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From the Editors

Finding support in community

As I sit down to write this edition of From the Editors, it is Monday, Nov. 4 and I have no earthly way of knowing which direction this election is going. The polls are deadlocked. By the time this issue publishes on Wednesday, Nov. 6 — we may or may not know the results of the election and it feels completely impossible to envision what that day will look like. Either way, it won't be easy. If Harris wins, Trump and his minions have already said on multiple occasions that they won't accept it. What will that look like? A repeat of Jan. 6, 2021? Worse? Will the judges and federal election officials act rationally to maintain our democracy like they did in 2020? Will the Supreme Court, if it eventually comes down to a decision from them? And if Trump wins? Well, we've all been through that before — the anxiety, chaos, and constant bracing, waiting to see what happens next.

Regardless of the outcome, what's left in our individual power after we vote? What can we as individuals do to improve our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren outside of national politics and their global implications? Our power lies in strengthening our local community.

Our November issue is always our Shop Local issue and it is the first one I ever worked on at the Erie Reader when I took the position of managing editor in October of 2022. In that issue, it was a pleasure to compile a list of local makers and artisans to support as we presented the Shop Local Gift Guide: Makers Edition. In 2023, we built our gift guide around shopping in different districts within the city. This year, we're revisiting both of those themes and expanding upon them with our 2024 Shop Local Gift Guide — updating you on new businesses in the downtown shopping district, some newer artists and makers on the scene, and taking you outside the city this time — on frosty drives throughout Erie County to support the microeconomies throughout our municipalities. This kind of local support is one that helps to build a strong community — one we'll need to rely on more and more as we face the future.

Another way to support our local community is to support local journalism. This is increasingly important in the current climate of creating distrust in the media. I recently sent out an email blast to our loyal newsletter subscribers (if you're not one, you can sign up on the home page of our website) about a new program we at the Reader are launching that allows you to become a monthly subscriber and support our small paper in more ways than simply being a reader (which is, alone, appreciated). This support comes with exclusive perks (including a cool, subscriber-only monthly email that I am really looking forward to composing). The Erie Reader has always been and will always be free to read online and in print, but this offers our readers a way to help support us, if that feels right. Click the "support" link on the top of our homepage to learn more.

It is my hope that this locally-focused issue finds its way onto newsstands amidst a climate of calm and order, after a smooth, normal, democratic election and that we can all continue, from that point, to move in a direction of forward, positive momentum together. Only time will tell.

The Double-Edged Sword of Foreign Conflict Intervention

Despite heavy cost, U.S. and NATO cannot balk at bullies

By: Jeff Bloodworth

America very nearly killed Edin Selimovic. Oddly, the 52-year-old Erieite and genocide survivor is thankful—because the U.S. also saved his life. Selimovic admitted to me, “After I survived, I chose to use the pain as a power and fuel to get to my destiny.” That destiny became the American Dream: a college degree, a middle-class life, and two high-achieving daughters. Ironically, Selimovic always had faith in America. He told me that in 1990s Bosnia, “The U.S. was always our hope... When the U.S. intervened, Bosnia was saved.”

In the early 1990s, Selimovic, along with 25,000 other Bosnians, clung to life in the so-called “safe haven” of Srebrenica, Bosnia. For years, America watched passively as Serbs slaughtered Bosnians. Hans Binnendjik, who then served on the State Department Policy Planning Staff, recalled, “It was clear that there was [American] resistance to engagement. It [Bosnia] did not fall under [NATO] Article V.” In other words, America had no obligation to act since Bosnia did not belong to NATO. So, the world wrung its hands as the Serbs perpetrated a genocide.

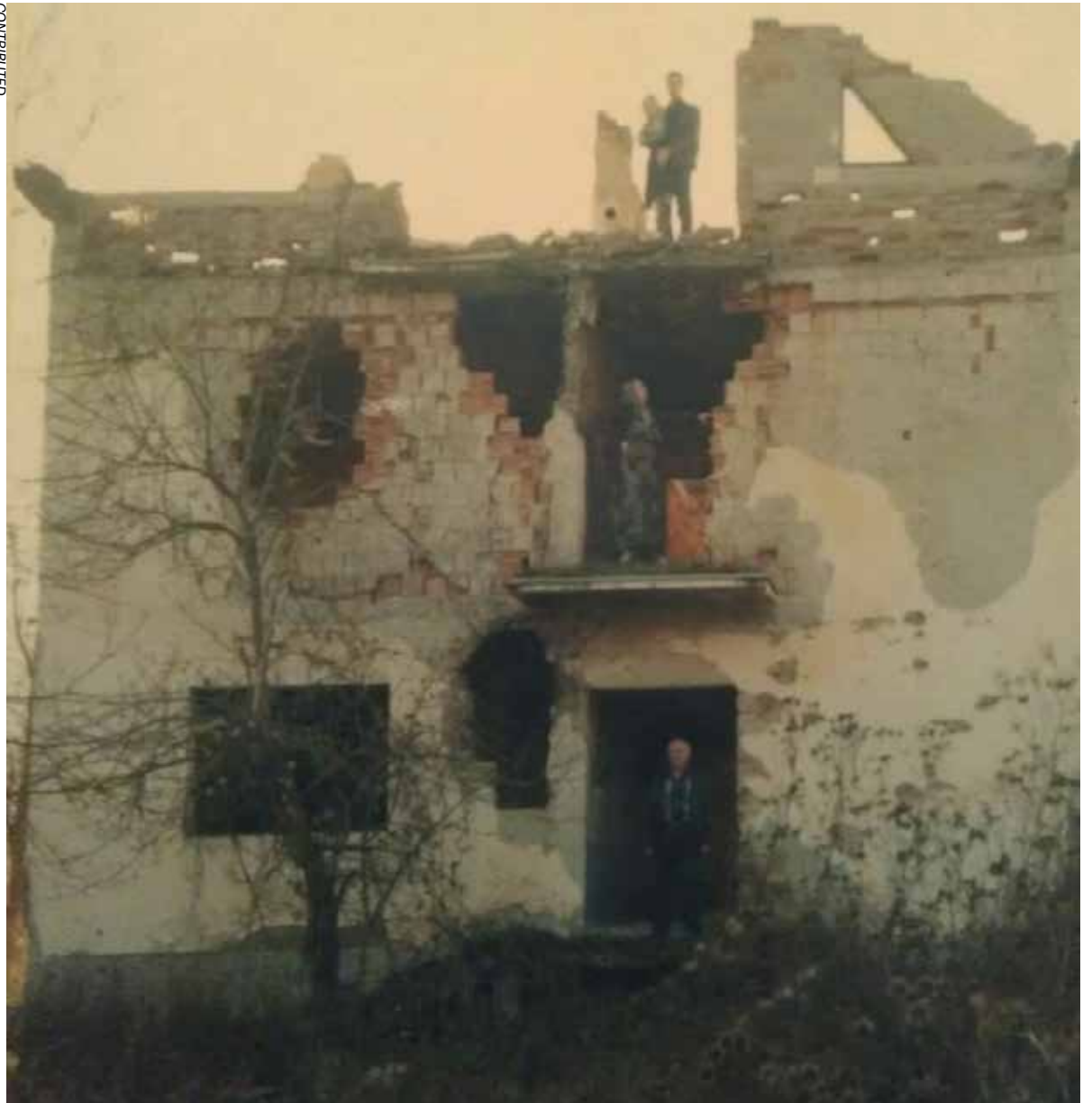
From 1992 to 1995, United Nations peacekeepers kept the Serbs from entering Srebrenica. But the Serbs also blocked food and aid from entering, which meant in Selimovic’s words, “We had no food. No electricity. Kids and the elderly died.” In July 1995, Serbs finally took Srebrenica and murdered more than 8,000 Bosnians. Selimovic, who was 24 years old, was one of 15,000 who fled into the mountains. He ran for 11 days. Exhausted by hunger and terrorized by Serb ambushes, many left the woods to surrender. The Serbs murdered them and pitched their bodies into mass graves. “I stayed in the woods,” Selimovic told me, “I found my survivor mode.” Eventually, he was captured. But those 11 days in the mountains saved Selimovic’s life.

After Srebrenica, America and NATO entered the war. Binnendjik, who is now a Distinguished Fellow at the Scowcroft Center for Strategy & Security, told me, “It [Srebrenica] was a turning point. After that, the U.S. and NATO were decisive.” In 1995, that meant NATO jets bombing Serb positions. Watching the tide of the war and genocide turn from a concentration camp was Selimovic.

On Sept. 29, 1995, Selimovic was swapped in a prisoner exchange. Every year, he celebrates what he calls “my second birthday.” He credits the U.S. for giving him that: “I believe if the U.S. and NATO had not been involved, there would have been many more Srebrenicas.” Binnendjik concurs. He, along with a generation of Americans, re-learned a basic lesson: “To get action and results, it takes NATO and American leadership.” Bosnia helped re-cement the post-1945 bipartisan consensus supporting NATO and America’s global leadership. But the hubris of this success sowed the seeds of its demise.

In 2024, the American-led international order that

CONTRIBUTED



This photo was taken in 2000 when Edin Selimovic and his family returned to Bosnia after the war – showing the ruins left behind in the wake of a genocide. Americans are fatigued by “forever wars” and with Trump and MAGA aiming to regain power, the relationship between the U.S. and NATO could split with disastrous global consequences.

saved Edin Selimovic is at a historic crossroads. For 75-years, a bipartisan consensus supporting NATO and collective security was the linchpin of U.S. security. During those years and on those key issues, American politics truly stopped at the water’s edge. That is why JD Vance’s 2022 statement, “I don’t really care what happens to Ukraine one way or the other,” is significant. MAGA, and its unilateral foreign policy vision, is now clearly the GOP mainstream. This is why 36 percent of Americans say, “The United States is doing too much to help Ukraine.”

Dr. Lena Surzhko-Harned has a one-word explanation for the collapse of the consensus: “fatigue.” The Penn State-Behrend professor of international relations sympathizes with those with whom she disagrees. She told me that “the forever wars in Afghanistan and Iraq” forced Americans to ask, “What

was this all for?”

In asking this basic question, Americans are not wrong. The costs of these forever wars stagger the imagination. The Pentagon spent over \$5 trillion to wage 20 years of warfare. But the human expense borne by American soldiers, over 7,000 combat deaths, 53,000 wounded, and 30,000 suicides, are the real receipts. Once you add 900,000 Iraqi and Afghani deaths to the toll, the dead from these wars reach nearly a million. The ultimate insult is that neither conflict buttressed America’s national interest or permanently helped Afghanistan or Iraq.

It is true that the Afghanistan War denied Osama Bin Laden and al Qaeda a safe haven. After 9/11, pursuing Bin Laden was both justifiable and wholly necessary. But when Bin Laden was finally killed in 2011, the U.S. extended its remit to safeguard Afghanistan’s

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Michael has joined his family's investment management firm as an Associate Advisor where he will provide insightful guidance to clients with retirement in mind.

Michael graduated from the 3+3 law program from John Carroll University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics in 2020, and from Case Western Reserve University School of Law with his Juris Doctorate and Business Law Concentration in 2022. Michael served as President of John Carroll's student government working with the Board of Directors of the University to create policy. While in law school, Michael acquired a Business Law Concentration giving him insight into corporate governance and compliance. Prior to joining Bishop & Company, Michael worked as an Estate Planning Attorney where he advised clients on various and complex tax matters. With his educational and practical experiences, Michael can benefit clients by developing a retirement plan that matches his client's desires, leveraging his diverse experience.

Michael is pursuing the Certified Financial Planner designation to complement his expertise, enhancing his legal and financial planning skills.

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democracy. Unlike Afghanistan, the Iraq War had no justifiable pretext. Sure, Saddam Hussein was a homicidal thug. He killed 30,000 Iraqi Kurds in 1980s mustard gas attacks. His regime also murdered another 200,000 political opponents. But Iraq is the textbook definition of what Barack Obama once called a “dumb war.” The conflict cost trillions in dollars, thousands of lives, and spawned geopolitical disorder that harms American interests to this day. Oh, and in the aftermath, Iraq still teeters on the verge of chaos.

Questioning foreign policy assumptions is healthy. But Surzhko-Harned told me Vladimir Putin “exploits this [American] fatigue.” To her, the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a direct threat to NATO. If the U.S. fails to stem Russia’s invasion, NATO is next. She explained to me, “It is a fight for democracy. To the American ear, this sounds like hyperbole. But this is about sovereignty, order, and democracy.” She admitted, “I am hard pressed to think Putin will invade a NATO country.” But if Ukraine falls or is forced to make significant territorial concessions, she warns “NATO [will be] brought to a state of not trusting in our allies, then no one is safe.”

Hans Binnendjik is blunter. He divulged, “If you want to start a big war, diminish NATO.” And Bin-

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This photo, taken in 1994 in Bosnia, shows Edin Selimovic with his father prior to the Serbian assault that decimated Srebrenica, killed thousands, and spurred the United States to become involved in conflict. In 2024, while at a political crossroads, U.S. support of NATO wavers, specifically when it comes to Putin’s war in Ukraine.

ing long held foreign policy assumptions, they both signal significant churn in Americans’ foreign policy attitudes.

Like al-Misky, Selimovic detests Israel’s war in Gaza. But when it comes to American global leadership, he said, “NATO needs to be strong and ready to act. It is in our interest. That’s how we reach every inch of

For 75-years, a bipartisan consensus supporting NATO and collective security was the linchpin of U.S. security. During those years and on those key issues, American politics truly stopped at the water’s edge.

nendjik thinks Trump will do just that. He warned, “I don’t think Trump has a commitment to Article V. There needs to be trust in American leadership. There is tremendous (European) trust in Biden and Harris’s leadership. There is no trust in Trump.”

The turn against historic American foreign policy commitments is not limited to the MAGA right. Israel’s war in Gaza and Lebanon has spurred significant unrest on the American left and with Arab-Americans in particular. In 2020, Reem al-Misky, and her sisters, phoned thousands of voters on behalf of Joe Biden and the Erie Democratic Party. But the Syrian-American and Erie resident calls the Gaza War her “tipping point.” Terming the Israeli occupation of the West Bank “apartheid” and “Jim Crow” she asked, “why are we supporting Israel?” In 2024, she is voting for the Green Party and promoting Jill Stein’s October campaign swing to Erie.

Al-Misky is not alone. Many Arab Americans, and others on the left, are organizing against America’s “special” relationship with Israel. Arab-Americans comprise less than one percent of all Americans. But more than 211,000 live in Michigan, making them a hefty swing vote in a hotly contested state. There is a Grand Canyon-sized set of policy differences separating the Green Party from MAGA. But in challeng-

the world because of NATO.” A foreign policy expert by life experience, Selimovic supports these institutions for an understandable reason. NATO enabled him to live and have two daughters, Eldena and Emina. Beaming with pride, Selimovic boasts about his eldest, Eldena, who works in Erie as a physician’s assistant. Emina, meanwhile, is a star Division I basketball player. Selimovic bragged about Emina’s work ethic, “she never accepted being average. She once called her coach on Christmas Day to open the gym [for practice].”

The Selimovices have a happy ending to their tragedy. But Professor Surzhko-Harned worries about the future. She warned: “We can’t take democracy for granted. We can’t take European security for granted. This is a pivotal moment where unless some leadership is shown to protect the values we hold dear as Americans to live free and happy lives, we are very much in danger of repeating the mistakes [of the past].”

Whoever wins the 2024 election will inherit an America in transition — and a world of unrest.

Jeff Bloodworth is a professor of American political history at Gannon University. You can follow him on Twitter/X @jhueybloodworth or reach him at bloodwor003@gannon.edu

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A Follow-up on Erie's Open Container Clash

The people have spoken and won

By: Jeff McCullor

Great job beer citizens! We did it. The last time you read my words, we were mere moments ahead of an Erie City Council meeting. The agenda was topped with the second reading and impending vote of a proposed ordinance that would effectively ban our open container privileges.

At the second reading of the ordinance, roughly 25 folks had their five minutes of podium time, myself included, and Councilmember Ed Brzezinski motioned to table the whole shebang without a vote. Councilmember Tyler Titus seconded. The ordinance now sits in legislative purgatory with a five-member majority vote needed to get it off the table in its current form. As I understand it, the votes to de-table it simply aren't there. So the situation remains unchanged. Keep taking your beers on your dog walks or continue freely bouncing from brewery to brew-

ery as you take in our city's microbrewery scene.

A majority of the concerns brought before council centered around the unreasonable targeting of Erie's marginalized community. One supremely memorable phrase mentioned was, "if you don't have a home all your containers are open." Talk about poignant.

