their neighborhoods trying to make a safe place to live and raise their children to be productive, and we’re looking to eradicate the criminal element to keep them safe. We want to make these safe neighborhoods for everybody.”

Rooting out violent subcultures wherever they are

Marcus Atkinson, one of the most passionate participants in the community discussion group, is thankful for these efforts and agrees there has been excellent dialog about what needs to happen next.

Atkinson, pastor of community engagement at Grace Church and director of ServErie, an association of Erie churches that is working to improve and restore some of Erie’s most neglected neighborhoods, is also host of *NEXT* on WQLN Radio and *Erie Now* on WQLN TV. He serves on the board of the Martin Luther King Center and is a former director of the YMCA’s Teen Center.

“I can tell you to a person, we are being honest and open,” Atkinson said. “If people didn’t walk away from that first meeting or two offended or frustrated, we were probably not being honest with each other because this issue is so sensitive. And we passed that test in my mind. So now let’s see who is coming back. Let’s see who’s interested in coming to some resolution. And you know what? Everyone including the chief is coming back.”

Atkinson said the issue that brings him the most angst and frustration is

the subculture that he believes exists in many police precincts.

“I know that for every profession there is a subculture. But when you have a profession that is paid by the public and that has the ability to use deadly force, that’s a powerful position to be in, but it’s also a position of accountability. So the people in charge have to go back to their officers and say, ‘Here’s the standard, and you don’t get the luxury of violating that based upon some blue code, albeit unwritten, and it won’t be tolerated on our watch.’”

“I was the former YMCA Teen Center director. If I have a teen terrorizing the other teens, and I do not handle that, my authority as a director is weakened when I try to discipline or even encourage another student who comes to the teen center and says, ‘Mr. Atkinson, you’ve let this person run amok, he’s beating up on people, he’s disrespecting people, you hav-

“I know that for every profession there is a subculture. But when you have a profession that is paid by the public and that has the ability to use deadly force, that’s a powerful position to be in, but it’s also a position of accountability”.

en’t done a thing about him, so I don’t want to hear your encouragement or I don’t want to hear you preach to me. Handle that if you want my respect, if you want me to listen.”

The community feels the same way about the police department, Atkinson said.

“You want me to trust you? Do something about this guy who’s always putting his boot on my neck when he sees me, who’s always pushing me around when he sees me,” Atkinson said. “That conversation probably lasted a good month, and we were meeting every week. Because it was at the epicenter of how most of us felt, and strikes at the very heart of the distrust issue.”

Chief Dacus said he’s come to understand there is confusion over what kind of force police are allowed to use in certain circumstances. The law, he

said, affords police to use more force than what’s being used against them, as long as that force is reasonable and proper. He admitted police need to do a better job of educating the public about that.

“If officers make decisions that are not in accordance with our department’s policies and procedures, there are mechanisms to hold them accountable,” Dacus maintained. He said the public might not be aware of the disciplinary actions he takes because, unless an officer has committed a criminal act, it becomes a private personnel issue.

On the other hand, he said, “If an officer commits a criminal act, we’ve demonstrated we’re willing to make the hard decisions.”

Dacus would not list any specific actions, but said, “I can tell you that we have been able to use information gathered from these meetings to address neighborhood situations, and to address situations within the police department.”

Danieri said while there is a perception of police brutality, black community members in the discussion group “would be the first to tell you, ‘Listen, we’ve got problems within our community. It’s a problem that individuals are not assisting police. We know that. We’re not going to blame officer so-and-so for us not telling you what we know about this. That’s not suitable anymore.’ I think they’d be the first to agree that the community has as much work to do as law enforcement does.”

The give-and-take is not always easy, and there’s a long way to go to rebuild relationships, but everyone agrees they need to work together to root out violent crime in Erie.

“These individuals have a great voice in the community,” said Danieri. “They have been going and will continue to go into the community and say, ‘You think you can paint all these officers with the brush of a few? You shouldn’t do that. Here’s why. I’ve sat with these people, we’ve shared stories, we’ve shared tears, we’ve shared experiences.’ Nothing gets better if we all just stand with our arms crossed on each side of that line in the sand.”

Lisa Gensheimer is a documentary producer and writer who lives in North East. She can be contacted at lisa@onmainstreet.com.

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Disney Favorites | April 1

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Including exciting selections from Beauty and the Beast, Frozen, Aladdin and more!

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Concourse of Union Station @ 1pm
Erie's only mac n' cheese tasting competition returns. Tickets \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door.

'Organ' Symphony | April 8

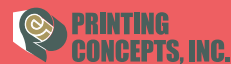
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4/26 • 6pm • \$10

5/3 • 7pm

5/10 • 7pm

5/17 • 7pm

5/24 • 7pm



NATIONAL BIRD (2016)
With Panel Discussion
Hosted by: Ben Speegen,
Jay Breneman & Josh Fedor

This documentary follows the dramatic journey of three whistleblowers who are determined to break the silence around one of the most controversial current affairs issues of our time: the secret U.S. drone war.

THE BUREAU SHORT FILM COLLECTION
With Leah Meyerhoff
Skype Q&A

Sponsored by:
Grant Larson Productions

A block of short films from an audience-supported studio that funds and premieres new work monthly by independent filmmakers.

DAVID LYNCH: THE ART OF LIFE (2017)

Infusing his own art, music and early films, this documentary shines a light into the dark corners of his unique world, giving audiences a better understanding of the man and the artist.

TWIN PEAKS: FIRE WALK WITH ME (1992)
With 2017 Short Screenplay Competition Winner with Live Stage Reading

A young FBI agent disappears while investigating a murder miles from Twin Peaks that may be related to the future murder of Laura Palmer; the last week of the life of Laura Palmer is chronicled.

INVISIBLE HAND (2016)
Directors in Attendance
Sponsored by:
Al & Peggy Richardson

Free market forces have recently manifested as 'fracking' in Pennsylvania - a high risk method to extract natural gas - that state and federal governments support. But communities hell bent on protecting their rights are fighting back against state and corporate take over; some with success.

LOVESONG (2017)

Neglected by her husband, Sarah embarks on an impromptu road trip with her young daughter and her best friend, Mindy. Along the way, the dynamic between the two friends intensifies before circumstances force them apart. Years later, Sarah attempts to rebuild their intimate connection in the days before Mindy's wedding.

BUSTER'S MAL HEART (2017)
With filmmaker Skype Q&A

Rami Malek (Emmy-nominee, "Mr. Robot") stars as Jonah, a troubled man on the run from fate. Malek exposes the depths of Jonah's soul in this smart thriller, peppered with dark humor and laden with interlocking mystery.

JACKIE (2016)
Sponsored by:
Peter and Charlene Correa

Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy fights through grief and trauma to regain her faith, console her children, and define her husband's historic legacy.

TBA (2017)

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Spotlight on Erie

March 29 – April 11, 2017

Thursday, April 6

Mercyhurst Prep Performs *Mary Poppins*



“It’s supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!”

And “super” is just the feedback that Mercyhurst Preparatory School’s (MPS) Performing Arts Department will want to hear following its production of *Mary Poppins*.

Students in the program will perform the beloved musical four times at the MPS Performing Arts Center from Thursday, April 6 to Sunday, April 9, which leaves few excuses to miss the show.

“*Mary Poppins* is a great choice to inaugurate some of the new technology and features in our new PAC,” said Arthur Martone, MPS performing arts chairman and director of the show.

More than 68 cast members and 35 orchestra members have been preparing since January. Students Maia Magerle (*Mary Poppins*) and Gabe Gallagher (Burt) will actually fly across the stage during the performance.

The musical will feature songs like “A Spoonful of Sugar,” “Chim Chim Cher-ee,” “Jolly Holiday,” and “Let’s Go Fly a Kite.” Just as when you watch the movie, you’ll likely find yourself singing or humming these catchy tunes long after the show is over. Fortunately, since there are multiple showings, you can come back to get your fix.

Though information is available online, the tickets for this production will be sold at the door. – Tracy Geibel

7 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, 2 p.m. on Sunday // Mercyhurst Prep Performing Arts Center, 538 East Grandview Blvd. // \$10 adult, \$7 senior, \$5 student // mpslakers.com/inside-mps

Thursday, April 6

Life, Longevity, and Legumes



Are there secrets to a long, vibrant life? Tony Buettner has some information on that. Buettner will detail the knowledge we can gather from “Blue Zones” when he speaks at the Jefferson Educational Society. Stemming from observations regarding a particular region in Sardinia, Italy, longevity experts began to identify different factors that caused residents to live much longer than average. Noted for its record concentration of centenarians, this community sparked research that pinpointed four other hotspots of longevity. Unique settings in Okinawa, Japan, the Nicoya Peninsula of Costa Rica, Icaria, Greece, and Loma Linda, California became the framework for this remarkable work. Residents with exceptionally long lifespans were mapped with blue circles, and clusters of them became known as Blue Zones.

Stemming from observations regarding a particular region in Sardinia, Italy, longevity experts began to identify different factors that caused residents to live much longer than average.

The term begat the company, which was founded by Tony’s brother, National Geographic fellow and bestselling author Dan Buettner. Today, Tony serves as national speaker and senior vice president of business development at Blue Zones, LLC. Buettner has been a featured speaker at the Aspen Institute and the Estes Park Institute, and has nearly 80 speaking engagements per year. He encourages activities that develop beneficial lifelong habits. Factors such as regular

exercise, a plant/legume-based diet, and the social aspects of family and community are just a few of the common ingredients to foster a Blue Zone. After years of careful research, we can now know some of the more elusive components to a prolonged, healthy life. – Nick Warren

7 p.m. // Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. // jeserie.org or 459.8000

Friday, April 7

Ludacris Shows Behrend Some Southern Hospitality



In case you haven’t received the news via *Word of Mouf*, multi-platinum recording artist Ludacris is *Back for the First Time* as Penn State Behrend’s spring concert headliner.

Luda (born Christopher Bridges) rolled out of the Atlanta scene at the turn of the millennium and was a moneymaker for the Def Jam South imprint from the start, with his inaugural single “What’s Your Fantasy?” quickly ascending the charts. The “Dirty South” movement would come to dominate the landscape of early-’00s hip-hop, with Luda at the vanguard. With masterful flow and humorous, often tongue-in-cheek treatment of stereotypical hip-hop subject matter (cars, money, women), Luda’s wit and charisma endeared him to an entire generation of fans. His career has yielded eight albums (five platinum, two gold) and appearances on 88 singles (51 as the featured artist) – 35 of those have charted in the Top 40.

His most recent album, *Ludaversal* (2015), ended a five-year drought between records and heavy involvement in Hollywood, particularly with the *Fast and the Furious* franchise as Tej Parker. Critics hailed it as a return to form after pressing on 2010’s *Battle of the Sexes*, looser without losing lyrical punch (or his patented punchlines).

The rejuvenated Luda comes to the Junker Center ready for y’all to “Stand Up.”

So clear your calendar and/or tell your other obligations to “move, get out the way.” Unless they can do it at the Ludacris concert – because you know it’ll be sold out. – Matt Swanseger

8 to 11 p.m. (Doors open at 7 p.m.) // Junker Center (take Jordan Rd. to Station Rd.) // behrend.psu.edu/concert // \$25 (Behrend students), \$35 (public), \$40 (at the door)

Friday, April 7

Heralding the Yellowstone Apocalypse



Brace yourself for a heavy dose of B grooves. Yellowstone Apocalypse is coming and they know how to get a stage rumbling. Though the band has only two members, they pack enough power for ensembles triple their size. The Cleveland duo plays a powerful blend of stoner-rock-inspired doom metal. Comprised of guitarist Mike Sopko and drummer Joe Tomino, the band is well rounded and experienced. In 2015, Sopko released a collaboration with child prodigy and former Mars Volta drummer Thomas Pridgen, along with legendary bassist Bill Laswell (who produced records for Iggy Pop, Motörhead, and Herbie Hancock) fittingly titled *Sopko-Laswell-Pridgen*. Tomino also serves as the drummer for Dub Trio, who recorded and toured with Mike Patton for his Peeping Tom project. Since 2011, Dub Trio has been the backing band for Matisyahu; in fact, Tomino’s appearance in Erie actually comes sandwiched between gigs with that artist.

Yellowstone Apocalypse is a relatively new venture. After spending years

CALENDAR

in the San Francisco area, Sopko relocated to Cleveland. Teaming up with Tomino, the two formed the band, cementing a sound that's arguably heavier than most of their previous work, in a style similar to the instrumental work of bands like Sunn O))) and Pelican. There's a palpable, visceral energy oozing from these thunderous notes, one that is able to envelop listeners, transporting them to a distant land of sonorous bliss. — Nick Warren

9 p.m. // Darcy's Pub & Grub, 3746 W. 12th St. // Free // 21+ // facebook.com

Saturday, April 8

Erie Philharmonic Ends Its Season with an Organ Symphony

The Erie Philharmonic hopes to end on a good note.

Conductor Daniel Meyer and the rest of the Erie Philharmonic Orchestra will wrap up their 2016-17 season with the Organ Symphony on Saturday, April 8, intending to "leave the Warner Theatre shaking."

The evening begins with a transcription of Bach's Fantasia and Fugue in C minor. More specifically, the Erie Philharmonic has chosen to perform English composer Edward Elgar's recreation of Bach's work, which was



meant to be played on the organ. Elgar's version, however, adds to the music, bringing in other instrumentation.

Then the Erie Philharmonic Chorus (directed by Gabrielle Dietrich) will take the stage with the Slippery Rock University Combined Choirs (directed by Stephen Barr) and two soloists from the Pittsburgh Opera to perform *Dona Nobis Pacem*. This title of this piece, written by Vaughan Williams, means "grant us peace."