The folks I walked with from Lavery Brewing Company to City Hall (with a fresh beer in-hand of course) posed no immediate threat to anyone's well-being. In fact it was a bright and shiny example of a full embrace of our privilege and what we all hope travelers do when they visit our area from elsewhere. We all spent time at local businesses buying food and tipping bartenders — you know, supporting, before simply taking our beers with us on a walk downtown.

So now what? How do we proceed with improving our city for everyone? To dovetail off some of the topics brought up to council — can the local



After City Council chambers were packed with opponents to a proposed city-wide open container ban — and after hearing comments from over 25 citizens, advocates, and brewers — the ordinance was tabled and unlikely to see the light of day any time soon. Local brewer Jeff McCullor reports on the proceedings.

government provide enhanced guidance or assistance to the unhoused population amidst this crazy housing crisis so they can properly put a roof over their heads? Do the glorified vending machines commonly known as PA Skill Games really contribute to growth in our community? Can we limit predatory business practices without over-


taxing enforcement?

While council wrestles with these (far more pressing) issues at hand, does anyone want to have a pint in the park? I'm down.

Jeff McCullor is the co-owner of Erie Ale Works. He can be reached at jeff@erieale-works.com

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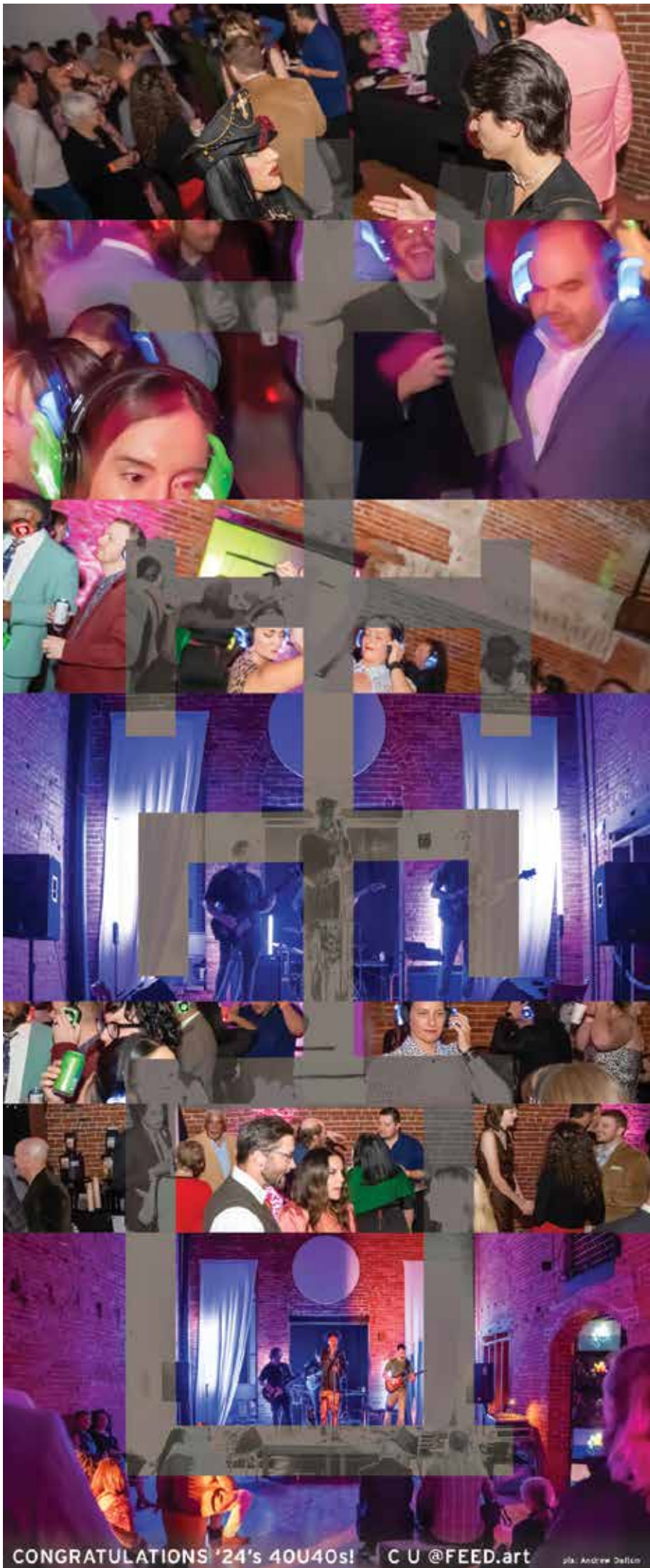


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It Was Their Tern!

Common Terns make a comeback at Presque Isle State Park

By: **Mary Birdsong**

On the morning of Aug. 17, something remarkable occurred at Gull Point at Presque Isle State Park. Two juvenile Common Terns (*Sterna hirundo*) left their nest area and flew free for the first time. It is noteworthy because the last time juveniles fledged successfully in that location was sometime in the mid 1960s — more than 60 years ago. It was an exhilarating moment.

This triumph didn't just happen on its own. It was years in the making and the result of hard work by a team of dedicated people over the course of the past three decades. Many agencies are involved in keeping the habitat favorable for nesting at Gull Point and stewarding efforts to protect the birds who now nest there in the summer. Besides Erie Bird Observatory (for whom I work), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy Natural Heritage Program, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and U.S. Department of Agriculture all contribute their expertise to the Piping Plover and Common Tern Recovery Team.

Besides being a favorite recreation location for thousands of human visitors each year, Presque Isle State Park is also a Pennsylvania Important Bird Area because it hosts several endangered and threatened nesting bird species and provides critical migration stopover habitat for numerous bird species each spring and fall.

The park's history as a nesting site for Common Terns reaches back to the early 20th century.

Clyde Todd in his 1940 book *Birds of Western Pennsylvania* reported that Common Tern were nesting at Presque Isle in 1904. By 1927 he says a small colony of 25 nests was established and by 1931, a colony of more than 125 nests stretched a quarter mile on the eastern end of the park. In more recent times, various sources report Common Tern nesting at Presque Isle as late

as the mid 1960s. Those sources do not mention, however, if any chicks fledged. The date of the last known successful fledge is unknown, but the mid 1960s is the benchmark for known nesting.

By 1985, though, the uptick in recreational beach-going by humans increased dramatically and the terns, like their fellow ground-nesting birds Piping Plovers, were especially impacted by frequent disturbances as Gull Point was a favorite destination for boaters looking for a place to enjoy the beach. The terns were declared extirpated, meaning they no longer existed as a nesting species in this location. In 1993 Gull Point was closed as a sanctuary and Common Terns, once again, began attempting to nest and in 1999 the species was upgraded to an "endangered" status after a nest was discovered.

Since then, unsuccessful nesting occurred in 2012, and at a high point in 2015 Gull Point hosted a small colony of eight nests. Unfortunately, the eggs from those nests were taken by predators or storms before hatching.

By 1985, the uptick in recreational beach-going by humans increased dramatically and [Common Terns], like their fellow ground-nesting birds Piping Plovers, were especially impacted by frequent disturbances as Gull Point was a favorite destination for boaters looking for a place to enjoy the beach.

In 2022, one pair nested and the eggs reached hatch — a new milestone — but the chicks were only seen for a few days.

The conservation team was determined this year. Again, one pair nested, and the three eggs reached hatch but like before, the chicks also disappeared after a few days. When they re-nested in a different location, the PA Game Commission — that has jurisdiction over state-listed endangered species — decided to try a new approach by erecting an enclosure around the newly laid eggs.

Using a model developed for a larger tern colony at Presqu'île Provincial Park on Lake Ontario, the Game Commission staff built a scaled-down version for use around a single nest. The structure was installed over a four-day period to give the adults a chance to get used to this intrusion into their territory. This structure, with solid sides topped with mesh, held taut strings across the top. The adult birds could come



Common Tern offspring haven't successfully fledged on Presque Isle since their habitat started being used for recreational purposes in the 1960s — until this year. With habitat restoration efforts and some human structural intervention, tern offspring have successfully fledged for the first time in more than 60 years.

and go through the strings, but they also, along with the sides, protected the eggs and, later, chicks from both ground and aerial predators. But the structure was not without vulnerabilities. Common Terns are colonial nesters, gaining strength in the mutual protection of the colony at large. The adults of a single nest don't have the comfort of nearby terns to count on when a predator shows up and they are prone to abandon if they feel disturbed.

Patti Barber, endangered bird biologist for the Game Commission said, "There was a risk, constructing an enclosure around the nest of a single pair had never been attempted because terns aren't as tenacious without others nesting nearby. The adults might abandon the nest altogether. However, given the history at Gull Point, the chance of a successful nest without the enclosure was extremely low and the potential of a successful nest balanced the risk of abandonment with the enclosure."

These tenacious terns did stand by their eggs and chicks until the fateful morning when the young terns were strong and confident enough to fly out of enclosure. It took several attempts for each of them but eventually they made it past the top strings and onto the beach. The parents stayed nearby and chased any other birds getting too close. Eventually, they both tested their wings for their first free flight. My heart swelled to watch these birds fly.

This one success does not mean it's time to delist these birds as endangered in the state, but the team is making meaningful progress towards the conservation goal of "successful fledging of chicks from at least one nest per year by 2025," as outlined in The PA Game Commission's Wildlife Action Plan of 2015-2025.

Mary Birdsong is co-founder and lead shorebird monitor for Erie Bird Observatory. She can be reached at mbirdsong@eriereader.com



This "enclosure" was constructed by the Pennsylvania Game Commission as an experiment to protect the eggs, hatchlings, and eventual fledglings from predators on the ground and in the air.

Shop Local Holiday Gift Guide 2024

New downtown stops, county-wide gems, and Erie makers make this year's list

By: Erin Phillips

It's that time of year again, when the charm and childlike delight of the holiday season collides with the crushing obligation of lists of things to buy. All of the big box and online retailers have begun, well before Halloween, to inundate your mailbox and social media feeds with the latest ways to commodify your love. But at the Reader, we're always here to help you make the gift-giving part of the holiday experience a little more heart-warming by encouraging and enabling you to shop local as much as possible.

How much better does it feel to know that your hard-earned dollars aren't going to some corrupt CEO in an ivory tower but instead supporting your local community and tax-paying local businesses or going directly into the pockets of local, individual makers? These are the people who keep the wheels of our local economy spinning; these are the people who sponsor little league teams and run donation drives. Spending your money within your community truly helps to make our community stronger — and with our Shop Local Holiday Gift Guide, we make making our community stronger a little easier.

Last year, as you may recall, we encouraged you to have an old-school shopping experience by picking a district in the city (be it downtown, midtown, or at a plaza like the Colony, West Erie, or Liberty) and spending a day shopping in that area. This year, we're expanding on that and taking inspiration from a feature in our 2024 Best of Erie City Guide (which focused on Erie's historic Main Street revitalizations), and encouraging you to Shop the County — take a gorgeous autumnal or frost-dusted drive to one of Erie's unique municipalities and enjoy and support the micro-economies of places like North East, Girard, and Edinboro. We'll also update you on some new businesses that have sprung up downtown, as well as showcasing some new products or experiences available from local artisans and makers.

New to downtown, out in the county, or made in Erie — the lists below will guide you through the holidays in a way that leaves you feeling refreshed and inspired rather than overwhelmed and icky. Let's Shop Local!

New Downtown Enterprises to Support

Last year's gift guide listed all of your downtown shopping options including standard favorites like **Glass Growers Gallery**, **Pointe Fouré's Dollhouse**, **City Supply**, **Ember + Forge**, and more. While our downtown shopping district continues to revitalize, morph, and grow, we're happy to update you on a few new arrivals for your holiday shopping needs.

Copper Carriage

406 State St.

Not new to Erie but new to downtown are the charming, bespoke curiosities of Erie's cutest couple, Stephanie and Joe Hunt, who curate the Copper Carriage. With plenty of local historic collectible pieces interspersed with antique furniture, decor items, and upcyc-

JESSICA HUNTER, COREY COOK, CONTRIBUTED



An update of new businesses in Downtown Erie gives you a glimpse of the fresh items you'll find when you traverse State Street supporting local this holiday season, including (clockwise from top left): The Bakery on 5th, ASCEND Erie, Copper Carriage, and Five Iron Golf.

led or repurposed bits and bobs — Copper Carriage is the place to go for a unique, one-of-a-kind gift.

Bakery on 5th

502 State St.

With picturesque pastries that would be at home in a fancy French patisserie, artfully crafted Turkish (and American) coffees, custom-made occasion cakes and desserts, and myriad breakfast and lunch options, the Bakery on 5th is a great addition to the downtown culinary landscape. A custom dessert for your holiday table or a gift card for your loved ones to get themselves something sweet are both great options.

Noodles Station 3 & Tsaocaa Bubble Tea

506 State St.

Get into the experience of Noodles Station 3/Tsaocaa Bubble Tea. Occupying the space vacated by the former Molly Brannigan's, this venture has found a home in Downtown Erie. A gift card for a steaming bowl of ramen or a quick boba on the go served up by autonomous robots (we're serious) means an unforgettable experience along with a full belly.

ASCEND Erie

426 State St.

With construction complete on the massive 25,000-square-foot facility, ASCEND Erie has reached a remarkable summit. With various climbing options, yoga and fitness classes, youth and family programs, community activities, and more, a gift membership to ASCEND Erie is the perfect fit for the adventurer on

your list. Alternatively, snag a gift card and your loved one can use a day pass to try it out.

Five Iron Golf

1000 State St.

Know a golfer who'd like to improve their swing? A sports fan who enjoys hanging out with like-minded folks over food and drinks? Consider a gift card or equipment from Five Iron Golf, Erie's latest downtown venture that offers golf simulators, lessons, swing evaluations, gear, and more all in an inviting, sports bar-type atmosphere.

Shop the County: Bringing Main Street Back

Hopefully you've had the opportunity to peruse our 2024 Best of Erie City Guide — a yearly magazine-style travel guide highlighting the best Erie has to offer — meant to help all those travelers visiting our area as well as locals wanting to discover something new in the familiar.

A feature within this year's guide was a look at how local small municipalities throughout Erie County, with the help of funding from ECGRA (Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority), are revitalizing, refreshing, and economically uplifting their historic Main Streets.

For our Shop Local Gift Guide, we're revisiting those municipalities — looking at Main Street businesses and beyond. It makes for a lovely adventure to take a short drive to someplace local, yet a little unfamiliar, and getting to know the micro-economy of that place and the small business owners who are helping to make it a place worth visiting.



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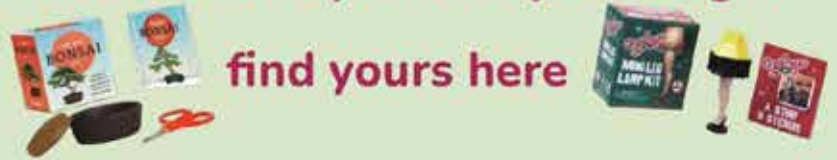
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Girard

Within the City Guide, we highlighted Girard's Main Street businesses helping to make their local economy hum, including **Full Circle Winery** (small batch wines in the historic Battles Bank building, 12 Main St. E.), **Main Street Art** (ceramics, watercolors, gifts, and classes, 138 Main St. W.), and **the Girard Dinor** (classic American dinor serving everyone's favorites, 222 Main St. W.). On and off Main Street, Girard has a lot to offer those wishing to shop local including:

The Battles Yellow House

436 Walnut St., Girard

As part of the Hagen History Center's Girard Campus, the 1858 historic homestead built by Rush Battles stands as a testament to Erie County history and its early success. The history center often hosts farm-to-table dinners, cooking classes, workshops, and events — a gift membership or tickets to an event make a unique gift for the history lover on your list.

The Hippie Space

211 Main St. W.

For the counterculture spiritualist on your list — look no further than the Hippie Space in Girard. The Hippie Space is perfect for those who love to get in touch with their inner guru, hosting events and workshops featuring psychic readings, drum circles, yoga, meditation, and reiki.

The Que Abides Pit Stop

6990 W. Lake Rd.

Encourage the barbeque lover in your life to expand their circle and head out to the west county for some of

the tastiest, smokiest grub around. And that's not just, like, my opinion, man...

North East

One of Erie County's most charming hamlets, North East provides the perfect setting to walk around for a day of unique shopping and dining. Within the City Guide, we featured mainstays on Main Street like **Tia Book Cellar** (charming new book store space, 15 W. Main St.), **The Skunk and Goat Tavern** (unique take on an American tavern dining experience, 17 W. Main St.), **The Bean Coffee House** (local cafe outlet for regional roaster Small City Roasting Co., 12 S. Lake St.), **Re.Found.Ry Antiques** (one of those places where you never know what treasures you'll find, 14 S. Lake St.), and **Driftwood Wine Cellars** (family-owned Pennsylvania wines, 20 E. Main St.). Off Main Street, there is still plenty to discover like:

One of many local wineries

Various locations throughout North East

With North East's invariable association with local winemaking, the amateur sommelier on your list will be charmed by a gift from any of the following local wineries (listed alphabetically):

Arrowhead Wine Cellars (12073 E. Main Rd.), **Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co.** (11727 E. Main Rd.), **Burch Farms Country Market & Winery** (9210 Sidehill Rd.), **Cellar '54** (9368 W. Law Rd.), **Courtyard Winery** (10021 W. Main Rd.), **Heritage Wine Cellars** (12160 E. Main St.), **Lakeview Wine Cellars** (8440 Singer Rd.), **Mazza Vineyards** (11815 E. Lake Rd.), **Penn Shore Winery and Vineyards** (10225 E. Lake Rd.), **Presque Isle Wine Cellars** (9440 W. Main St.), **Skal Meadery** (15 W. Main St.), **South Shore**

Wine Company (1120 Freeport Rd.), and **Yori Wine Cellars** (18 S. Lake St.).

Calico Patch Quilt Shop

107 Clay St. # 3, North East

Encouraging and supporting your loved one's hobbies is a true act of love, and some fabric, notions, pattern books, or a gift certificate to Calico Patch will have the quilter in your life blanketing you in affection.

Phelps Bros. Guitars

31 S. Lake St., North East

If you've got a budding Eddie Van Halen on your list this holiday season, check out the hyper-local experts at Phelps Bros. Guitars. With new and used guitars in stock, as well as synthesizers, amplifiers, and effects pedals and a knowledgeable staff that specializes in repairs — you're in harmony at Phelps.

The House of the Potter

12391 E. Main St., North East

Established in 1975, this North East mainstay includes the work of over 40 artists and craftspeople — an easy one-stop-shop for supporting local artists and makers while picking up a special, handmade, unique item for the hard-to-shop-for person on your list.

Waterford

Waterford's heritage and history is a huge part of their identity and their historic Main Street is as quintessentially American as you can get. In the City Guide, we highlighted some of the businesses on that charming street like **16441 Collective** (gallery and gift shop showcasing local artists and artisans, 210 High St.), **Sugar N'Spice** (nestled in the 1826 Eagle Hotel, it's got history and comfort food, 32 High St.), **Waterford Hotel** (gorgeous Victorian hotel with casual dining, 213 High St.) and **Heritage Gallery and Frame Shop** (local art, gifts, and home decor, 661 High St.). Additionally, Waterford offers holiday shopping experiences at the following:

A. Caplan Company

12607 US-19, Waterford

Any home cook would absolutely love an item or gift certificate to Caplan's — take it from this home cook (ahem, family and friends, take note)! With quality equipment, kitchen gadgets you never knew existed, heirloom cast iron cookware, professional knives and cutlery — if you (or someone you love) cooks, you better stop and look.

The Outpost Craft Coffee

991 US-19, Waterford

With custom roasted and prepared artisan coffees, teas, baked goods, sandwiches, and more — the folks at the Outpost would love to provide your giftee with a pick-me-up or casual meal.

Small Guys Farm Supplies

11522 Peach St., Waterford

Don't spend your money at the big box pet or garden supply stores — give some to the guys at Small Guys Farm Supplies and get quality feeds for your pets, chickens, or wild birds or lawn and garden items that come



A stop in Edinboro makes for a lovely afternoon walking up and down Erie Street and visiting one or all of the following (clockwise from top left): The Edinboro Chocolaterie, Willow Creek Furniture (interior and exterior), and the Edinboro Market.

FEATURE

with the service you can only get from the small guys.

Edinboro

With PennWest Edinboro University keeping the population youthful and ever-changing, the economy of the town of Edinboro reflects the younger generations while also serving the needs of its mainstay community. In the City Guide we featured **Flip Cafe** (wins Best Brunch year after year — see what the fuss is about, 103 Meadville St.), **John's Wildwood Pizzeria** (wins Best Pizza again and again — hand-stretched fresh dough that's totally worth the hype, 105 Erie St.), **Edinboro Market** (farmers market times 100, Edinboro Market is micro-local shopping — farm fresh, local produce and products, as well as specialty artisans, 109 Erie St.), **Earthshine Co.** (uniquely curated gifts and natural beauty products, 118 Meadville St.) and **814 Outdoor Sports** (local full-service ski and bike shop, 500 W. Plum St.). Off the main drag, Edinboro offers:

Edinboro Chocolaterie

114 Erie St., Edinboro

Sick of giving the same old box of chocolates every year? Try someplace new and give your friends and family a taste of something sweet they may not have had before. Their unique, artisan chocolates, truffles, melt-aways, and more will have your sweetest smiling. Can't make it out to Edinboro? No worries — Chocolaterie sweets are available in town at **Werner Books and Coffee** (3608 Liberty St.)

Willow Creek Furniture

111 Erie St., Edinboro

Find a unique, handcrafted, timeless piece of furniture that will be sure to become an heirloom at Willow Creek. Specializing in products made from reclaimed historic barn wood — the piece you choose will be imbued with history and made to last.

Gold Star Anime

5540 Rte. 6N, Edinboro

Have someone on your list who is into anime, manga, comics, role playing games, video games, collectible figurines, and more? Look no further than Gold Star Anime in Edinboro — you'll be sure to find something unique that will make your giftee feel seen.

Corry

Erie County's second-largest city is making a comeback in a huge way — through Main Street improvements and the work of local nonprofit Impact Corry, there's never been a better time to visit. Some of the Main (Center) Street highlights include **Whistle Stop Antique Mall** (snag a great find with tons of antique furniture, art, glassware, and jewelry, 50 N. Center St.), **Library Bar and Grill** (casual dining in the historic former home of the Corry Public Library, 203 N. Center St.), **Painted Finch Gallery** (gorgeously curated art of all media, from local and regional artists, 32 N. Center St.), and **Epiphany's Emporium** (handcrafted gifts and collectibles, 34 N. Center St.). Also consider hitting up the following:

Lillian's Cafe

44/46 N. Center St., Corry

Lillian's doubles as a small cafe and antique shop (with

ERIN PHILLIPS, CONTRIBUTED, AND JESSICA HUNTER



We're headed out to the county for this year's holiday gift guide including a stop at (clockwise from top left): A. Caplan Company in Waterford, Till Top Creamery in Corry, one of many local wineries in North East, and The Yellow House in Girard.

the bonus of having Steadfast Tattoo upstairs). Serving craft coffees, teas, and sweets while also providing a selection of locally sourced antiques and vintage items — grab a drink while finding that perfect gift.

Till Top Creamery

129 Pennsylvania Ave., Corry

Featuring products made from a local dairy farm that was established in 1921, the farm has gone on to become a legacy for the Royek family, earning Century Farm status as well as being named a Dairy of Distinction. Their products range from cheeses, ice creams, nuts, sauces, syrups, jams, jellies, honey, herbs, balms, and soaps and should easily find a place under your tree this year.

The Salt Spa and Organic Goods

101 N Center St., Corry

Give your loved one the gift of relaxation — a massage or the unique experience of a "salt room" or "float room" session. Or pick up some herbal tinctures, salves, lotions, soaps, or teas for the naturopath in your life.

Shop the Makers: Erie's Artisans on Display

The Shop Local Holiday Gift Guide went the way of the makers in 2022, and we thought it was time for an update. While the list in 2022 was robust yet far from conclusive, we included as many local makers, artisans, artists, and craftspeople as possible and the same is true for this update. To get a better sense of the true breadth of local makers to support in Erie — make sure to check out some of the many planned and pop-up markets this season like **Small Business Saturday, Erie Arts & Culture's Holiday Pop-Up Market, Downtown D'Lights, FEED + STATIK market, the Copper Carriage Holiday Market**, and more. A huge "thank you" to Casey Corri-

tore (40 Under 40 Class of 2023) of Erie Arts and Culture for providing an updated list of local makers to help inform this guide.

Makers are listed alphabetically by last name

Anush Dulgaryan Bruno, Sealed by Nature

Visit: sealedbynature.com

When looking for stocking stuffers this year — skip the overly perfumed, department store bath and body items and instead go with a local product made with care. Offering botanically balanced, natural skin care products, soaps, bath bombs, hair products, and lip and body moisturizers — nature is signed, sealed, and delivered to your loved one this holiday season.

Stephanie Ciner, Wildfield Farms

Visit: wildfieldurbanfarm.com

You've seen Steph Ciner sharing the bounties of her urban farm all harvest season (at local farmers markets as well as at the Pay What You Can Farm Stand — helping neighbors have greater access to fresh produce all season long). For the holidays, she keeps the locally grown goodness going by offering handmade, locally sourced, fresh-cut wreaths, swags, and garlands. They're as beautiful as they are fragrant.

Emily Gaudio, Broken Egg Clay

Visit: etsy.com/shop/BrokenEGGClay

From the whimsical (think sunny side up egg plates, bread slice earrings, cat planters, etc.) to the locally celebratory (Erie-centric ornaments and decor), Emily creates ceramic wares that are creative, interesting, and useful. Your giftee will be charmed to have such a one-of-a-kind piece under the tree.

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We've updated our previously published 2022 Holiday Gift Guide list of local makers to include some of the following to support this holiday season (clockwise from top left): Emily Guadioso of Broken Egg Clay, Charmain Wismar of Charmain's Custom Creations, Stephanie Ciner of Wild Field Urban Farm, and Morgan Yezzi's Continuous Collection of Modern Home Cookery.

Danielle Knight, Handcraft Island

Visit: handcraftisland.com

The most fun and interesting candles and melts — Handcraft Island takes inspiration from the smells that define our lives. From favorite cereals, cozy drinks, and the aromas of fall — the candles themselves are little works of art and you're sure to find a unique scent for everyone on your list.

Andre Jones, Rabbit3

Visit: rabbit3.co

Local designer Andre Jones (40 Under 40 Class of 2024) offers high fashion, couture design, and hand craftsmanship at an accessible price point. The cutting-edge fashionista/o on your list will be extremely impressed by your impeccable taste with your gift of any Rabbit3 piece.

Edward Krantz, Bookforge Bookbinding

Visit: bookforge.online

Purchase a hand-bound book from local master bookbinder Edward Krantz and give your loved one the gift of self-reflective journaling, idea-jotting, dream-recording, poetry-writing — the possibilities are endless. Or give the gift of an experience by purchasing a workshop session so your friend or family member can learn a new skill from the local expert.

Megan Merz, Fine Art

Visit: meganmerz.com

With paintings and prints created from handmade carvings, Megan's whimsical art lends itself perfectly to gift-giving: whether you opt for a traditional fine art piece or go the commercial route with stickers, post-

cards, or note cards — Merz is (literally) made for you.

Hannah Moran, North Coast Pennants

Visit: [instagram.com/northcoastpennants](https://www.instagram.com/northcoastpennants)

You may have seen her charming, handcrafted pennants adorning the walls of local haunts like Ember + Forge — Hannah Moran's talent is eye-catching. Her hand-stitched, wool pennants are vintage- and Erie-inspired, celebrating local landmarks like the Land Lighthouse, the Boston Store, Dobbins Landing, and Perry Square. The perfect gift for all of us local-philes out there!

Charmain Wismar, Charmain's Custom Creations

Visit: [facebook.com/charmaincustomcreations](https://www.facebook.com/charmaincustomcreations)

If you've hit up a LEAF Farmers Market this summer, you're sure to have seen Charmain slinging her handcrafted wares — headbands, scrunchies, apparel, mugs, and more — all in the cutest prints on the softest fabrics.

Morgan Yezzi, Vintage Recipes

Visit: yezball.com

The Erie Reader's own *Erie Cook Book* revisiter Morgan Yezzi has created a locally relevant, historic recipe guide to supplement your favorite home cook's stocking. *Yezball's Continuous Collection of Modern Home Cookery* pays tribute to the classic recipe files of the past, brimming with original, kitchen-tested recipes, personal stories, and essential cooking tips. It is amusing, it is functional, it is available as a one-time purchase or as a subscription.

Erin Phillips is shopping local as much as possible — you can find her traversing the county in her minivan this holiday season. She can be reached at erin@eriereader.com

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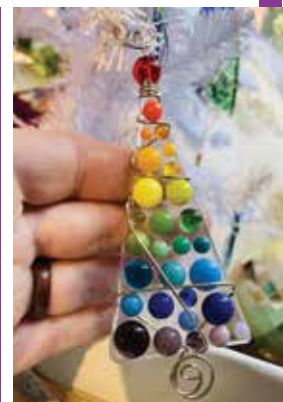
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FEATURE

Shop the Beehive

Looking to local innovators this holiday season

By: Sabrina Bootz and Chris Lantinen

The NWPA Innovation Beehive Network is a free resource for business owners, start-up entrepreneurs, inventors, and more. With local universities and the county library contributing specialized services like market research, crowd-funding help, marketing and branding, and rapid prototyping, they remove barriers that prohibit business growth and innovation. Each of the companies in this section have worked with the Beehive to enhance some part of their business. But their innovative business concepts, and their daily drive needed to succeed, should be credited solely to their entrepreneurial spirit. Enjoy shopping at these various “Friends of the Hive.”

Before the Barrel Distillery

beforethebarrel.com

Before the Barrel Distillery delivers some much-needed holiday “spirit” to your loved ones this gift-giving season. Flavorful moonshines like salted caramel pecan, hot pepper honey, apple pie, and banana will bring an interesting spin to any mixologist’s bar cart, while rum, gin and absinthe round out the selections. Founder and distiller Bernie Blore is prepping a new Greene Township location (moving from Corry), so make sure to follow the company’s socials for the most recent news. On the website, you’ll find mixology tips, hours, and more. You can only purchase in-person.

Jacked Jerky

getjackedjerky.com

Jacked Jerky is the perfect companion for the avid hiker, gym-goer, or frequent road tripper. The Erie brand differs from other beef jerky on the market because they only use grass-fed beef and tamari sauce. Tamari is a gluten-free alternative to soy sauce that is rich in flavor and umami. Their protein-packed snack comes in three flavors — Original, Southwest, and Sweet Heat — while the variety pack showcases all three. If you’re looking for a gift that keeps on giving, consider signing up for their monthly subscription. Their products can also be found locally at retailers like Gordon’s and Sanders Markets.

Puppers

puppersllc.com

Don’t forget the furry members of your family this holiday season. Puppers, a lo-

CONTRIBUTED



The NWPA Innovation Beehive Network contributes some suggestions on shopping local this holiday season using those businesses that have utilized the services of the Beehive to enhance their success – including (left) TourErie, (top) Bad Larry BBQ Tools and Accessories, and (bottom) Brokenstraw Outdoors.

cally-run boutique, will enhance any pet’s “purr”sonal closet with the combo of fashionable and functional products. Consider styling your four-legged companions with custom-fit, one-of-a-kind accessories like cozy pajamas or chic crocheted neck scarves. Puppers also stocks toys, beds, and pet-sized couches they can use all year round.

Bad Larry BBQ Tools and Accessories

badlarrybbq.com

Bad Larry BBQ Tools and Accessories has your grilling aficionado covered this holiday season. The Warren, Pennsylvania company’s heavy-duty, stainless steel barbecue tools are made in the U.S., ready to elevate any pitmaster’s favorite pastime. Whether you grab a pair of tongs, a spatula, or opt for the full BBQ tool set, they’ll be ready for summer 2025 (or whenever you bust the grill out). The double-pronged grill skewers are especially sharp. A four-pack at only \$12 is perfect for some shrimp, chicken, and vegetable kabobs.

GramE’s Kitchen

grames-kitchen.square.site/

GramE’s Kitchen offers delicious (and addictive) snack mixes to please salty and sweet lovers alike. Your options include garlic ranch, jalapeno cheddar, chocolate and vanilla twist, and maple bacon. And if you’re having trouble choosing just one, the \$20 sampler box includes 10 assorted flavors. On top of securing some easy stocking stuffers, you’ll also be support-

ing a family-run local business and an operation dedicated to their late GramE. Purchase online, or find GramE’s Kitchen products at select Country Fair locations (see their Facebook for exact stores). You’ll also find the team at many regional events and festivals.