The final performance of the night and the season will be Camille Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3, also known as the Organ Symphony, which unsurprisingly features the organ amongst other instruments. It was well received in the 1800s in London where it was first performed, and the Erie Philharmonic believes that Saint-Saëns' timeless piece is just the way to end its season.

As he does before every concert, Brian Hannah will host a talk called

"Classics in the Evening" at 7:15 p.m. in the First Niagara community room. — Tracy Geibel

8 to 10 p.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // \$10 to \$52 // 455.1375 // eriephil.org

Saturday, April 8

Celebrating Local Microbreweries for 10 Consecutive Years



Excellent craft beer and Erie have become synonymous, particularly with the opening of so many small, local breweries. Whether you're a Lavery fan, always at Millcreek Brewing Company, or have a taste for Erie Ale Works, local beer is diverse and appeals to many tastes. And the ideal way to learn more about regional brewmasters and microbrews is to head over to the Erie Micro Brew Fest on April 8 at the Brewerrie at Union Station.

Now in its 10th year, the festival has certainly earned its designation as Erie's Original Craft Beer Fest, and it offers plenty of opportunity for patrons to get their sample on. The VIP session kicks off at 12:15 p.m. and runs until 4 p.m. Sampling session 1 begins at 1 p.m. and continues until 4 p.m., while session 2 runs from 5 to 8 p.m. In addition to entering the Micro Brew Fest 45 minutes early, VIP guests will also receive a free souvenir glass to take home. All those aiming to learn more about locally-produced beers might want to bring a notebook. This year, there will be 30 microbreweries present including the aforementioned, plus Southern Tier Brewing Company, Straub Brewery, Victory Brewing Company, Robin Hood Brewing Company, Five & 20 Spirits and Brewing, Rusty Rail Brewing, and many more.

Not up for drinking? The festival welcomes designated drivers to rein in their thirsty friends, but also to experience the atmosphere and learn. Tickets are available at a discount for those getting behind the wheel. Because responsibility is key, y'all. — Miriam Lamey

12:45, 1, or 5 p.m. // The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. // 454.2200 // wqln.org/Auctions-Events/Erie-Micro-Brew-Fest

MUSIC

Jenny Oaks Baker

Mar. 31 — noon to 1 p.m.

WQLN Radio, 8425 Peach St. wqln.org.

SAS Acoustics featuring Kayti Stadler

Mar. 31 — 5 to 7 p.m.

Presque Isle Downs, 8199 Perry Hwy. facebook.com/SASAcousticDuo.

Spring Punk Party Palooza

Mar. 31 — 5:30 to 10:30 p.m.

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

HelioTrio

Mar. 31 — 6 to 9 p.m.

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

The Breeze Band

Mar. 31 — 9 p.m.

Presque Isle Downs, 8199 Perry Hwy. presquedisledowns.com.

The Wildeyes and Acoustic Earle

Mar. 31 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

Vulgar Display of Pantera

Mar. 31 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Sherlocks, 508 State

St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Julio Quezada and Friends

Apr. 1 — 6 to 9 p.m.

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

Disney Favorites

Apr. 1 — 8 to 10 p.m.

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. eriephil.org.

Mosaic Foundation

Apr. 1 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

Doug Phillips

Apr. 2 — 1 to 4 p.m.

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

Gem City Jazz Ensemble

Apr. 2 — 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. jazzerie.com.

Concert Band of Northwest Pennsylvania Spring Concert

Apr. 2 — 3 to 4:30 p.m.

Louis C. Cole Auditorium in Memorial Hall at Edinboro University, 205 Meadville St. events.edinboro.edu.

D'Angelo Department of Music: Concert Choir

Apr. 2 — 4 p.m.

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

Roche Guest Artist Series: Music Therapist Dr. Deforia Lane

Apr. 3 — 8 p.m.

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

Roche Guest Artist Series: Gerald Lee, Piano

Apr. 5 — 8 p.m.

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

Lunchtime Concert Series: Dr. Meghan DeWald

Apr. 7 — 12:15 to 12:45 p.m.

Dr. William P. Alexander Music Center at Edinboro University, 110 Kiltie Rd. events.edinboro.edu.

Riverside Music Festival

Apr. 7 — 4:15 p.m. & Apr. 8 — 11:15 a.m. & Apr. 9 — 11:45 a.m.

Riverside Inn, 1 Fountain Ave. theriversideinn.com.

Primal Scream Therapy, Awake At Last, Of Shadows, Vanity Strikes, and More

Apr. 7 — 5:30 to 10:30 p.m.

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

Ludacris Concert

Apr. 7 — 8 to 11 p.m.

Penn State Behrend Junker Center, 4701 Behrend College Dr. behrend.psu.edu.

Earphorik

Apr. 7 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

The 'Organ' Symphony

Apr. 8 — 8 to 10 p.m.

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. eriephil.org.

Bravura, The Apocalyptic Fist or Black Death, Amavasya, Sun & Flesh and Ford the River

Apr. 8 — 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Bobbys Place, 1202 W. 18th St. facebook.com/gimpguyunderground.

Big Mean Sound Machine, Galactic Duo, and Weazildust

Apr. 8 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

Acoustic Jukebox

Apr. 9 — 1 to 4 p.m.

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

Gem City Jazz Ensemble Spring Concert

Apr. 9 — 2 to 3 p.m.

H.O. Hirt Auditorium in the

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

SAS Acoustics featuring Kayti Stadler

Apr. 12 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Colony Pub and Grille, 2670 W. 8th St. facebook.com/SASAcousticDuo.

Gem City Revival

Apr. 12 — 6 to 9 p.m.

The Back Deck, 4646 Buffalo Rd. facebook.com/gemcityrevival.

DANCE

Champions of Dance

Apr. 2

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier erieevents.com.

And if Not Now, When

Apr. 7, 8 — 8 p.m.

Dafmark, 1033 State St. dafmark.org.

Lake Erie National Cheer and Dance Championships

Apr. 9

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

Cultural Series: A Little Bit of This and a Little Bit of That

Apr. 9 — 2 p.m.

Mercyhurst North East Ridge Library Great Room, 16 W. Division St. northeast.mercyhurst.edu.

FOOD & DRINK

Three B's & Chill

Mar. 31 — 9 p.m. to midnight

Three B Saloon, 732 W. 4th St. facebook.com/ThreeBSaloon.

Maple Festival

Apr. 1, 2 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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

Wine On The Lake

Apr. 1 — noon to 4 p.m. & 1 to 4 p.m. & 5 to 9 p.m. & 6 to 9 p.m.

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier wineonthelake.com.

St. Peak's Day Irish Beer & Whiskey Party

Apr. 1 — 5 to 9 p.m.

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

Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

Apr. 2, 9 — 10 a.m. to noon

Experience Children's Museum, 420 French St. eriechildrensmuseum.org.

Mac n' Cheese 2.0

Apr. 2 — 1 to 4 p.m.

Concourse of Union Station, 121 W. 14th St. eriephil.org.

Erie Food Tours

Apr. 8, 22 & May 13, 27

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9:45am Sunday School
11am Worship Service
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Topics Included:

- ▶ Tiny Homes as an Affordable Housing Option
- ▶ Updates on PHARE and other Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency Products
- ▶ How Tenant Income Relates to Rent Approval for Section 8
- ▶ Transgender Discrimination in Housing
- ▶ Energy Efficiency & Green Building Opportunities in Affordable Housing
- ▶ Creating Win-Win Partnerships with Landlords
- ▶ State of Solar in NW Pennsylvania
- ▶ Criminal History & Expungements 101
- ▶ SDHP—Introduction to Services

Participants:

- ▶ Joseph Aguglia, Esq., ECHRC
- ▶ Carla Falkenstein, PHFA
- ▶ Rev. Faith Fowler, Cass Community Social Services
- ▶ Gale Schwartz, Housing Alliance of PA
- ▶ Robert Catalde, Erie County Clerk of Courts
- ▶ Kevin Huwe, Self-Help Determination Project
- ▶ Darrin Kinnader, Housing Authority City of Erie
- ▶ Amy Clabbatz, Erie County Housing Authority
- ▶ Guy McUmber, Green Building Alliance
- ▶ John Purvis, Solar Revolution

RSVP for an Interpreter or other Accommodation by April 20, 2017
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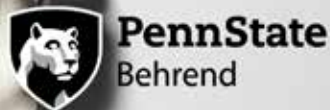
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Tickets at behrend.psu.edu/concert

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at

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[DOWNSTAIRS]

WEAZILDUST

[UPSTAIRS]

THURS 04/13

PAINT & ROCK

FRI 04/14

GOOSE

SAT 04/15

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+ REBEL SOULS

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Saturday, April 8

Big Mean Sound Machine and Galactic Duo Promise an Energetic Gig



Ithaca-based Big Mean Sound Machine will be returning to Kings Rook Club on April 8, with special guests Galactic Duo. Big Mean bring their larger-than-life presence and Afro-funk style that must be heard to be defined.

"It's truly a challenge to describe our sound in words, or to try to pick a single tune that exemplifies it," the band explains. However, they offer the track "Seeing The Bigger Picture" as a good start. This is also the single for the band's upcoming album *Runnin' for the Ghost*, which, coincidentally, drops the day before this gig. Even though potential attendees can do their sonic research, the show will still be a surprise. "Since we rarely

ever write set lists and we call all our songs on stage," they say, "there's no specific song we look forward to playing any more than any other." However, attendees can anticipate a joyful atmosphere at the Rook: "We are most interested in all of our music having a spirit of positivity and being uplifting to our audience."

Galactic Duo, meanwhile, is comprised of Tony Grey (bass/keys/vocals/composition) and Ian Maciak (drums), and they'll bring a similar chill vibe to the gig. The two are "looking forward to tapping into the energy of the room and creating an improvisational exchange that's exhilarating for both the audience and musicians." For those new to Galactic Duo, they suggest starting out with "Say What You Mean," as the track best highlights the band, itself. It's "a track that taps into the concept of superficiality, where people move through their day on autopilot due to societal conditioning, which becomes the stereotypical norm."

Stick around for the afterparty upstairs hosted by Weazildust (aka Packy Lunn from Jimkata) to keep the night going ... and going. — Miriam Lamey

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

Tuesday, April 11

Mercyhurst University Brings Anna Deavere Smith to Erie



On Tuesday, April 11, Mercyhurst University is presenting Anna Deavere Smith's one-woman show at the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center.

Known for her unique performances that discuss meaningful topics like race and social inequality through one-woman plays based on real interviews, Smith will be performing *Reclaiming Grace in the Face of Adversity*.

The *New York Times* described Smith as "the American theater's

most dynamic and sophisticated oral historian," while *Newsweek* called her "The most exciting individual in American theater."

In *Reclaiming Grace*, Smith will discuss the power of kindness, imagination, and hope. She will deliver several monologues in which she acts as people who displayed extreme grace and compassion to overcome the obstacles they encountered and ultimately transcend their challenges.

Smith is probably best known for her plays *Fires in the Mirror* and *Twilight: Los Angeles*, which was nominated for a Tony Award. *Notes from the Field: Doing Time in Education*, one of her most recent works, looks into how school suspension can lead to further trouble, and in *Let Me Down Easy*, she dived into the complex and dubious topic of healthcare to share her findings with audiences.

She has received the 2013 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize, the National Humanities Medal, and a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Grant.

The show is expected to sell out, so purchase tickets soon. — Tracy Geibel

7:30 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. // \$15 adults, \$10 seniors and students, \$5 12 and under // 824.3000 // miac.mercyhurst.edu

— 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Like My Thai, 827 State St. eriefoodtours.com.

Erie Micro Brew Festival

Apr. 8 — 12:15 to 4 p.m. & 1 to 4 p.m. & 5 to 8 p.m.

The Brewerie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. wqln.org.

Awards Banquet

Apr. 8 — 5:30 to 10 p.m.

St. James Place, 2622 Buffalo Rd. facebook.com/lakeshorerailwaymuseum.

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.

National Bird

Mar. 29 — 7 p.m.

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

Phantom of the Paradise

Mar. 30 — 8:30 to 10 p.m.

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

Chasing Water and Brilliant Darkness

Mar. 31 — 7 p.m.

Edinboro University Pogue Student Center, 405 Scotland Rd. foundationforsustainableforests.org.

Ed Wood Double Feature: Bride of the Monster and Night of the Ghouls

Mar. 31 — 8 to 10 p.m.

Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

The Bureau of Creative Works

Apr. 5 — 7 p.m.

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

Passengers

Apr. 5 — 8 to 10 p.m.

Edinboro University Frank G. Pogue Student Center, 405 Scotland Rd. events.edinboro.edu.

Big Trouble in Little China (1986)

Apr. 7 — 8 to 10 p.m.

Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.

David Lynch: The

Art of Life

Apr. 12 — 7 p.m.

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

VISUAL ARTS

Sophomore Review

Ongoing through Mar. 31

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

Annual Gmitter Scholarship Exhibition

Ongoing through Apr. 1

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

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.

Senior Art Thesis Exhibition

Apr. 3 through May 5 (Reception Apr. 8 — 2 to 4 p.m.)

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

Annual Student Show Juried by John Vanco

Apr. 4 through Apr. 16 (Opening Reception and Awards Apr. 4 — 12:15 to 1:15 p.m.)

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

Adjusting the Ballast: The work of Michael Radar

Apr. 5 through Apr. 22

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

Barber National Institute Art Show

Apr. 7 — 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. & Apr. 8, 9 — noon to 3 p.m. & Apr. 10 — 1 to 6 p.m.

Barber National Institute, 100 Barber Place barberinstitute.org.