Spice Sisters

spicesisters.com

A business that recently relocated to Erie, the Spice Sisters bring a handcrafted and versatile line of spice blends, condiments, and sauces to the region. Take the “Dynamo Dust” as an example — described as a “roast rub and stuffing blend,” you can also use it to flavor soups, sauces and dips, along with dusting potatoes and even baked goods. The extra spicy “Roarin’ Russum,” featuring South Asian flavors, can be used as a broth/gravy/soup thickener, or you can use it as a base for chutney. Browse their webstore for more global creations, or head over to the Erie Food Co-Op (1341 W. 26th St.)

Brokenstraw Outdoors

brokenstrawoutdoors.shop

Based out of North East, Brokenstraw Outdoors is home to “The Boss,” a shooting rail/rest that attaches above a hunter’s tree stand and that helps you achieve an accurate and safe shot. Hunters will love how they can adjust the device quickly and quietly, allowing them to sit or stand, and they’ll appreciate that it’s constructed from American-made steel (it will also stand up to the pesky Pennsyl-

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vania elements). The innovative product was selected as a finalist for the 2024 Ben Franklin Technology Partners' TechCelerator.

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Tour Erie

toureriepa.com

Led by lifelong Erieites and the mother-daughter team of Heather and Lauren Cass, Tour Erie offers educational adventures throughout our city. The "Best of Erie's Bayfront" experience, which you book throughout winter, has segments on the War of 1812, the Battle of Lake Erie, local landmarks (Bicentennial Tower, the library smokestack), and more. This tour lasts between 90 minutes and two hours, and it covers about 1.5 miles over mostly flat terrain. The new business just recently finished up a highly successful run of their "Eerie Stories" tours. A perfect gift for those visiting the city or those who just want to reconnect with the town around them.

North Edge Craft Coffee

northedgecoffee.com

This local coffee roaster has an eclectic blend of caffeine-charged options, spanning local inspiration, international origins, and pop culture. Their Bali Blue Moon product is a local favorite, as it's "organically grown in Indonesia" and described as having "prominent chocolate notes and rich earthy undertones." Meanwhile, their newer flavored roasts feature a revolutionary, natural infusion method that includes more organic ingredients and no chemicals or oils. North Edge achieved recent acclaim through their partnership with FanDuel Sportsbook and their product for the women's soccer World Cup. Buy all their roasts at their website or at their physical location (1222 Linden Ave.)



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The Bee's Knees: Bespoke Tailoring Brings Age-Old Craftsmanship to Erie

Entrepreneurial couple sets up shop in historic Masonic Temple

By: **Chloe Forbes**

A true art form never goes out of style, and a new venture in Erie looks to prove that. Young couple Barbie Harkins and Mitch Yaple are opening Bespoke Tailoring this holiday season to provide high-quality services and clothing that doesn't burn a hole in your pocket.

The two busy bees will open their doors in the Masonic Temple on West Eighth Street downtown.

Bespoke Tailoring will include formal menswear alterations, custom suiting, vintage clothing, and more. Harkins, 25, landed on the tailoring scene in Erie after graduating from Mercyhurst University's fashion merchandising program in 2018 and apprenticing as a tailor at Isaac Baker Tailoring. She gained attention during the pandemic when she began posting her creations to Instagram and TikTok, including crocheted work and dresses made from recycled fabric and thrifted jeans. People began recognizing her when visiting Primo Tailoring, where she did alterations. "I feel like that was one of the first times that I thought, 'maybe I'm a little bit good at what I do'" Harkins said modestly.

Yaple, 23, entered the picture in 2023. Yaple's strong suit is thrifting and styling; he's been into fashion ever since he was old enough to shop at Salvation Army with his mother. When they first started dating, Harkins enjoyed when Yaple would thrift pants and bring them in for Harkins to alter before going out to dinner. "That was the most fun because we could play around with different hem lengths and what he could style stuff with," Harkins said. "I used to go thrifting by myself and be like, 'This would be so much more fun with a boyfriend.' Then I got one."

The two attended a menswear exhibition in Chicago this summer in preparation for Bespoke's opening. Their main priority is high-quality yet affordable clothing. As a tailor, Harkins noted the traditional career paths are to work in a tailoring shop or open a shop. She thought there was enough demand in Erie to open a shop. Bespoke Tailoring will be special in that it offers women's alterations in addition to men's, so clients can bring their wedding dresses or women's formalwear into the shop.

As Erie County natives, Yaple and Harkins know and see their clients regularly. As economic hardships strain a lot of families, it became a priority to them to give people the best value. "I think it should be attainable for everyone, so I want to make it so that everyone can afford to look good," Harkins said. "Nobody likes getting ripped off. It doesn't matter how much money you have," Yaple added.

As for the name, Harkins said her side work kept building and multiple people told her she should open a shop and name it Bespoke, which means specially made for someone. The logo depicts a bee holding a needle and was designed by Erie native and graphic designer Moira Dieteman. "I love a logo where the mascot is doing something a little silly," Harkins said, smiling.

Yaple picked the location, which he said was a fitting choice. He recalled seeing the corner store empty for most of his lifetime and wanted to revive the space. "It's



Barbie Harkins (right), a Mercyhurst University fashion merchandising program grad and partner Mitch Yaple are bringing a custom tailoring business to Downtown Erie – featuring alteration services and vintage and thrifted items nestled in a Masonic Temple storefront.

exciting to bring new life into it, honestly," Yaple said. "It kind of just ties in nicely with what we do — it fits our style a lot because we're into vintage." The Masonic Temple is on the National Register of Historic Places after being built in 1909 in a Renaissance Italian style with marble corridors and intricate woodwork. While making design choices, the two wanted to create a cozy, old-fashioned, Wes Anderson-esque atmosphere that welcomes guests.

"In the past few years, anytime somewhere gets renovated, it's just gray like all the life is sucked out of it. We want colors in there," Yaple said.

They also hope to bring in products from other small businesses in the future. Yaple is a reformed fast-fashion buyer and wants to help others create a wardrobe with higher-quality fabrics that are more sustainable. They encourage bringing in vintage pieces to be reworked and tailored to give them as long of a lifetime as possible. "Everybody uses [online fast fashion retailers] Temu and Shein, and has seen the shortcomings of it and where it's being manufactured," Yaple said, mentioning that he rarely buys anything new anymore.

The two categorize their styles as preppy-adjacent which makes use of timeless pieces. "I feel like I'll watch what's trending and see where it would fit into my own style," Harkins said. Growing up, Harkins said she was inspired by fashion designers on television. "When I was a child, I watched *Project Runway*, like the OG *Project Run-*

way," she said, noting Christian Siriano was her favorite. In high school, she created a dress made from newspaper, showcasing her skills at an early age.

And although the two young business owners are known for their sense of style and witty humor, they don't want to be taken lightly. They're here to roll up their sleeves and get down to business. "I don't want anybody to leave feeling like we didn't hook them up. It needs to fit perfectly before you go out the door, we're not trying to half-ass it," Yaple said. "I want them to feel like they can trust us — that they're getting a fair exchange."

Sticking to the Bespoke name, the duo wants clients to have an experience rather than just a piece of clothing. Suits are crafted using the exact measurements and preferences of an individual, and part of honoring a tailor's craftsmanship includes fittings until someone is satisfied and dressed to kill. Harkins said that no matter what size, shape, age, or gender someone is, the feeling of having something that fits perfectly is unrivaled. Seeing someone confidently wearing a piece of clothing she altered drives her work, and she hopes to continue expanding that presence for years to come.

You can find Bespoke Tailoring on Facebook or Instagram at @bespoke_erie

Chloe Forbes is a local journalist. Reach her at chloeforbes14@gmail.com.

Less and More Than Demure: The Independently Glamorous Life of Kay Laurell

The short life story of Erie's own old-Hollywood and Broadway starlet

By: Jonathan Burdick

For a decade, Kay Laurell was one of the best known Broadway starlets and silent film actresses in the country. This “reigning queen of the Bohemian world” was also, as theatrical writer William Johnston noted in 1924, as “verdant a small-town girl as ever came to Broadway.”

She was born Ruth M. Leslie on June 28, 1890 (sometimes incorrectly listed as 1894) to George and Adela Hall Leslie, one of four children alongside her older brother Raleigh and younger twin sisters Mary and Agnes. In 1898, then living in New Castle, the family experienced tragedy: George died by suicide. Soon after, Adela relocated the family not far from her hometown of Wattsburg to a home on Poplar Street in North East, then a town of about 2,000 residents.

At North East High School, Ruth was active and well-liked. She read the class poem at her graduation ceremony in 1909 and gave a toast at the banquet titled “Old Friends.” She was already dreaming of New York City, but more than anything, she just wanted to be successful at something. *Anything*. She struggled with self-doubt. Despite being a quick learner, she felt she lacked any marketable skills. Yet, as an 1930 exposé read, “an ambition flamed inside her.”

So, she worked and she saved. In 1911, she left North East for Detroit followed by Chicago and then Cleveland. There, she lived with an aunt and worked an office job, but eventually quit and moved back home after a man in her office kept aggressively insisting that she marry him. Back in Erie County, she secured employment as “telephone exchange girl” and then a

stenographer in the city.

During these years, Ruth was described as “winsome, appealing, and sympathetic” towards others. Personally though, she was deeply dissatisfied. “I know there is something I can do better than all this,” she believed. She decided that only in New York City could she truly discover herself.

In 1914, she moved to Manhattan. En route, she said goodbye to Ruth Leslie and reinvented herself as Kay Laurell. She promptly stumbled into a modeling gig, becoming a muse for famous artists such as William Glackens, Howard Chandler Christy, James Montgomery Flagg, and Harrison Fisher. “All the great names in America’s roster of art found inspiration in her,” one 1915 article declared.

This was when Broadway’s Florenz Ziegfeld Jr., credited by some as “the man who created show business,” discovered Laurell. He immediately offered her a role as one of his “Ziegfeld Girls” in his popular Broadway institution: the Ziegfeld Follies.

The Follies was an extravagant yearly Broadway show that Ziegfeld started in 1907. These shows were a combination of vaudeville and variety show with the singing and dancing Ziegfeld Girls (and their often elaborate and risqué outfits) being center stage. While the Manhattan critics preferred more serious productions, the shows still played to sold out crowds at the New Amsterdam Theatre at 214 W. 42nd St.

Laurell was an immediate star. One friend later argued that while she wasn’t the most talented on stage, she was a “tigress of a woman” and “one of the great *femmes fatales*” of Broadway. She was magnetic. The audience couldn’t take their eyes off her.

“[W]hatever unkind critics may at times say, Mr. Ziegfeld still possesses a certain genius for selection,” stated *Vanity Fair*. “Miss Laurell is an impressive and delightful figure.”

“Until a few weeks ago, Miss Laurell had never appeared on any stage. Now she has eminent rank in the beauty chorus of the Ziegfeld Follies,” reported the Pittsburgh Press. These stories almost always objectified Laurell’s physical appearance and her role as the “most beautiful of the Ziegfeld girls.” Columnist Winifred Van Duzer went as far as calling her “the most beautiful chorus girl in the history of the stage.”

“Her features are absolutely perfect,” Ziegfeld himself said. “Of all the women I have engaged for my companies, and I have specialized in beauty for many years, I believe Miss Kay Laurell deserves to be called the most beautiful.” Ziegfeld entered her photograph into an “America’s Loveliest Women Contest.” She placed fourth, winning \$250. As described in *The Washington Times* at the time, she then entered a beauty contest in the city winning out against 100 others and netting a \$5,000 prize before winning another beauty contest in Chicago for the same amount — an astronomical amount of money at a time when the average working man was netting under \$700 yearly.

DEC 1919 SHADOWLAND MAGAZINE



Born in North East, Pennsylvania as Ruth M. Leslie in 1890, Kay Laurell's star-quality was recognized at an early age and she eventually made her way to New York City and became a regular in the Ziegfeld Follies before going on to star in motion pictures and on Broadway.

As for Laurell, outwardly at least, the objectification didn’t bother her. She was savvy and quickly capitalized on her newfound fame. With her contest winnings and a weekly pay of \$50 (the equivalent of about \$1,500 today), this was far more money than this small town girl from Erie County ever could have imagined, enough that she was always able to send some home for her mother.

By early 1915, Laurell was appearing in advertisements, on calendars, in an exercise column, and being asked for advice by fashion columnists. Once, she went out in public wearing an ankle watch. One columnist wondered if wristwatches would soon be an accessory of the past. An account from 1926 even claimed that Laurell was responsible for the popularity of the short bob haircuts among the young flappers of that era. Then there were the gossip columns. They couldn’t get enough of her either.

While she did engage in the city’s nightlife, she still spent a lot of her free time alone. She read often. Her personal library eclipsed 500 books. She studied French and Spanish, took classes on manners and etiquette and formal speech, and spent hours learning to golf and ride horses. “She dreamed of mingling in international society,” one biographer noted. “She wanted to be able to meet anyone in the world and feel at ease.”

She embedded herself deeply in the New York cultural and social scenes. According to famed writer and acquaintance H.L. Mencken, she also could be very guarded. Once one was in her confidence though



Kay Laurell starred alongside Russell Simpson in the 1919 film *The Brand*. One critic noted that she was “graceful beyond description,” and she went on to star in two additional major motion pictures before she decided to return to Broadway.

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she, much to his amusement, became “a walking encyclopedia of the town scandal.”

“She had all of the equipment needed in her profession,” Mencken continued. She was also, he said, an “extremely shrewd judge” of men, an important instinct for a young woman in the city. To the countless men, many of them very wealthy, who pursued her, she often came off as “cold and single-purposed,” one biographer wrote. Mencken recounted a time that an affluent American man, enormously rich from the Cuban sugar boom, tried to seduce her with “gorgeous inducements” to run off to Cuba with him. “She was, of course, not inclined to anything of the sort, but she managed to get a ruby worth \$30,000 out of him,” explained Mencken. He said that she, quite brilliantly, had an ongoing deal with a nearby Tiffany’s: she’d sell the extravagant gifts she received from men at top dollar and then she’d wear imitations knowing most people couldn’t tell the difference. While Mencken described her as a person of great character, he also added that she had no ethical qualms over swindling her “rich admirers.”

“She once told me that any woman ... could get money out of men by sleeping with them, but that she thought it took real skill to get the money and evade the sleeping,” he recalled. “[S]he wanted to demonstrate her virtuosity, even if only to herself.”

“She wasn’t very sentimental, but I thought she was marvelous,” actress and friend Helen Hayes recalled. “She was authentic. The skull and crossbones were right out there on the label for all to see.”

Laurell, while not inventing it, helped popularize the term “gold digger.” While sitting in the lobby of the Ritz Carlton Hotel with playwright and friend Avery Hopwood, she waved to another friend, playfully saying, “Hello, gold digger!” As described in Brian Donovan’s 2020 book *American Gold Digger*, Laurell meant this as a self-aware joke, not an insult.

“That’s what we call ourselves!” she told Hopwood, who’d never heard the term. “You men don’t give something for nothing — why should we?” Hopwood enjoyed the exchange so much that he spent five weeks writing the script for *The Gold Diggers* about three showgirls living in Manhattan. It ran for nearly 300 performances on stage, grossed nearly \$2 million, and was adapted as a motion picture.

Soon, Laurell began prepping for her second year with the Follies. An elaborate set was built with the spectacular sight of a pool of water flanked by thick shrubbery and two large golden elephants. Emerging from the water was Laurell as Greek goddess Aphrodite.

She was also now making considerably more money. When rumors circulated that she was getting married, she denied it. “Why should I?” she asked. “Mr. Ziegfeld gives me \$500 a week. I have my own apartment, my own car, my own maids — well, that’s enough.”

In 1916, after the closing of the latest Follies production, she was offered \$500 a week (around \$14,500 adjusted for inflation) to appear on stage in England. That May, while living in London, she shocked many of her friends and fans: Laurell *had* married. His name was Winfield R. Sheehan, a former reporter

who was now managing the newly formed Fox Film Corporation. They had known each other casually, but the relationship had progressed when he’d been in London on business.

“Well, we’ve got to give up hope about Kay Laurell, boys,” penned the editor of the Tacoma Times. “She’s married.”

Upon returning stateside, she didn’t join any productions. She told the Erie Daily Times while visiting her mother that she’d simply been living a private life at their Upper West Side home at 210 W. 90th St. She was considering doing a motion picture though, perhaps influenced by her husband’s new job.

In reality though, the marriage was troubled from the start. After word spread of their surprise matrimony, Julia Beaubien, another Broadway actress, sued Sheehan for \$75,000 over a “breach of promise” that he was to marry *her*. She’d stopped working, as per his request, and they’d even had a wedding date. The betrayal was a tabloid sensation. While there was some villainization of Laurell, mostly she too was portrayed as a victim suffering “personal grief” over Sheehan’s actions. It was settled out of court for a “substantial sum.”

Sheehan revealed his true colors at home too. He was increasingly jealous and possessive of Laurell. He also became violent. The final straw was in June 1917 when he chased her around their apartment, threatening to “cut out her eyes and disfigure her face,” before he “severely and violently struck and beat [her] about the head and face, knocking her down with great violence and rendering her unconscious.” She left him and petitioned the court for a divorce. In her complaint, she alleged severe cruelty and “unkind, harsh, and tyrannical conduct” and argued that her life was in danger if she stayed with him.

Laurell suffered a nervous breakdown. She spent a few weeks at a mineral springs resort in West Virginia where she decided she *must* get back on stage. After returning to the city, it was announced with much excitement that Laurell would rejoin the Follies for their 1918 show.

With the United States now fighting in the Great War, Ziegfeld decided to center the production around patriotism. The dancers all wore flags of America’s allies and he recruited big names like W.C. Fields, Will Rogers, Eddie Cantor, and Ann Pennington.

Ziegfeld also decided he wanted one of the dancers to be topless, exploiting a loophole in the law that permitted a woman to show her breasts on stage as long as she was standing still. Laurell volunteered. The show opened with the stage lit from darkness with Laurell portraying the Spirit of the Allies, standing still on top of a massive rotating globe as soldiers beneath her charged across No Man’s Land and the chorus girls portrayed Red Cross workers. There were a few negative reactions to the nudity, but it received rather warm reviews from critics who described it as “gorgeous entertainment” with “humor, beauty, [and] color skillfully blended.”

Laurell also returned to socializing with a diverse and eclectic group. She began casually seeing Edgar Selwyn, a gentle-natured actor turned stage manager. As explained by Mencken, Selwyn *desperate-*

WILLIAM JAMES GLACKENS



Kay Laurell inspired many in different ways, but her beauty was often a muse – for example, in this portrait by artist William James Glackens entitled *Café Lafayette* (Portrait of Kay Laurell), completed in 1914. When Laurell initially moved away from North East, one of her first jobs was modeling for artists.

ly wanted to marry Laurell, but her divorce wasn't finalized nor was his — and, although she cared for him, she wasn't too interested in marriage. In fact, in one tabloid, Laurell outright said that some women shouldn't bother getting married at all.

Others in her circle included socialite Reginald Vanderbilt and esteemed lawyer Clarence Darrow. She appeared in the writings of F. Scott Fitzgerald, who recalled a memorable time he rode in a Fifth Avenue taxi cab with a “wistful” Laurell and magazine editor George Jean Nathan. In one tabloid, they posted photographs of her in Miami where she was “mingling with a number of other celebrities” at a popular resort.

As for the Follies, while the productions were very popular spectacles and gave her a successful career, Laurell desired to be viewed as an *actress*, not just a performer. She soon got her big break in Hollywood. In 1919, she was cast in Rex Beach's *The Brand* — “a

drama of stormy passions and frozen trails” — about Laurell's character struggling in an Alaska mining town and clashing with an evil gambler. In Erie, this played at the Aris Theater in a double-bill with Charlie Chaplin's *Easy Street*. Reviews were very positive. “She is both graceful and beautiful and shows promise as an actress,” read one.

“Graceful beyond description, Miss Laurell does not present the conventional figure of the motion picture actress who only pretends to dance and sing,” another critic wrote. “She entertains the crowd of miners [in the film] as if her life depended on it.” Indeed, never known as a great dancer on stage, when she discovered that she'd be dancing in the film, she went all-in to prepare.

That same year, she also had a supporting role in *The Valley of the Giants*, a romantic drama about two rival logging companies. Her third and final picture was 1921's drama *Lonely Heart*, in which Laurell was again the lead and demonstrated her “dramatic ability.”

After this though, Laurell desired to return to New York and focus on the stage. Broadway, she told the Erie Daily Times was “far more interesting” and she liked how “you have a greater chance to improve your work” over the run of a production. She joined Avery Hopwood's *Ladies' Night*, a three-act comedic sex farce that pushed boundaries. Reviews of her performance were positive, but were mixed for the show itself. One critic called it “hackneyed,” while another agreed that it was “obscene,” but also “ridiculously funny.”

Many took notice of the new direction in Laurell's career too. “[It] was not her desire to remain merely a Follies beauty,” a story in the Washington Times said, adding that she was coming to “full fruition” as an actress having “devoted her[self] assiduously to the study of her art.”

In February 1922, she joined the production of *The Naughty Wife* at the Colonial Theater. It was described as a well-written comedy, but reviews of her performance were harsh. The New York Star described her acting as “peculiar” and “nervous.” *Variety* published that the play “serves as a vehicle for Kay Laurell,” but that she was “merely ‘parroting lines’ and ‘moving mechanically.’” Back home, the Erie Daily Times defended Laurell from these critics, saying

that she “received more publicity as a girl with a perfect figure and a divorce than she has received in honest criticisms as an actress.”

Around this time, Laurell herself wrote a newspaper column about the “maelstrom” many Broadway actresses faced, from the temptations to the predatory behaviors. She didn't mince words. “[Many are] victims of drugs, drink, and other vices that sap them until the very end,” she said. “They fell into the pitfalls ... but [were] mostly victims of circumstance of the connivance of scoundrels ... from the fatherly old men called ‘daddies’ to the slicked haired lounge lizards.” These men were, she wrote, “human parasites.”

Laurell likely felt she had something to prove too. In early-1923, she joined the stage production of Kate McLaurin's *Whispering Wires*. Reviews of this performance were glowing. One of the critics didn't hide his shock with backhanded compliments.

“Little did I dream, when I used to see (and see so much of) Miss Laurel in the ‘Follies,’ that one night I should be sitting in a front row more or less excitedly measuring her qualifications as a clothed and serious actress,” he wrote. “Demure? No, that is not the word. She is less and more than demure. She is earnest rather than shy; she is trustful of her role rather than suspicious; she is as real as a girl can be or ought to be in this kind of play. ... I will go the length of saying that Kay Laurell adds a new name to my unlengthy list of actresses whose work is honest and personality persuasive.”

That April, she starred in a drama called *Cobra* at the Apollo Theatre. One critic complimented her “young rascality” in a performance that was “sordid, kindly, [and] intense.” She then traveled to Washington, D.C. where she acted in a brief production of *Up in Mabel's Room*, a comedy that received a favorable reception. After that closed, she joined an acting troupe alongside Peggy Wood where they traveled to Paris to perform American productions for a few months.

She visited Erie County when she could. In May 1924, she came home for the birth of Agnes' twins, Sheila and Carolyn, at St. Vincent Hospital. Billy Charles, in the Erie Daily Times, noted how easy she was to interview and how all she wanted to discuss was the newborn twins. He also admired how when she was back in town, it was as though she'd never left. He complimented her as “humble” and “very soothing to the

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optic” as well as “graceful, pretty, and well-mannered” with her shining bright blue eyes. He seemed surprised that she had arrived at the hospital dressed rather plainly, only with a “clever little hat” that hid her flapper-esque bob.

“[N]ever let anybody tell you she is a pretentious young lady just because her name has been featured in the theatrical world,” he said. A few months later, she was back in Erie when her nephew Richard, the “treasure of her life,” was struck by a car and broke his leg. She stayed by his bedside at Hamot Hospital during his weeklong recovery.

“[I]f we take it from the hardened metropolitan critics, she’s a real theatrical find,” the Erie Daily Times boasted after her next performance on a stage in Boston. She had worked *persistently* over the past decade to get where she was, they added. Next up was the Broadway production of F. Tennyson Jesse’s comedic play *Quarantine* at the Henry Miller Theatre. This was a huge hit, running from December 1924 through April 1925 with 150 performances. She then joined Henry Stillman’s *Nocturne* at the Punch and Judy Theatre, which didn’t find the success of *Quarantine*, but was still listed in one publication as one of the best plays of the year.

After that, she sailed back to Paris for her next show. Here, the story gets murky. At some point, she ended up in London, living out of the luxurious Carlton Hotel. She then abruptly withdrew from the public eye. Friends tried to convince her to get back on stage, but the increasingly reclusive Laurell refused. She wouldn’t return to performing until she could do so on her “usual terms,” she said.

Then, on Jan. 31, 1927, Laurell, at age 36, died. According to reports, she’d made “frantic phone calls” to friends from her hotel room, but was unable to get in touch with anyone. She told hotel management that she was fearing “impending death” and they summoned a doctor. Only he and a few of the hotel staff were present at her bedside. It took days for many to find out. She’d been checked into her

hotel as *Kay Leslie*, not Laurell, and that was initially how her death was reported. Within a few days though, news had traveled. Her death was first said to be from a blood clot while other publications cited pneumonia.

Now, there was the matter of settling her estate. Rumors circulated in the tabloids that she’d died penniless. They were wrong. Laurell had been *exceptionally* wealthy. From the start, she’d been careful with her money and investments. Her siblings initially petitioned the court that this inheritance should go to their mother — who was so sickly that they chose to keep the death from her, fearing the effects of such grief. When their mother died only a month later though, that complicated things.

Raleigh, now residing on Erie’s Holland Street, insisted that his sister’s divorce with Sheehan had been finalized, but he was unsure of the details. Meanwhile, a will surfaced in London. It was a brief six sentences long, finalized just days before her death. She left her property in England to Joseph Whiteside Boyle Jr., a businessman, and son of Klondike Joe, the famous Canadian adventurer. She’d been privately seeing him in the year leading up to her death while they awaited his divorce to be finalized.

It was *then* discovered that she left a *separate* fortune in the United States too, of which her will had made no mention. The battle over her stateside estate — valued at over \$80,000 (roughly \$1.5 million adjusted for inflation) — quickly made headlines. Raleigh determined legally he and his sisters were eligible to inherit it rather than her ex-husband or her boyfriend. Agnes, still living in North East, and Mary, now residing in Girard, agreed.

During this litigation, it became more clear *why* Kay Laurell was so reclusive in her final months. She’d been pregnant. Her death wasn’t from a blood clot or pneumonia. She’d died in her hotel room giving birth to her son: Joseph Kay Boyle. Joseph Whiteside Boyle Jr. was the *father*.

The siblings were blindsided. It wasn’t until 1930 that this news became public, meaning young Joseph was already nearly three years of age. He’d been living in the care of Ethel Anderson in Bangor, England. Coincidentally, just weeks before Laurell’s death, an English law had also passed stating children born out of wedlock were eligible as heirs. Not knowing this, she’d left her money for Boyle to ensure her son’s security. But now young Joseph himself had a legal claim to her English fortune — although the stateside fortune was another matter to settle.

Raleigh took the lead. He was determined to ensure that his nephew received the full inheritance. He and his lawyer traveled to England to investigate. “He returned satisfied that Boyle had from the time of the child’s birth sought to care for it and that furthermore, he had no wish to claim any part of the fortune,” it was reported. “[Raleigh’s] chief anxiety was that the child be cared for.”

The court agreed. The fortune was placed in a London bank as a trust for Joseph. “[When Joseph] looks at a picture of the mother he never knew in life, he will see a beautiful and tragic woman ... [who] assured his comfort in the future,” an account in the New Britain Herald stated.

“Happiness eluded Kay Laurell despite her success,” penned another. Perhaps though that was not true. As she matured, it always seemed to be more about *people* than the money or the stage or the fame. It was about her friends, her family, and those she loved.

Once while visiting Erie, she lost her purse. It had \$50 cash, some gold jewelry, a gold knife, and her lipstick. She offered the money, a sizable sum, as a reward to anyone who found it. “I do not care about the purse or the money,” she told the Erie Daily Times, “but it is so annoying to lose your address book, don’t you know?”

Jonathan Burdick runs the public history project *Rust & Dirt*. He can be reached at jburdick@eriereader.com



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Broken Open: The Art & Awakening of Nicholas Cardell Gore

Local artist discovers freedom in vulnerability

By: DaVona Pacley

Culminating with autumn's reflective and introspective energy, Nicholas Cardell Gore's inaugural solo exhibition *Give Me My Flowers* showcased "an artistic interpretation of elegant floral compositions, displaying vibrant colors and utilizing stylized forms to capture the delicate moments in nature's beautiful blossoms."

On opening night, Gore, an Erie native, Navy veteran, and mixed media artist, stood beside his beloved mother, Mary Johnson, a retired Army and Navy veteran. His heart overflowed with joy as he shared his new creations with his partner, family, community members, and, especially his mother.

While admiring Gore's artwork, standing next to the painting "If It Was Ever Hard To Love You," a wave of emotion came over me. The colors, imagery, and textures evoked deep feelings of grief, joy, happiness, and sorrow. Inspired by the depth and complexity of his work, I felt compelled to learn more about the inspiration behind it and his journey.

Gore's journey back home to Erie was driven by personal tragedy and loss: from ending a 10-year marriage to the passing of his cousin in January 2023 and then his aunt, the mother of his cousin in October. "I was going through it. Divorce, death ... I've lost people in the military but I didn't really grieve or allow myself to grieve," Gore states. He did what a lot of guys do — he bottled up his emotions, trying to live up to the "men are supposed to be tough" trope. But that frame of mind had him reflecting on what was truly important in his life. These events marked a turning point, pushing him to reevaluate his priorities and future. "I felt like I was being broken open at the end of last year and the beginning of this year." Gore shares a line from a poem, "I am not broken, I am free," elaborating that it's not a sign of weakness but a sign of personal freedom.

During his last visit with his cousin in the hospital, Gore mentioned feeling conflicted about a decision to either accept a job opportunity in Chicago with an organization dedicated to housing veterans or to pursue a career in art. He had recently completed a commissioned portrait piece for former Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, who is transitioning from the public to the private sector. At the ceremony, Gore, ex-

hilarated by the experience, recognized that he wanted to continue doing work that he was passionate about and that would make a positive impact on the community. Gore recalled that this was how he wanted to feel: "I want to do my work and be appreciated for it." This conversation with his cousin would be the catalyst that led Gore back home and to immersing himself into his art.

As an only child raised by a working military mother, he spent a lot of his formative years playing sports, drawing, reading books, and bonding with his cousins and friends. From an early age, he showed a deep interest in art, inspired by the natural world and his surroundings. His main influence was Bob Ross, whose philosophy of "painting what you see, and what you want to see in the world" deeply impacted Gore's approach. Another influence was music, especially soul, jazz, funk, R&B, and culture across the African diaspora, including the way people live and express themselves in the Deep South.

Gore, a self-taught artist, chose media — acrylics, watercolor, and oil pastels — that allow him to capture the energy and vibrancy of his subjects. His work often reflects the richness of Black culture, blending bold colors with textured layers and accents. His process is intuitive, often beginning with soulful music, a candle, burning incense, and a clear mind to set the tone.

In Erie, while growth is happening, our community is grappling with racial and socioeconomic disparities. And Gore is demure, aware of the privilege he had since being embraced by the community, but also mindful of the challenges he might encounter as a Black artist. When he arrived in Erie in March 2023, he brought with him a portfolio of completed artworks and experience in community engagement. Eager to integrate into the artistic community and community at large along with his desire to express his art through more storytelling, this intention came to fruition.

Last summer, Gore received the opportunity to showcase his work at Glass Growers Gallery. Excitedly, Gore communicated his desire for enhanced storytelling, notably with a focus on cultural narratives — however the clients and space prefer traditional art forms such as landscapes, portraits, nature and Erie based imagery — but in the end the brief exhibition spurred Gore to create an ex-



Local visual artist Nicholas Cardell Gore sits down with DaVona Pacley to discuss the work presented in his first solo exhibition, his inspiration, his history, and his multi-disciplinary creative vision for the future.

hibit that would appeal to this audience.

Give Me My Flowers embodies many layers of meaning for Gore. On a foundational level, it expresses his desire for not just recognition and appreciation of his artistic endeavors while he is still alive to receive and cherish it. This sentiment sheds light on acknowledging and valuing artists, especially Black artists for their contributions; and how they want to express their creativity in the present.

In addition, the exhibit signifies the complex emotional perspective Gore navigated during this transformative phase of his life. It signifies his journey through grief, the courage to embark on new beginnings, and the profound experience of "breaking open" — shedding societal expectations and embracing his authentic self as artist and human being. In essence, *Give Me My Flowers* symbolizes Gore's resilience, vulnerability, and the blossoming of his artistic expression amidst life's complexities.