Second Sundays

Apr. 9 — 2 to 4 p.m.

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

THEATRE

Sesame Street Live "Make a New Friend"

Mar. 29 — 10:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. erieevents.com.

Cultural Series: A Comedy Tonight

Mar. 30, 31 & Apr. 1 — 7 p.m.

Mercyhurst North East Alex Theatre, 16 W. Division St. northeast.mercyhurst.edu.

Women of Word

Mar. 30 — 6 p.m.

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

Noises Off

Mar. 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.

The Middle Ages

Mar. 31 & Apr. 1 — 7:30 to 10 p.m. & Apr. 2 — 3 to 5:30 p.m.

All an Act Theatre, 652 W. 17th St. allanact.net.

Constellations

Mar. 31 & Apr. 1, 7, 8 — 8 p.m.

Dramashop on 2nd Floor of Renaissance Centre, 1001 State St. dramashop.org.

The Glorious Ones

Apr. 2 — 7:30 p.m.

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

Don't Dress for Dinner

Apr. 5, 19 & May 2, 3 — noon & Apr. 7 — 7 p.m. & Apr. 8, 22, 29 — 5:30 p.m. & Apr. 23, 30 — 2:30 p.m.

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

Mary Poppins

Apr. 6, 7, 8 — 7 p.m. & Apr. 9 — 2 p.m.

Mercyhurst Preparatory School, 538 E. Grandview Blvd. mpslakers.com.

The Miss Firecracker Contest

Apr. 6, 7, 8 — 7:30 p.m. & Apr. 8, 9 — 2 p.m.

Mercyhurst University Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E. 38th St. mercyhurst.edu.

Anna Deavere Smith: Reclaiming Grace in the Face of Adversity

Apr. 11 — 7:30 p.m.

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

COMMUNITY

Tai Chi

Mar. 29 & Apr. 3, 5 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

A STRONGER community is a SAFER community!

with PREVENTION ENFORCEMENT REENTRY

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

How do we lead the way for positive change?



Working Smarter Together. What does this mean?

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

How can we assist those caught in the revolving door?

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

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



Watch videos and learn more at IamUnifiedErie.org.

CALENDAR

The Dangerous Curves of Women of Word

Celebrating seven years of hard-hitting poetry



WoW. "For example," she adds, "Matthew Borzon has a book of poetry completely about PTSD. Darryl Brown sat and listened to him, and wrote the perfect poem to join them together. Borzon got chills when he heard Brown slide it into their conversation."

Also on the program is Luchetta Cookie Manus addressing homelessness. She and Thasia will join Marjorie Wonnner in a piece about STEM curriculum (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), which is a fresh and compelling topic.

As always, WoW brings in unusual elements to keep things new. This year, expect an expanded interpretive dance component and original folk music. "Last year, dancer Sukanya Burman watched from the audience and asked to participate," says Thasia. Burman will be joining Sarah Foster, back from last year. Jack Wonnner will open the show with folk originals and is throwing in some limericks, as well.

In all, WoW delivers a distinctive and interesting way of experiencing poetry. Besides the novel delivery, you can continue the conversation afterward and pick up a chapbook by the poets. If nothing else, go for the poetry about STEM curriculum. — Mary Birdsong

6 p.m. // 219 Meadville St., Edinboro
// Free admission // Meet and greet after the performance

Women of Word, now in its seventh year, is not for the faint of heart. The poetry event, at Edinboro's Diebold Center for the Performing Arts on March 30, focuses, by choice, on some of the most unsettling topics of our day. Expect original poetry about suicide, post-traumatic stress disorder, mental illness, domestic violence, homelessness, and more. The event is not exclusive to female poets; male writers will also add their voices to the evening.

As you may recall, WoW differs in that poems are not read individually but are paired thematically, creating poetic conversations with unexpected twists and turns, resulting in surprising moments of clarity or counterpoint.

"Audiences have been blown away for the past six years by the two-poem conversational format," says Thasia Anne, who created, directs, and produces

Five Wishes Advance Directive Planning: Part 2
Mar. 29 — 1 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Qi Gong: Wellness Wednesdays

Mar. 29 — 1 to 2 p.m.

Lincoln Community Center, 1255 Manchester Rd. erielibrary.org.

Qi Gong Workshop

Apr. 6, 20 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Children's Storytime Room in the Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Oriental Painting

Mar. 29 & Apr. 5, 12, 19 — 5 to 7 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Who Needs a Will?

Mar. 29 — 7 p.m.

Room 219 at Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Cardio Fit and Weight

Lifting Class

Mar. 30 & Apr. 6 — 9:30 a.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Digital Media Festival

Mar. 30, 31 — 12:15 to 9 p.m.

Penn State Behrend, 4701 College Dr. sites.psu.edu/behrendarts.

Library Explorers

Mar. 30 — 4 to 4:45 p.m.

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

Therapeutic Yoga

Mar. 30 — 4 to 5:15 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

New Horizons Music Project: Strings and Folk

Mar. 30 & Apr. 6 — 4 to 6 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Music of the World, A Creative Arts Residency

Mar. 30 & Apr. 6, 13, 20, 27

& May 4 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Harland Williams

Mar. 30 — 7 p.m. & Mar. 31 & Apr. 1 — 6:45 & 9:30 p.m.

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

Literary Festival: Eibhear Walshe Reading

Mar. 30 — 8 p.m.

Mercyhurst University Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E. 38th St. mercyhurst.edu.

Paint and Rock

Mar. 30 — 8 to 10 p.m.

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

Day in Intelligence Studies

Mar. 31 — 9:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. mercyhurst.edu.

Tai Chi

Mar. 31 & Apr. 7 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.

Regency At South Shore,

Now is the Time For Compassion

Dafmark Dance Theater creates another artistic pearl



SCOTT MCGRATH

Jo Alspaugh (left), Megan Sabatini, Andona Zacks-Jordan, and Jennifer Dennehy will be joined by Scott Heinrich for Dafmark's presentation of *And If Not Now, When*.

In what promises to be a powerful and stirring performance, Dafmark premieres *And If Not Now, When* on April 7. Designed around the seven-part song cycle "Compassion" by Nigel Westlake and Lior, *And If* brings together six perform-

ers and the dynamic choreography of Dafna Rathouse-Baier in what co-director Jean-Marc Baier says is "one of the most powerful evenings ever created by Dafna."

"Compassion" is based on a collection of ancient Hebrew and Arabic poems, proverbs, and songs; each of the seven segments in the work has a different theme and tone, including wisdom, peace, hardened

hearts, inner beauty, unending time, pain, and courage.

Dafna's choreography is her interpretation of, but also her response to, each of the songs. She hears and sees our mutual need for each other, dialogue including aggression, a mother's experience, our journey through loss and hope, freedom, and wisdom. "At a time when compassion is less and less a social reality, I would hope that the viewer and listener will identify with the simplicity of what is most dangerous in us: indifference."