Gore's journey reflects a commitment to self-discovery, reinvention, newfound love, and cultural expression. Following his life-changing decision to return home, Gore now focuses on creating

art that resonates with personal and cultural significance as well as experiences that bring him wholehearted joy. Through his art, Gore seeks to capture the beauty, strength, and resilience of his community, leaving a lasting impact on those who view his work. Although he desires one thing for our artistic community: "I wish more artists in Erie were more curious and supported other artists outside their direct field. I enjoy theater, music, poetry, literature and dance as much as painting; these art forms give me inspiration for my work ... and sometimes I just want to support other people's work."

The digital gallery of "Give Me My Flowers" can be viewed online at glassgrowersgallery.com.

Nicholas Cardell Gore can be found at nicholascardellgore.com

DaVona Pacley (she/they) is the founder of Flow Freely, a holistic wellness business offering inclusive doula support, Reiki, and meditation services, and also serves as a public relations associate for Journey to a Trauma Informed Life. She can be reached at davona@flowfreely.space

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Andrew Gage, MD

Dr. Gage earned his medical degree from State University of New York at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences, where he also com-



pleted an orthopaedic surgery residency. He served as a fellow and clinical instructor in orthopaedic sports medicine at Brown University, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. Dr. Gage specializes in sports medicine, total joint replacement, and anterior hip procedures.

“UPMC Sports Medicine provides care to the recreational weekend athlete, collegiate level, semiprofessional, and everyone in between,” says Erin Terry, supervisor, athletic training and development, and UPMC Sports Medicine service line lead in Erie.

Brian Still, MD

Dr. Still received his medical degree from Medical University of South Carolina and completed an orthopaedic surgery residency at UPMC Hamot. He completed his orthopaedic sports medicine fellowship at the University of Chicago. Dr. Still's clinical

interests include sports medicine and knee arthroplasty.

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Francis Foti II, DO

Dr. Foti is certified in family medicine and sports medicine by the American Osteopathic Board of Family Physicians. He completed his fellowship and medical degree at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and his residency at Washington Hospital.

Matthew Heitzenrater, DO

Dr. Heitzenrater is certified in family medicine and sports medicine by the American Board of Family Medicine. He earned his medical degree from Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and completed his residency and fellowship at AHN Saint Vincent in Erie.

Contact Us

To learn more or schedule an appointment, call 814-877-6195 or visit UPMC.com/ErieSportsMedicine.

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EVENTS

Erie Philharmonic Presents Three Concerts Through December

Bolero, *Frozen*, and Holiday Pops come to the Warner

In November and December, the Erie Philharmonic will present a trio of concerts in their Symphonic and Pops Series. From Maurice Ravel's steady rhythms of *Bolero* and Duke Ellington's jazz-inspired symphonic triptych *The Three Black Kings* to the music of Disney and the holiday season, the Erie Philharmonic's musical selections will bring variety and excitement into the final months of 2024.

Bolero **SATURDAY, NOV. 9**

The Symphonic Series continues with a repertoire that spans genres, starting with Maurice Ravel's *Bolero*. One of Ravel's final compositions before his death, the dance was commissioned by Russian dancer Ida Rubinstein and premiered on Nov. 22, 1928 at the Palais Garnier in Paris. Accompanying the feature work is Franz Liszt's third symphonic poem, *Les préludes*, Duke Ellington's final composition *The Three Black Kings*, and Christopher Theofanidis's *The Universe in Ecstatic Motion*, featuring flutist Marina Piccinini as the featured soloist.

Frozen in Concert

BEGINNING SATURDAY, NOV. 16

Inspired by the classical fairytale *The Snow Queen* by Hans Christian Anderson, Disney's *Frozen* took audiences by storm, grossing over \$1.28 billion at the box office and winning Best Animated Feature and Best Original Song at the 2014 Oscars. The movie will be projected on-screen in the Warner Theatre as the orchestra performs the music. Robert and Kristian-Anderson Lopez, who had previously written the music and lyrics for *The Book of Mormon*, wrote 25 songs for the film, with eight appearing in the final cut. Composer Christopher Becke incorporated musical influences from the Sámi culture of Norway for his score, including traditional instruments and singing styles.

Come Home for the Holidays **SATURDAY, DEC. 7**

Come Home for the Holidays features the Erie Philharmonic Chorus and youth choirs performing alongside the orchestra. Featured ballet dancers will accompany the music, taking audiences on a journey with the sounds of the holidays



During the weeks between the Reader's November and December issue there will be three separate performances of the Erie Philharmonic at the Warner Theatre including *Bolero*, Disney's *Frozen*, and the ever-popular *Home for the Holidays* concert.

and a joyful celebration of music. Past performances have featured Leroy Anderson's "Sleigh Ride" and "A Christmas Festival," popular holiday classics including "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" and "The Christmas Song," and traditional choral music such as "Angels'

Carol" by English composer John Rutter. — Thomas Taylor

Saturday performances begin at 7:30 p.m., Sunday matinees begin at 3 p.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // \$17-\$66 // For tickets: eriephil.org



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BACKGROUND IMAGE: FROM A DISTANCE, QIAN LI

Take a Stroll Down to Avenue Q at PACA

Hit musical deals with real life lessons the way only puppets can

BEGINNING THURSDAY, NOV. 14

Gen X and younger have historically learned a lot from puppets. Counting, reading, and sharing have been pretty standard fare for puppet-based shows targeting a young audience for decades. But what if similar puppets could teach more adult lessons once a generation of children moves into adulthood? That's the primary theme of *Avenue Q*, a parody of those children's shows that so many of us remember so fondly, packaged for grown-ups. The show, written by Jeff Marx and Robert Lopez (composer *Book of Mormon*, *Frozen*, *Coco*), was a Broadway hit for over six years, winning multiple Tony Awards, before closing in 2009. Now, you can see a local rendition right here in Erie, at PACA, playing for seven shows this month.

Co-collaborators KC McCloskey and B.J. Waide, with cast and crew, have been pitching in on so many different things, in so many different ways, that as of press time they aren't sure exactly how the contributions will be playbilled. Per McCloskey, "B.J. Waide stepped up to direct, and through that it's become a true collaborative process, with the cast helping out with all the pieces, with directing, vocals, costumes, puppets, etc. We haven't, as a group, quite figured out how to bill the production because of that." McCloskey adds, "I think it's just important to highlight coming together and the collaborative process. They've all been so awesome and pitched in and I can't express my gratitude enough. They all deserve so much credit." B.J. Waide agrees, "It is 100 percent a collab

and doing that makes the work more personal for the entire cast. Having your thoughts and ideas actually heard and utilized is an entirely different animal."

Working with puppets presents additional and unique challenges. "I've never worked with puppets before," says Waide. "I keep telling everyone that the puppet is the character and they are one unit," she says. McCloskey adds, "We have a blend of people who've worked with puppets and people who haven't. It's been a fun challenge for everyone learning how they work and how to best present themselves and their puppets."

When asked to describe this show, McCloskey explained, "It highlights the struggle of trying to find your place in the world, navigating relationships, friendships, financial struggles, racism, and the importance of being able to live in the present and be true to yourself. It's funny, touching, and raunchy." Waide adds, "When people come to see this amazing show I want them to understand that even though it touches on real topics, it is 'PC' fun that ribs everyone. No class or culture is harmed in the making of the show." — Edwina Capozziello

Note from the cast and crew: this is an adult production with adult content, language, and situations

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, Nov. 14 through 16 at 7:30 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, Nov. 22 and 23 at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Nov. 24 at 2:00 p.m. // 1505 State St., 2nd Fl. // \$20 // For tickets and info: tickets.eriereader.com



Join the cast of *Avenue Q* and their puppets as they produce the Marx and Lopez musical comedy on the PACA stage. A Gen X parody of children's educational public programming, this "funny, touching, and raunchy" production is for adults only.



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EVENTS

Altered State Distillery Celebrates Five Years in High Spirits

A weekend of live music scheduled to say thank you to Erie

BEGINNING FRIDAY, NOV. 15

The first five years of owning any business can be tough, especially when a good chunk of that time was during the COVID-19 pandemic, but Altered State Distillery has grown and thrived. With the recent addition of a kitchen, patrons can now enjoy delicious food along with their craft libations. Altered State Distillery is hosting a fifth anniversary celebration that kicks off on Friday, Nov. 15 and will feature Erie's premier party funk group Phunkademic, along with craft cocktail specials. The party continues on Saturday with music from Cosmic Rhythm followed by a special acoustic brunch on Sunday featuring Lopaka Roots.

Owner and distiller Gavin Maus says, "This is all to thank Erie for supporting us and voting for us every year as the Best Distillery in the area."

The idea for opening a distillery came after Maus found himself unemployed after 29 years as a sales engineer for a local machine manufacturer. Maus states, "My wife and I took a vacation to visit relatives and came back with an idea. Based on reviewing the industry nationally and its growth, along with my love of brewing, we saw an opportunity in the distillery market." Maus then began honing in his skills, doing research, and cre-

ating connections with other distilleries in the region.

Altered State started out with the idea of putting a big city cocktail bar in a small town, and developing their craft cocktails using syrups, house-made vermouth and coffee liquor, and a mango habanero infusion to create their unique flavors. Maus spoke on how the business has grown over the last half a decade. "We started hosting music regularly and became a music venue with our booking manager. This grew our business exponentially."

Once Altered State began featuring live music they became a stop for fans, specifically in the genres of jam, funk, and jazz. "We developed our marketing around concert posters. The artist John Vogl created our labels. He worked with bands such as String Cheese Incident, Ray LaMontagne, Trey Anastasio, Primus — the list goes on. As a musician at heart and my wife a lover of music, it made sense. Without her we wouldn't have the quality of bands that fit our style," states Maus.

The concerts are free and that's also important as Maus explained, "Free music in a small town enables folks the ability to come and have some drinks and enjoy themselves. It is getting much more expensive for us small businesses

CONTRIBUTED



Celebrate with Altered State as they recognize their fifth year in business with a weekend long slate of live music, specials, and food designed to thank their loyal customers for their support.

to afford these bands, but we will keep trying as long as we can."

The state of Altered State shows growth — with new products in the works including a Blue Dent Corn Bourbon and a Rosen Rye Whiskey, which both use heirloom grains grown at Fayette Farms in Girard. Maus also said that all their barrels are made from Pennsylvania white oak. Help keep it local and

head to Altered State to raise a glass, bust a move, and celebrate five years of success. The party starts at 6 p.m. with Phunkademic starting shortly thereafter. — Larry Wheaton

Friday, Nov. 15 from 6 to 9 p.m., Saturday from 7 to 10 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. // Altered State Distillery, 1535 W. 8th St. // 21+ // Free entry

Copper Carriage Holiday Market

Shop small for antiques, handmade goods, and more

BEGINNING SATURDAY, NOV. 16

Copper Carriage is holding their second annual Holiday Market on Saturday, Nov. 16 and Sunday, Nov. 17. The event will host over 50 vendors including those selling antiques, vintage, handmade goods, and local art. The event spans two floors of the Masonic Temple of Erie.

"It's just a really great way for people to come and shop small in one location that is in a really cool, historical building," Stephanie Hunt, co-owner of Copper Carriage said about the event.

Copper Carriage regularly lives at 406 State St. and sells a variety of antique and vintage goods and occasionally partners with other small businesses in the area. "I feel like small businesses and the makers and vendors are this really tight-knit community in Erie," Hunt said. "We look out for each oth-

er."

Hunt said that she takes flyers advertising the Holiday Market to businesses outside of the Erie area as well, including Edinboro, Meadville, and Ashtabula. "I feel like it pulls in a lot of customers and people that maybe wouldn't come to Erie to do shopping," Hunt explained. Over 1,000 people shopped at last year's Holiday Market.

The event will kick off the holiday season with holiday music and food and drink vendors. Hunt encourages you to "grab your girlfriends, grab your family, go shop, hang out, and check out all of these cool things that people make and sell." — Alana Sabol

Saturday, Nov. 16 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 17 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. // Masonic Temple of Erie, 32 W. 8th St. // Free admission // For more info: coppercarriage.com

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The folks behind the antique shop Copper Carriage are bringing a can't-miss local vendor showcase to the Masonic Temple for their second annual Holiday Market. Shop local makers and small businesses as you take in the gorgeous, historic building and enjoy live music and local fare.



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What the Dickens? *A Dickens of a Carol* at Mercyhurst University

Playwright Mary Barile puts unique twist on a familiar classic

PREMIERING THURSDAY, NOV. 21

Did you feel those altogether brief but still foreboding chills in the air throughout the past couple of months? That was Erie's winter machine, just starting to rev its engine. Before you know it, the holidays will be upon us, and the Mercyhurst Theater Program is ready to get everyone in the jolly mood with their production of *A Dickens of a Carol*.

According to Dr. Brett D. Johnson, director of the university's theater program as well as director of this production, *Dickens* is inspired by one of author Charles Dickens' most beloved stories, *A Christmas Carol*. But, he said, "Playwright Mary Barile introduces a unique framing device to this cherished tale. It's Christmas Eve 1843 and Dickens welcomes his dear friend, Thomas Mitton, to celebrate the successful publication of his book."

Johnson continued, "As the two men

begin to read, the story comes to life within Dickens' study. Barile's humorous and heartfelt adaptation remains faithful to the original, featuring all the beloved characters — from Bob Cratchit and the three spirits to the Fezziwigs and Tiny Tim."

The cast is led by two guest artists, Dr. Doug Powers as Ebenezer Scrooge and Owen Hitt, who plays both Charles Dickens and Bob Cratchit, and rounded out by a whopping 24 Mercyhurst students. The show, which is recommended for ages 10 and up, is a special one, too, for Johnson, marking his 40th production with the Mercyhurst Theater Program.

"Reflecting on my 40th production as director ... fills me with immense pride and gratitude for the creative journey we've shared," said Johnson. "Each show has been a unique opportunity to collaborate with talented, hard-working students, and I look forward to con-



The Mercyhurst Theater Program will present their version of *A Christmas Carol* on the Taylor Little Theater stage this November to get you into the holiday spirit. *A Dickens of a Carol*, an inspiring adaptation of the original story, is sure to warm even the coldest humbug's heart.

tinuing to nurture their passion for the arts." — Cara Suppa

Thursday, Nov. 21 through 23 at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 24 at 2 p.m. // Taylor Little Theater, 501 E. 38th St. // \$5-\$15 // For tickets and info, visit: miac.mercyhurst.edu

Lake Effect Film Festival Shines a Spotlight on Erie Filmmakers

Celebrate local cinematic talent at 10/20 Collective

FRIDAY, NOV. 22

The inaugural Lake Effect Film Festival (LEFF) is looking to make waves this November at Erie's own 10/20 Collective, showcasing a number of films from Erie-based filmmakers. This remarkable new event, co-directed by festival founder Katie Nixon and program director Sarah MK Moody, promises to be a night to remember, celebrating Erie's burgeoning film community. The festival is working towards an evening of DIY creativity and cultural celebration.

"LEFF is Erie's premiere multi-genre film festival," says Nixon, the founder of Rhoxon Productions Inc. "For our inaugural year, we will be featuring Erie-born filmmakers. We have such wonderful talent here and we are honored to showcase such an amazing group of artists. This event will help establish Erie as a film hub and help to bring film jobs and art to our beautiful city."

Among other film screenings, the festival will feature the premiere of Nixon's long-gestating series *Silverwork*, adding another layer of intrigue to the event. With tickets ranging from \$30 for general admission to \$100 for VIP (including access to a private cocktail table and post-screening dance party), LEFF is pulling out all the stops for their first



The inaugural Lake Effect Film Festival will focus on Erie-born filmmakers, including the work of organizer Katie Nixon. Shown here is a behind-the-scenes look at her film series *Silverwork*, which will premiere at the festival.

event.

Set to be featured are a red carpet experience and cocktail-chic attire, blending an upscale experience with the heart of Erie's creative spirit. Interested parties can also take advantage of sponsorship opportunities to help support this groundbreaking event. "This is the

year to get in at the ground level," says Moody. "We see exponential growth from here, and hope our city embraces our festival and supports it for many years to come." — Aaron Mook

6 p.m. // 10/20 Collective, 1020 Holland St. // \$30 // For more info: 1020collective.com

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EVENTS

A Miracle on State Street: Shop Small Saturday 2024

The popular Small Business Saturday event continues to wow this November

SATURDAY, NOV. 30

Each year, the Saturday following Thanksgiving and Black Friday is dubbed Small Business Saturday, a day to celebrate and support the small businesses in the community. This year, the Erie Downtown Partnership (EDP) is taking the event to a new level.

Partnering with the Erie Downtown Development Corporation (EDDC), Copper Carriage, and Pointe Four Vintage, EDP's day of shopping is rebranding as "Miracle on State Street: A Shop Small Saturday in Downtown Erie." New this year is the launch of a window-decorating contest for businesses, sponsored by the EDP.

Businesses can apply to EDP to receive a stipend of \$200 to put toward the beautification and decoration of their storefront windows prior to Shop Small Saturday. The public will be able to vote for their favorite storefront decorations from that day (Saturday, Nov. 30) until the Erie Art Museum's Gallery Night two weeks later (Friday, Dec. 13). The winner of the contest will be announced the following week.

A plethora of local vendors will be featured in spaces including the Boston Store concourse, 1020 Collective, the Erie Art Museum, City Gallery, FEED Media Arts Center, and more. Brick-and-mortar businesses will also participate, with a full rundown of all locations included on the Shop Small map available on the day of the event.

Entertainment, food, beverages, and activities will be available in each main vendor location, and the Flagship City Food Hall will offer a free gift-wrapping station.

"Very few of our events touch every corner of downtown, but this one gets people walking and exploring from the bayfront all the way up to the tracks," said Dave Tamulonis, events and marketing manager for EDP. "I think walking is the best way to experience your environment and interact with your city and the people who live there."

Nostalgia is a huge motivator for the event as well. "It's awesome to see people do their holiday shopping downtown again," said Tamulonis. "I know a lot of people are nostalgic for the Boston



ERIE DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP

Small businesses in Downtown Erie, the concourse at the Boston Store, and Perry Square will be a bustling celebration of the power of shopping small. The day after Black Friday is known as Small Business Saturday and the folks at Erie Downtown Partnership are planning on making it easy and fun to shop small.

Store's participation and enjoy shopping for their gifts like they did when they were younger." — Ally Kutz

10 a.m. to 4 p.m. // Various locations throughout Downtown Erie // Free // For more information, visit: eriedowntown.com

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EVENTS

KEVIN! Don't Forget Macaulay Culkin at the Warner

Home Alone star looks back on his best-loved film with special tour stop in Erie

SUNDAY, DEC. 1

For millions of people, there's nothing quite like the magic of *Home Alone*. The 1990 Christmas blockbuster has firmly established itself in the canon of classic holiday films. The film's success catapulted its star, Macaulay Culkin, to superstardom, who was just 10 years old when the film was released.

This December, Erie will be host to a special screening of *Home Alone*, billed as "A Nostalgic Night with Macaulay Culkin." Part of a 15-stop tour, Warner Theatre guests will be treated to a moderated interview and audience Q&A with the man who played the iconic role of Kevin McCallister. "Hey y'all. I'm hitting the road this December for a little tour. Whimsy and nostalgia abound!" Culkin wrote on his Instagram account.

Without a doubt one of the most recognizable child stars in history, Culkin garnered early notoriety in John Hughes' *Uncle Buck*. A year later, they would team up again, with Hughes writing and producing *Home Alone*. Culkin would go on to star in films such

as *My Girl*, *The Good Son*, *Richie Rich*, and *Home Alone 2: Lost in New York*, released two years after its predecessor.

Around a decade later, Culkin would have a self-determined career renaissance, starring in cult films like 2003's *Party Monster* and 2004's *Saved*. Recently, he's made guest starring turns in *The Righteous Gemstones* and *American Horror Story*.

There's little doubt that if you're reading this, you already know the plot of *Home Alone*, whether you've seen it or not. Directed by Chris Columbus (also known for the first two *Harry Potter* films, *The Help*, and *Mrs. Doubtfire*), it co-stars Joe Pesci and Daniel Stern as Harry and Marv, "the wet bandits," with Catherine O'Hara and John Heard as Kevin's parents, also featuring an unforgettable score by John Williams.

Guests are encouraged to go easy on the Pepsi. — Nick Warren

Doors at 5:30 p.m., show at 6:30 p.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // Tickets starting at \$39, special VIP passes available // For tickets and info visit: homealonetour.com



Relive the childhood nostalgia of *Home Alone* with star Macaulay Culkin as he discusses the movie and his experiences after a special screening of the film at the Warner Theatre.



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Gem City Style

An interview with Maftuna Rakhimova, owner of Bakery on 5th

By: Jessica Hunter

What do aerospace engineering and baking have in common? Former engineer Maftuna Rakhimova's precision and knack for details have made running her Turkish bakery on the corner of Fifth and State seem like second nature. We recently chatted about the parallels between these two seemingly disparate career paths, along with the keys to her establishment's early success.

Jessica Hunter (JH): Tell us a little bit about yourself — what was life like before opening the Bakery on 5th?

Maftuna Rakhimova (MR): Before opening the Bakery on 5th, I worked in the aerospace engineering field, where I developed skills in precision, problem-solving, and teamwork. My career involved tackling complex challenges and designing innovative solutions, but my true passion always lay in business. During my engineering days, I spent my free time visiting coffee shops and small bakeries in Connecticut and New York City. Eventually, I realized that I wanted to combine my analytical mindset with my love for business, leading me to pursue my dream of owning a bakery. It was a significant shift, but it allowed me to create something meaningful and share my passion with the community.

JH: What inspired you to open a Turkish bakery and coffee shop?

MR: The inspiration stems from a deep appreciation for Turkish culture and cuisine. Many are drawn to the rich traditions of Turkish baking, including unique pastries like baklava and simit. The desire to share these flavors with the community combined with the welcoming atmosphere of a coffee shop, creates a space for cultural exchange and connection. Personal experiences, family recipes, and a love for the art of baking also play significant roles in this decision.

JH: Can you tell us some of the biggest challenges you faced during your journey to opening the bakery?

MR: They included securing financing, navigating local regulations, and finding the right location. There are difficulties in sourcing quality ingredients and managing supply chains. Balancing the demands of running a business with the creative aspects of baking can be tough. Additionally, building a customer base and establishing a strong brand in a competitive market requires significant effort and marketing savvy. Each of these challenges can be a learning opportunity that ultimately strengthens the business.

JH: How do you source your ingredients? Do you use any traditional methods or tools that are essential to creating authentic Turkish pastries or coffee?

MR: I source my ingredients with a strong commitment to authenticity. The baklava comes straight from Turkey, ensuring that it captures the true essence of traditional flavors. For all other ingredients, I work with Turkish suppliers who provide high-quality staples like nuts, spices, and specialty flours.

Traditional methods and tools are crucial for making authentic Turkish pastries and coffee. For pastries like baklava, a rolling pin and a large, thin sheet of dough (yufka) are essential, along with techniques for layer-

JESSICA HUNTER



This month, Jessica Hunter had the opportunity to chat with the owner of one of Erie's newest downtown businesses, the Bakery on 5th. Maftuna Rakhimova talks about the challenges of starting a new business, her passion for creating a welcoming space, and her advice for those considering taking the leap into entrepreneurship.

ing and cutting. For Turkish coffee, a cezve (a small pot) is used to brew the coffee over low heat (or electric machine) allowing for the characteristic foam to form. The coffee is typically ground to a very fine powder and served unfiltered, making the preparation method integral to its authentic flavor. These traditional practices help preserve the unique textures and tastes that define Turkish cuisine.

JH: What atmosphere do you aim to create for people when they walk through your doors? How do you hope they feel after enjoying a meal or coffee at the Bakery on 5th?

MR: At the Bakery on 5th, the goal is to create a warm and inviting atmosphere that feels like a home away from home. I aim for a cozy, welcoming space where customers can relax and connect with friends or family. After enjoying a meal or coffee, I hope they feel not only satisfied but also enriched by the experience — appreciating the flavors of Turkish cuisine and the sense of community. Ultimately, I want them to leave with a sense of joy and a desire to return.

JH: Do you have any advice for someone interested in opening their own food business?

MR: Absolutely! Here are a few key pieces of advice for anyone looking to open their own food business: patience, start small, research thoroughly, focus on

quality, engage with the community, be prepared for challenges, and keep learning. With passion and dedication, you can create a successful food business that brings joy to others.

JH: Is there a signature item (food or drink) on the menu that you always recommend to newcomers? What is your go-to order?

MR: Yes, a signature item I always recommend to newcomers is the baklava—it embodies the essence of Turkish pastry with its flaky layers, nuts, and sweet syrup. For drinks, the Turkish coffee is a must-try; it's rich and flavorful, served in a traditional cezve. My personal go-to order often includes the baklava paired with a cup of strong Turkish coffee, as it perfectly showcases the unique flavors of the menu.

Our former President Bill Clinton's visit made our bakery more special. He was very excited to try our coffee and said our bakery was the best one he ever visited! Such a recognition not only boosts our bakery but highlights the passion and dedication to create a more authentic atmosphere and delicious food.

For more information on the Bakery on 5th visit: bakeryon5th.com

Jessica Hunter can be found at jessicahunterphotos.com

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Artist Spotlight: An Interview With Erie Native Roger Harvey

Folk sensibilities progress to their peak on new album

By: Nathaniel Clark

On Oct. 4, Erie native Roger Harvey released his third studio album under his own name titled *Progress*. A few days after its release, I had the opportunity to sit down and talk with Harvey about the album, his musical identity, and his enduring connection with Erie.

For many persons involved in the local Erie music scene, Roger Harvey is a recognizable name: the Girard/Edinboro musician got his start as a teenager with an 8-track tape machine, recording and performing punk music all over the county. However, as Harvey got older, his artistic aspirations began to change.

"A lot of punk rock music is very political. And so as a young person that was really uplifting to me because I would rally around with a bunch of people. We'd all coalesce around these ideas. At some point through punk rock I started to hear about different folk singers who sang about a lot of the same things, but in a very different way," Harvey explains. "Woody Guthrie was the first (folk) person that I connected to and I just thought it was so cool that people could talk about the range of things in life which included, of course, politics."

Traversing musical boundaries, Harvey's folk career began as he started to explore other musical communities. Spending some time in Philadelphia, the artist eventually landed in Nashville, Tennessee where he recorded his first two proper folk efforts. Both 2015's *Twelve Horses* and 2017's *Two Coyotes* meet at an intersection between acoustic folk and rock'n'roll. At the time, it was a place Harvey felt perfectly at home.

Flash forward to 2024 and *Progress*. Eschewing the genre-melding of his previous records, Harvey's latest LP stays exclusively in the realm of folk. With a tracklist covering The Almanac Singers, Merle Travis, Joe Hill, and countless others, the album is essentially a love letter to the enduring nature of folk music. Harvey expands, "These songs that have been contextually sung for so many different protest movements throughout history but also sung at home. [...] There's something about these songs and the message that uplifts people through hardship, and that was something that I connected to."

A keen example of this enduring quality is the track "Keep on the Sunny Side."

Originally written by Ada Blenkhorn in 1899, the track became a setlist closer for Harvey in 2021. The song calls for its listener to look on the brighter side of life but also acknowledges the hardships that ordinary people face.

The lyrics of Woody Guthrie make an appearance on the track "Deportee (Plane Wreck at Los Gatos)." Connecting to the real life plane crash over the Mexican-American border that killed four named Americans and 28 persons labeled just as "deportees," Guthrie turned his anger at their namelessness into music. While the inspiration for the song dates back to 1948, its meaning holds water today as America's immigration policies and departments continue to strip individuals of their humanity. It is worrisome that a song written over 70 years ago shares thoughts that are seen as radical today.

Outside of the lyrics, the soundscape of *Progress* serves as a massive factor in its commitment to the enduring nature of folk music. Every instrument, sound, and vocal was recorded in-room, directly onto analog tape. "I love to be challenged as a musician. I love to put myself in uncomfortable spaces," Harvey told me throughout our communication. Essentially, the music-making process for this album was closer in-line to Harvey's time recording on 8-track than any of his previous folk material.

"I mean, though I perform with an acoustic guitar a lot, I generally play with some sort of electrified instrumentation, whether that's a pedal, steel guitar, or electric guitars, a full drum kit, and stuff like that. So I really wanted it to be a modern take, but I wanted it to have some of those traditional elements to it," Harvey said.

A key assistant in making this traditionalist turn was fellow folk musician and album collaborator Simon Flory. Originally meeting through a common personal friend, Harvey and Flory toured together around Texas in 2019. Throughout that stint the musicians connected over songwriting and sobriety. Specifically, the two found themselves with shared ideas about the world and their love of traditional country and folk music. So, as Harvey prepared to go on this journey, he naturally reached out to Flory.

Harvey explains, "It just came to my mind that Simon might want to do [the record] with me, but more so, that Si-



Erie native Roger Harvey (right) has recently released his third studio album with collaborator Simon Flory (left) and Reader contributor Nathaniel Clark had the opportunity to talk with Harvey about his childhood in Erie, his growth as an artist, and his vision for this album entitled *Progress*.

mon is the perfect person to do it with. Because I knew if I went down to Fort Worth, Simon has this incredible community of people. It was that incredible community of people that served as the setting for the album. Fort Worth, Texas is as much of a collaborator on *Progress* as Harvey and Flory."

Harvey continues, "The whole record was recorded live with no overdubs, corrections, or any editing that modern digital audio workstations have to offer. What is left is pure, unbridled creativity between collaborators. Reaching out to the greater Texas music community, Flory brought in various musicians to fill in the atmosphere on *Progress*. The sounds of fiddles, harmonicas, and banjos feel as at home here as they would on the porches of people shooting the breeze."

With the album now available to the public, Harvey has returned to Nashville. While going on the road from time to time, the musician's sights are mostly set on what's next. With a new album already brewing and close to completion, Harvey is optimistic for the future. From what he was able to tell me, the new record is taking on both imaginary and realistic elements as he talks about where he grew up.

"For me, it's Girard, Pennsylvania. But

I want it to be like anywhere, because I think the experience I had, for a lot of people, is something they can relate to," Harvey said.

Throughout our discussion, Harvey made his vision for music as a whole clear. Evident by his inspirations and background, the musician looks to bring people together. Whether in punk venues or folk shows, Harvey has always looked at the community that music can build. "I mean," he says, "the whole point of songs is to illuminate this kind of shared experience that we often fantasize about. Especially if it's something really deep, we feel like 'I'm the only one that's going through this,' or 'no one else could fully understand what I'm going through.' Music gives us this bond to feel like we're not alone. And so that's a really rewarding part, like a deeply rewarding part."

Progress is currently on all digital streaming platforms and available for digital download on Bandcamp. There is also an incoming vinyl pressing that is available for pre-order on Roger Harvey's website at rogerharveymusic.com

Nathaniel Clark is a fourth year Secondary Education: English student at Penn State University. They can be reached at nathanieluclark@gmail.com

The Erie Cook Book Revisited: Mrs. Moore's Spiced Blondies

A decadent twist on a historic spice cake recipe

By: **Morgan Yezzi**

Truthfully, this recipe began as a jolly good spice cake — a surprising triumph of fluff and flavor, although not exactly the cake born of “hard times.” As the days went by, the cake’s moisture deepened, though I was really craving a denser, spicier bite.

So I adapted the process for blondies (the recipe for which first published in *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*, 1896), which lends a new depth and chew to this classic spice cake. The result is a bold transformation, inspired by Mrs. Moore’s creation. Thank you, Mrs. Moore, for your wonderful base; I hope you’d approve of my small revisions to your timeless recipe.

Yields between 9 and 12 bars.

1/2 stick of butter, melted
1 1/2 teaspoons of “all kinds of spice you can find in town” as per Mrs. Moore (like cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, nutmeg, etc.)
1/2 cup of oil
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup light molasses*
2 eggs
1/2 cup buttermilk

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and butter and flour a 9x9 pan. **

Melt the butter and the spices together. Whisk in the oil, brown sugar, and molasses until the mixture is fully combined. Add in both eggs and whisk until the batter has a crackly sheen to it. Pour the buttermilk on top, but don’t stir it in yet.

1 1/4 cups of all purpose flour
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp of salt

Sift all of the dry ingredients over the batter and incorporate the dry into the wet by stirring until just combined. Pour into the prepared pan and bake for 30 to 40 minutes until a tester comes out with crumbs, not batter. (The edges should appear cooked and the middle should be fluffy).

**If you don’t have molasses on hand and don’t want to buy it, you can add an additional 1/2 cup of brown sugar and 1 tablespoon of vanilla extract.*

***A 9-inch circular pan works in place of a square as well.*

Adapted from Mrs. Moore’s recipe for Spice Cake on page 115 of *The Erie Cook Book* by Laura Sterrett



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Country Fair

True Romance?