Company dancers are Jo Alspaugh, Jennifer Dennehy, Megan Sabatini, and Andona Zacks-Jordan. Guest dancer Scott Heinrich joins in the presentation, as does Marsha

Langman Cisek who will be creating a visual work of art during the performance that will be revealed at the conclusion.

The work will be presented on Friday and Saturday evenings, with Friday's performance followed by a wine, cheese, and

"At a time when compassion is less and less a social reality, I would hope that the viewer and listener will identify with the simplicity of what is most dangerous in us: indifference."

dessert reception. Either should be a memorable night out, but

more importantly, an opportunity to participate in an artistic conversation about humanity and introspection.

According to Jean-Marc, this is an experience not to be missed. "From the music to the visuals, I am taken each time into a space of awe and exaltation, with my feelings amplified after each viewing. If people don't know Dafmark Dance Theater, this is the production that reveals an artistic pearl in our midst."

In these times, pearls of wisdom, peace, and hope might be just what we need. — Mary Bird-song

8 p.m. both evenings // Dafmark Dance Theater, 1033 State St. // 454.3993 // dafmark.org

322 Washington Place
lifeworkserie.org.

Travel to Israel

Mar. 31 — 1 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

LuLaRoe Pop-Up

Mar. 31 — 5 to 7 p.m.
The Family Shop, 2501 W. 12th St. thefamilyshoperie.com.

City Light Canvas Class

Mar. 31 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Claytopia, 924 W. Erie Plaza Dr. heathercash.com.

Edinboro's Got Talent

Mar. 31 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Louis C. Cole Auditorium in Memorial Hall at Edinboro University, 205 Meadville St. events.edinboro.edu.

EPIC Volleyball Tournament

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

Run for Parkinson's

Apr. 1 — 9 a.m.
Rotary Pavilion in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. runsignup.com.

United Way Success by 6 Early Learning Expo

Apr. 1 — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Macy's Court in the Millcreek Mall, 5800 Peach St. facebook.com/pg/UnitedWayErie.

Book Drive

Apr. 1 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Film and Fun: Extreme Weather

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

Mindfulness and Meditation Teacher Training

Apr. 1, 22 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Plasha Yoga Studio, 3330 W. 26th St. plashayoga.com.

Erie Handmade Fair Supports Autism Society NWP

Apr. 1 — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Polish Falcons Club, 431 E. 3rd St. facebook.com/eriehandmadefair.

Motel Mayhem: A Comedic Murder Mystery at the Mansion

Apr. 1 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Watson-Curtze Mansion, 356 W. 6th St. juniorleagueoferie.com.

Erie BayHawks vs. Delaware

Apr. 1 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

Princess Ball

Apr. 2 — 3 p.m.
Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center, 7794 Peach St. erieplayhouse.org.

Spring Semester Art Classes

Apr. 3 — 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Mainstage Cattle Calls

Apr. 3, 4 — 6 p.m.
Erie Playhouse Rehearsal Hall, 1158 E. 12th St. erieplayhouse.org.

Fit for Life Fitness Class

Apr. 4 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Pre-planning Benefits and Aftercare

Apr. 4 — 6:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Litter at Presque Isle State Park

Apr. 5 — 1:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

PRSA Student Day

Apr. 5 — 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Multipurpose Room in Frank G. Pogue Student Center at Edinboro University, 405 Scotland Rd. events.edinboro.edu.

Artsy Elephant Canvas Class

Apr. 5 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Claytopia, 924 W. Erie Plaza Dr. heathercash.com.

40th Annual English Awards Night with Poetry Reading by Distinguished Poet Ross Gay

Apr. 5 — 7:30 p.m.
Waldron Campus Center at Gannon University, 109 University Square. gannon.edu.

Medieval Stained Glass Windows

Apr. 6 — 2:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach

St. lifeworkserie.org.

"What The Hell is Going On?"

Apr. 6 — 4:30 p.m.
Erie Club, 524 Peach St. prsanwpa.org.

William Wegman Lecture

Apr. 6 — 6:30 p.m.
Louis C. Cole Auditorium in Memorial Hall at Edinboro University, 205 Meadville St. events.edinboro.edu.

Erie SeaWolves vs. Trenton Thunder

Apr. 6, 7 — 6:30 p.m. & Apr. 8, 9 — 1:30 p.m.
UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th St. erieevents.com.

Blue Zones: Secrets of a Long Life

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

Shoot the Rock Future Stars Classic

Apr. 7, 8, 9
Family First Sports Park, 8155 Oliver Rd. eriesportscommission.com.

Used Book Sale

Apr. 7 — noon to 5 p.m. & Apr. 8 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Cambridge Springs Public Library, 158 McClellan St. cambridge.ccfls.org.

Sacred Geometry: The Architecture of the Universe

Apr. 7 — 1 to 2:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Presque Isle After Dark: Long Pond Trail

Apr. 7 — 7 to 8 p.m.
East Pier Parking Lot in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Watershed Education Teacher Workshop

Apr. 8, 9 — 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Fly Fishing Instructional Workshop

Apr. 8 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Rotary Pavilion in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Making Herbal Medicinals: An Intro to Preparing & Blending Teas

Apr. 8 — 10 a.m. to noon
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Making Herbal Medicinals: An Intro to Tincturing

Apr. 8 — 1 to 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

TEDxPSUBehrend

Apr. 8 — 1 to 6 p.m.
Penn State Behrend, 4701 College Dr. behrend.psu.edu.

Blasco Author Series: Thomas Rourke

Apr. 8 — 2 p.m.
Admiral Room at Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Cathedral Prep Legacy Gala

Welcoming Sounds Down by the Riverside

FRIDAY, APRIL 7 THROUGH SUNDAY, APRIL 9



As soon as you approach Riverside: The Inn at Cambridge Springs, you'll feel the unique atmosphere. Walking up to the 133-year-old building, you get a rich sense of history; the inn is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, after all. It's a gorgeous hotel almost frozen in time. The location itself is enough to be inviting, but then you begin to hear the music. Greeted with welcoming notes of all timbres, musicians gather for impromptu jamborees along the hotel's vast porches.

Event organizer Justin Moyar affirmed, "As soon as you pull down the drive, you'll hear music. Not the amped-up, outdoor, huge stage speaker system kind, either. I'm talking about good old-fashioned porch jams with guitars, banjos, fiddles, upright basses, and so on."

After taking in the open, communal vibe, guests can visit any one of the numerous stages. From kickoff at 4:15 Friday afternoon with Paolello and Gone, to Sunday at 5:15 with Lori Burke, there will be 82 perfor-

mances from local and regional musicians.

The main stage is housed in the hotel's Victorian Room, the site of Riverside's Dinner Theatre productions. Moyar explained that "the main stage will showcase some up-and-coming local bands and also some fan favorites. Friday seems to emphasize more of a folk and bluegrass flavor, while Saturday is focusing more on the blues rock side of things. Both days will still have surprises interspersed in the lineup."

The Gastropub Stage is the place to be for acoustic acts and solo performances alongside a full service bar. "We have a wide variety of styles and genres coming in, so that stage alone is a surprise every time the next performance starts," Moyar mused.

The hotel's Ballroom will feature a mix of workshops and more live sets. In addition to all of the musical performances, there will be 13 workshops, ranging from morning yoga with Abi Pooler to guitar classes with Eric Brewer.

Near the hotel will be a fourth stage, at The Villa Restaurant and Lounge. Located a short walk across French Creek via the Main Street bridge, you can find Bob Kellogg's Eerie Records Stage. "We've brought in some of the best punk, metal, rock, and everything in between from the tri-state area. Many of the bands can be heard on the Eerie Records Compilation CD, as well as others the company's produced," Moyar added.

The sheer number of Erie musicians present at the hotel will be impressive unto itself. Throughout the weekend, people mingle, playing together in different combinations. Singer-songwriter Claire Stuczynski



looks forward to the weekend, exclaiming that "it's great to have all the musicians in one area for one weekend in the hotel to just jam and meet new people. That's what I love most about it."

Stuczynski has performed at the festival nearly every year since its inception. "I've played solo, duo, trio, or full band on most of the stages," Stuczynski said.

"As soon as you pull down the drive, you'll hear music. Not the amped-up, outdoor, huge stage speaker system kind, either. I'm talking about good old-fashioned porch jams with guitars, banjos, fiddles, upright basses, and so on."

"It's one of my favorite festivals to play, because there are so many things going on at once, and I love the old wrap-around porch with everyone just jamming on it together!"

Admission to the performances comes, remarkably, free of charge. In its seventh year, the festival serves as a welcome kickoff to the warmer months. With plenty of history behind it and even more ahead, the Riverside Music Festival is a unique, beautiful place to experience our local community of artists and musicians. – Nick Warren

April 7 through 9 // Riverside Inn, 1 Fountain St., Cambridge Springs // TheRiversideInn.com or 398.4645



The historic Riverside Inn at Cambridge Springs will be the site of this year's Riverside Music Festival. (middle) Tiger Maple String band member Ali Parker and Justine Parker Russell are joined by their friend George for some late night music on the patio. (right) Tiger Maple String Band entertain guests in the hotel's ballroom during the 2016 festival.





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Rosa's Legacy Reborn

Take a culinary trip to Meadville ... and the Dominican Republic.



NICK WARREN

By: **Mary Birdsong**

Erieites who fondly remember Rosa's Legacy when it was on Brown Avenue in Erie have reason to celebrate. The good news: Rosa's has reopened. The bad news (for Erie, anyway): It's now located in Meadville.

Rest assured that this restaurant is worth the 45-minute trip from Erie.

After a recent visit, I am happy to report that dining there will be the same great experience that many of us have missed. The atmosphere is similar to its old digs, maybe a little less petite and charming. But the music plays, fans spin, and bright colors grace the walls, all putting one in the right mood for casual and laid-back Caribbean dining.

The menu, as before, contains just a few carefully curated selections in each category of meat, poultry, and seafood, bringing the best of authentic and homey Dominican cooking to the table.

All offerings are prepared from scratch, with marinades fashioned for each particular type of meat or fish. Proprietor Neil Brode also pointed out that everything on the menu is gluten free, except for the bread pudding.

Before we could barely get settled at our table, two cabbage salads arrived dressed with pickled onion and

bathed (nicely) in a piquant unpretentious vinaigrette. They were delicious, but in hindsight we should have saved them for eating alongside our entrees, as the dressing would have provided a crunchy and tangy counterpoint to what was to come.

My husband Mike selected the Fish of the Day, which happened to be barramundi, often called Australian sea bass. It was marinated in a sofrito (peppers, onions, herbs, and spices) and then pan fried with onions and peppers. The fish was flaky, tender, and had taken well to its marinade. In other words, perfectly done. For his side, he chose the yellow rice of the day, which was a simple but flavorful pilaf including black beans, and an agreeable complement to the fish.

I had the Oxtail, a braised beef dish I had been eager to try before the Erie

location closed. It surpassed expectations with moist, tender, and pleasingly seasoned meat. The white rice and beans sides, typically an afterthought in many places, shone as brightly as the main ingredient, the red beans having a delicate smokiness and just the right amount of tooth.

An extra side of fried green plantains (tostones) and fried sweet plantains (plátanos maduros) we ordered were eagerly dunked in the bean juice as well as into a sample of tasty Shrimp Soupy Rice we enjoyed compliments of the house. It was here that the cabbage salad would have been an excellent foil to the entrees, following the Dominican custom of mixing meal components together for a delectable symphony of flavors.

By coincidence, we knew some fellow diners, part of a foodie group in Meadville, who were eager to share their notes about entrées we had not tried. Nancy Smith and Alice Deckard both praised the Shrimp in Garlic Sauce, with Smith remarking, "When you can smell the garlic first, you know it's going to be good." Deckard, who hesitates to order shrimp in a land-locked location, found it "so tender and flavorful." The Spring Pork Chops also received rave reviews from Devon Stout and Mike McGrath as "aromatic and moist." Rob Smith summed up the dining experience by saying, "Nothing is overly spiced. The flavors are subtle and just right."

Exactly. The emphasis here is on flavor, not heat.

Knowing this was a BYOB establishment and aware it offered house-prepared juice beverages, we brought our

own rum. A sweet and creamy morir sonando (milk with orange juice, lime, vanilla, and sugar) went well with the rum, as did the parcha juice made with passion fruit. They also offer a tamarind juice, lemonade, and soda. A sample of all the juices arrives at every table before the meal to help you choose your beverage. If you go for craft beer, an excellent idea may be to stop at Voodoo Brewery just around the corner for a growler of your favorite brew. You'd be supporting two local businesses in one fell swoop.

Presiding over it all is Brode, whose pride is obvious. "We stick to basics. What goes on the plate is the most important thing. All our time, energy, and passion is for the food." It's also clear he's happy to have Rosa's operating again and is pleased to be a part of Meadville's revitalization. "I want this to be a community place, be community driven," he says. "People like Ed Fine who has been working hard to re-make the downtown area have my gratitude for all the help they have provided."

Brode also wants to send special thanks to the "Erie crowd" that has shown up with support he calls "unreal."

If you live in Meadville, rejoice to have a very fine restaurant close at hand. Erieites, plan your weekend evenings accordingly.

964 Park Ave, Meadville // 4 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Friday, Saturday // Cash only // 737.7678

Mary Birdsong can be contacted at mBirdsong@ErieReader.com, and you can follow her on Twitter @Mary_Birdsong.



MARY BIRDSONG

Located on Park Avenue in the heart of Meadville, Rosa's Legacy delivers the same delicious food Erie residents grew to love. (bottom) The fish of the day, Australian Sea Bass, also known as barramundi, arrives alongside a bed of rice pilaf and grilled sofritos.



MUSIC REVIEWS

Jack Stauber
Pop Food
Self-released



A wildly inventive, genre-bending dance symphony, *Pop Food* is a delicious meal. Erie native Jack



Stauber offers up his second full-length solo album, a followup to 2013's *Finite Form*. Stauber is a familiar face to Basement Transmissions regulars, serving as frontman for the Edinboro-based Joose, as well as Pittsburgh's Zaki. Like *Finite Form*, this new work is ideal for fans of Animal Collective, as well as Ariel Pink or even Mac Demarco. Frenetic, humorous moments in tracks like "I Love You Verne Troyer" give way to the softer, intimate sounds of "Koi Boy." Even during the album's most tender moments, you can tell that Stauber is having fun with every note. The programmed drums, effects-laden guitars, and experimental keyboards create a tonal palette that defies any easy classification. Stauber's unbridled creativity shines with a glimmering wink, combining the accessible grooves of early Passion Pit with the chaotic soul of Captain Beefheart. Some lyrics float like gorgeous waves on tracks like "Bothersome," while others, like "My Plea," are laugh-out-loud funny. It all fits together, as an entrancing, psychedelic dichotomy. — Nick Warren

Valerie June
The Order of Time
Concord Records



This record feels honest. Different aspects of Valerie June Hockett's personality shine through in *The Order of Time*.



In vulnerability and in strength, she tells a story. Her nasal Memphis twang is immediately recognizable in all its idiosyncrasies. June blends folk, bluegrass, soul, and Americana elements into a welcoming stew. Utilizing the traditional tools of Americana music from Appalachian to gospel, June and her band forge a unified sound. It's raw music of the earth. The album begins humbly, with a slow, passionate shuffle, guitars echoing in the dust as if they were fading along that very "Long Lonely Road." What follows is the gospel plea of "Love You Once Made," which fades into the uptempo country dancehall of "Shakedown." Some of the passionate standouts like "Astral Plane" and "With You" resonate the best, despite occasionally dragging. The album closes with the catchy and appropriately named "Got Soul," a floor-stomping full band celebration. *Order of Time* does its best to follow up on 2013's successful *Pushin' Against a Stone*. The overall sound is streamlined, a more distinctly southern feel than before. — Nick Warren

Jay Som
Everybody Works
Polyvinyl Records



The work of 22-year-old Oakland, California native Melina Duterte, Jay Som has made a record that's nothing



short of incredible. *Everybody Works* is the first proper album from Duterte, following last year's *Turn Into* collection. It's a luscious, dense work of indie rock genius. With heavier elements of shoegaze employed in tracks like "1 Billion Dogs" and "Take It," Duterte does a stylistic balancing act. There are delicate dreampop tracks that perfectly emulate the 1980s such as "Remain." The tender, effects-laden melodies of the jazzy "One More Time, Please" and the warbly vibrato of "(Bedhead)" pull off the meditative, full-body experience that made My Bloody Valentine so enriching. The album closes with the hypnotic epic "For Light," floating listeners out on airy waves and tucking them safely into bed. Duterte's rich musical vocabulary is able to articulate her vision with grace. Her voice is soothing, disarming the listener immediately. A tad more somber than *Turn Into*, the record never ventures into emotional charlatanism. A success at nearly every turn, with *Everybody Works*, everything works. — Nick Warren

The Shins
Heartworms
Columbia

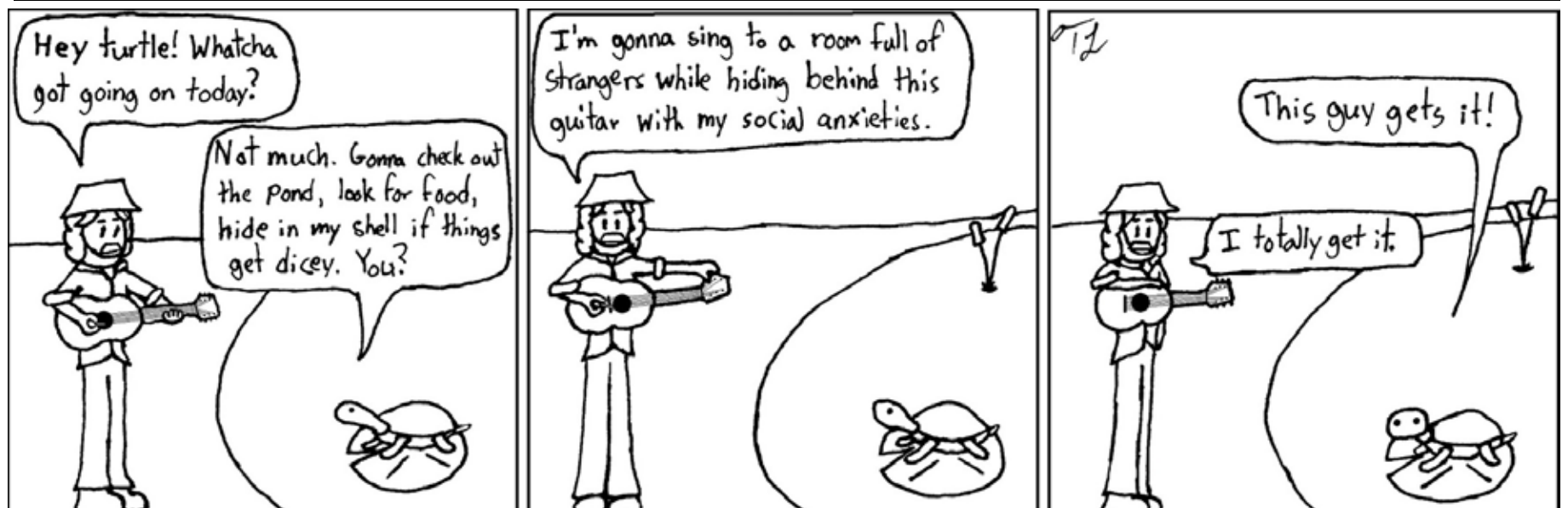


There's just something magical about James Mercer's voice. These days, the principal songwriter of The



Shins is the only one left of the original lineup. Always the driving force of the band, Mercer once again offers up a new addition to the band's catalog. For many, The Shins provided an inimitable soundtrack to the 2000s. They captured an essence of late 60s rock and bottled it for a new generation. *Heartworms* is their fifth full-length record, and their first since 2012's *Port of Morrow*. The latest opening track, "Name For You," begins in a familiar tone, a simple drum rhythm against a chorused upbeat guitar. Things gradually change. By the time "Cherry Hole" comes around, you realize that this isn't the same Shins you're used to. Relying much more on keyboard effects and present-day production styles, the result is a modern indie pop sound, perhaps more akin to Mercer's Danger Mouse collaboration, *Broken Bells*. Although never quite rising to the heights of 2003's *Chutes Too Narrow*, this latest offering stands on its own. With strong songwriting throughout, Mercer's gift for melody hasn't faded. — Nick Warren

Tommy in Toon — by Tommy Link



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