Anora is equally hilarious and tragic

★★★★★

Sean Baker (*Red Rocket*, *Tangerine*, *The Florida Project*) has made a name for himself telling stories on the fringes of society. For that, he has been accused of condescension and “poverty tourism,” but I feel he transcends these accusations thanks to his deeply humanist approach. He invites you to laugh at these characters’ predicaments but never at the people themselves and he achieves this thanks to his skills as a writer/director and his seemingly supernatural ability to find the perfect actors for his films.

This has never been more the case than with *Anora*, his best film yet; a late-stage capitalist Cinderella that is funny, heart-felt, and heartbreaking in equal measure.

Ani (Mikey Madison) is a New York City sex worker who finds her life changed after meeting Ivan (Mark Eydelshteyn), the son of Russian oligarchs. They seem to be the perfect match — she wants money and he wants to stay in America. After a whirlwind week together, the two get married, but their happiness is interrupted when Ivan’s parents send hired thugs to their house demanding that the mar-



riage be annulled and Ivan return with them to Russia.

Madison is the true star of the show and she carries the film on her tough but vulnerable performance. Ani has no delusions about this romance — Ivan is her ticket to a life she never thought possible and the audience finds her predicament easy to sympathize with. The conflict is entertaining without mockery or sanctimony and we get wrapped in Ani’s manic fairy tale right up to the inevitable

but devastating final shot. *Anora* is currently playing in select theaters but will come to a wider audience in early 2025. — Forest Taylor

Written and directed by Sean Baker // Starring Mikey Madison, Mark Eydelshteyn, Yura Borisov, Vache Tovmasyan, Karren Karagulian, Paul Weissman, Lindsey Normington, Anton Bitter, Iva Wolk, Emily Weider, Aleksey Serebryakov, and Darya Ekamasova // 139 minutes // Neon // Rated R

A Dangerous Mind

Woman of the Hour is a tonal mess

★★

One of the strangest trends in entertainment is this recent obsession with true crime stories. It seems every other month, Netflix releases a new film or miniseries delving into the life of some killer or sensational crime. And now Anna Kendrick tries her hand at the phenomenon with her directorial debut *Woman of the Hour*. The film tries to be both a haunting true crime story and a light-hearted tale of feminist empowerment, making the tone shockingly jarring.

In 1978, aspiring actor Sheryl Bradshaw (Kendrick) was offered a guest spot on *The Dating Game*. She must ask questions to three men who she can’t see and based on their answers, decide which one she would like to go on a date with. One of those men was Rodney Alcalá (Daniel Zovatto) who, a year later, was revealed to be a serial killer.

Kendrick tells the story out of order, framing it with *The Dating Game* juxtaposed with Alcalá’s crimes committed before and after the show. So on one side we have a harrowing story of the ways the system has failed women and allows



a killer like Alcalá to go unpunished for so long. In between these scenes of real violence against real women we have a comedic tale full of witty “girlboss” retorts and applause lines. The result is a tonal inconsistency bordering on offensively tasteless.

The story of a killer appearing on a game show is fascinating but there isn’t enough to maintain interest even in a film this short. Kendrick gives us occasional directorial flourishes (the scene where Sheryl finally meets Rodney is absolutely

chilling) but it’s too little too late. There is a compelling story buried somewhere in this cartoonish spectacle, but it won’t be found here. *Woman of the Hour* is now available on Netflix. — Forest Taylor

Directed by Anna Kendrick // Written by Ian McDonald // Starring Kendrick, Daniel Zovatto, Nicolette Robinson, Autumn Best, Pete Holmes, Kathryn Gallagher, Kelley Jakle, Matt Visser, Jediah Goodacre, Rob Morton, Dylan Schmid, and Tony Hale // Netflix // 95 minutes // Rated R



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Kaara earned an associate's degree in nursing from Mercyhurst University and a bachelor's degree in nursing from Gannon University. She received a master's degree in nursing, midwifery, from the University of Cincinnati. Kaara is certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board.



Julie Schwab, CNM
Certified Nurse Midwife

Julie earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from Gannon University. She received a master's degree in nursing, midwifery, from the University of Cincinnati. Julie is certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board.

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ERIE OTTERS HOCKEY NOVEMBER SCHEDULE



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NOV 2ND | 7PM

MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT
NOV 9TH | 7PM

3-2-1 FRIDAY!
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S3 LABATT BLUE LIGHT | S2 #101 DOGS | S1 POPCORN

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HOCKEY NIGHT IN ERIE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH

CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS NIGHT
NOV 23 | 7PM

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(814) 340-7529

1243 Liberty Street, Suite 104,
Franklin, PA 16323

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Erlinboro, PA 18412

11065 PA 18, Suite 6,
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Erie, PA 16505



Employment Opportunity – County of Erie Seeks ECHRC Director

DIRECTOR OF ERIE COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION

Director proactively manages overall operations and staff of the Human Relations Commission, a quasi-judicial agency charged with enforcing the Erie County HRC Ordinance, which works to prevent discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodations. The Director processes discrimination complaints to determine their merit, works with investigators, consults with agency attorneys, disposes of complaints, monitors the appeals process, and works closely with the Enforcement Commission and Advisory Board to achieve the mission of the Agency, keeping the bodies active and involved in the process. Director conducts intakes, performs investigative work, and coordinates community education and outreach as directed by the Commission and County Council. Director reports directly to County Clerk.



Please send cover letter and resume to khillcott@eriecountypa.gov or
Erie County Council, Erie County Courthouse, 140 West 6th Street, Room 114, Erie PA 16501

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Mala Sangre

Mata Mata
Self-released



For well over a decade, Erie's Mala Sangre has been keeping the punk scene alive at break-neck speed. Releasing their first album



in 2010 and never changing their lineup, Mala Sangre has become an admirably regular presence in the local music scene. On their sixth release *Mata Mata*, we see them continuing to play Ramones-style punk songs at a Motorhead pace. A tradition on Mala Sangre records is to highlight some of Erie's best musicians, with guests "Morbid" Rob Burke (Maniacal Device) singing the horror-themed "Whore's Child," drummer Jeff Burick (Penny Racer, Daytona Beach 2000) providing a blistering tempo on "Secret Place," and Jay Durnell (Dread Metal Productions) growling like Tom G. Warrior on "Power Wound." Mala Sangre takes a deeper dive into metal territory with the help of Eden On Fire members Amy Gould, Scott Hagerty, and Rick Knapp on the track "Bring On The Darkness." The song showcases the band's willingness to explore new territory while remaining true to their roots. *Mata Mata* is also a family affair — with lead singer Carlos Rivera's brother Jose lending his vocals to "Dejame Solo" and son Cameron (Massive Denial) playing lead guitar on tracks "No Tomorrow" and "Power Wound." In the end *Mata Mata* is as familiar as it is different, and captures the energy of their live performances. Viva Mala Sangre! — Larry Wheaton

Chat Pile

Cool World
The Flenser



As a rising name in heavy music, Chat Pile is known just as much for their nightmarish lyrical content as they are their borderline-unclassifiable brand of industrial noise and sludge metal. (After all, two of the songs from their debut *God's Country* were about real homicidal incidents horrifying enough to send you down a Wikipedia spiral). The band's sophomore release *Cool World* widens their scope both in terms of the turmoil that inspires them and the genres they pull from; fortunately, it's still enough to shape one of the darkest, heaviest, and most unique albums of the year. This includes newfound melodic moments, but fans of *God's Country's* unrelenting nature shouldn't scoff at that. "Shame" may be straightforward enough to sound like Self Defense Family, but by the end, vocalist Raygun Busch is still growling in multiple registers, each one sounding less human than the one before. And on album highlight "Frownland," a bass tone indebted to (none other than) Korn leads the band through primal verses that explode into a shockingly bright (and heavy) instrumental refrain. Chat Pile is still making music that sounds like almost no one in the industry, and it's hard to imagine metal fans not being happy about that. — Aaron Mook



Yeshuwa Myers

My Enemies' Nightmares
Self-released



Released in the midst of troubling and conflicting times, Yeshuwa Myers continues to share a rare grace and positivity so desperately needed today. His inspiring messages are reminiscent of other artists like KRS-One, MF Doom, and Common. One could easily tag Myers within the hip-hop genre, but he has previously referred to his work as World Soul with all its blended influences. World Spirit seems a more fitting term for one bestowed with the sublime gifts of the Holy Spirit like wisdom, healing, and tongues. Or to paraphrase Yeshuwa himself, he attempts to create ripples of "blessed vibes." Myers winds his way out of darkness towards the light and love found in His Savior, and he wants us all to join. His self-produced compositions are intelligent, complex, and intricately layered. His unique lyrical delivery ranges from an easy flow on tracks like "Live4" and "Hands" to the rapid fire found on the title track to a little of both on the likes of "Yikes!" His rhymes are mature and relatable. When the evangelical is this engaging and entertaining, delivering the Good News is a good thing for anyone who hears it. Remember this because you will hear it again, "It's like that 'cuz Yeshuwa made it!" — Melissa Sullivan Shimek

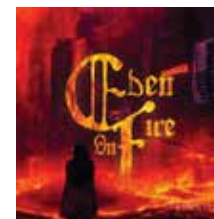


Eden On Fire

Unresolved
DI Records



Aside from its literal title, the debut full-length from Erie's Eden On Fire is anything but *Unresolved*. With over an hour of epic, banner-waving melodies, it's a fully original, complete package (featuring 10 songs proper and two bonus tracks). The quartet has harnessed the sounds of heavy metal and hard rock from the 1970s and '80s and given them a new, personal spin. Often, there are two key facets of the band at work together — the rocking, powerful instrumentation best exemplified by songs like "Love Bomb" and "Set Me Free," and the more symphonic piano sections, heard in the intros to "Broken," "Parasite," and perhaps my personal favorite "Fallen" (whose descending minor melody even follows its lyrics). This theatrical balance is tied together by the forceful presence of the band's founder, singer and keyboardist Amy Gould. Her lyrics paint the picture of a woman who knows herself — one who, while wounded — is standing as strong as ever. The clear expert musicianship of guitarist Rick Knapp, bassist Scott Hagerty, and drummer Michael Calabrese is both dynamic and captivating from start to finish. All this, and it sounds *damn* good turned up. For die-hard metal fans and newcomers alike, you'll want to keep your eyes on this band, and *Unresolved* is the perfect way to start. — Nick Warren



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CROSSWORD

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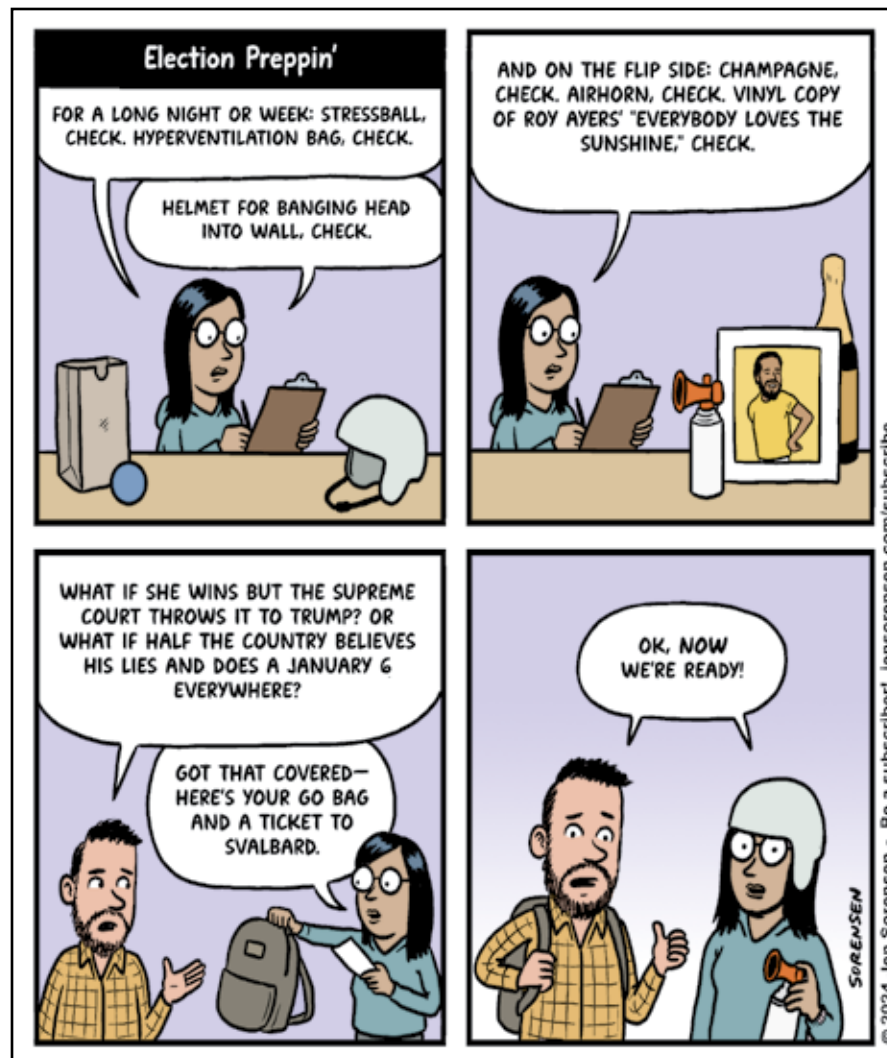
Across

- "Pulp Fiction" star [*November 4 marks the 30th anniversary of my professional crossword debut, so here's a throwback to that first puzzle!]
- SALT concerns
- "No, you got the wrong number, this is ___" (Chief Wiggum quote on "The Simpsons")
- Devonshire cream lump
- Vehicle in a 1967 thought experiment
- Old board game that means "I play" in Latin
- Garfunkel and ___ (musical comedy duo)
- To some degree
- Jellied delicacy
- Abbr. after Cleveland or Washington
- Baltic Sea tributary
- Dominant Mexican political party for most of the 20th century
- Moliere play segment, maybe
- "Benevolent" group
- Alter
- It's also called a "majestic plural"
- First human in space
- Gets at

Down

- "Once more ___ the breach ..."
- Paul Sorvino's daughter
- In ___-so-distant future
- Video visits with a doctor, e.g.
- His most famous work opens with "Mars, the Bringer of War"
- "Ceci n'est pas ___ pipe"
- Co-authors Margret

- and H.A., for instance
- New Zealand's highest peak
- Party after prizes?
- Sur's opposite
- Letters often on an injury report
- 1901-1904, in art history
- Got with the times
- Impassivity
- Zaragoza's region
- "Ratatouille" setting
- Noble
- "Police Academy" head rank
- Norm's time to shine?
- What shields allow you to take, in RPGs
- Dip with fruit, onions, and salt
- Snows
- Workplace antidiscrimination focus
- Talented talker
- Lug
- Laser gas
- Cardinals' beaks
- "Today" host until sometime in 2025
- First name in jumping
- Sun-baked
- 2011 World Series hat letters
- "Hollywood Squares" block



Answers to last puzzle

P	I	E	R	C	E		A	S	A	P		A	W	L			
A	T	R	I	A	L		R	O	B	B		V	I	A			
C	H	O	N	K	S		B	O	U	J	I	E	S	T			
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H	E	A	D	B	U	T	T				A	N	Y	H	O	O	
U	R	N				A	L	O	U			P	A	P	A	W	S
N	O	D				G	U	M	P			T	S	E	T	S	E

CALENDAR

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Thu 11/07

Drum Circle presented by Joyous Spirit Yoga
@ 6pm / \$15
The Hippie Space, 211 Main Street West, Girard

Headliner Geoffrey Asmus at Calamari's Squid Row
@ 6pm / \$15-\$20
Calamari's Squid Row, 1317 State Street

Fri 11/08

Featured



Todd Paropacic + Ionesav: New Moving Pictures
@ 5pm / Free
FEED Media Art Center, 1307 State Street



Sat 11/09

Frozen Footrace
@ 10am / \$35
1 Peninsula Dr

CLUB HOUSE II
@ 10pm / \$10

FEED Media Art Center, 1307 State Street

Thu 11/14

Featured



Avenue Q
@ 7:30pm / \$20
PACA, 1505 State Street



Fri 11/15

Featured



KING'S ROOK EMO NIGHT ft. Fastfall + Friends for Sale + Stellar Motus
@ 9pm / \$5
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach Street



Sat 11/16

The Erie Record Riot! Over 10,000 vinyl records in ONE ROOM! Sat November 16th @Quality Inn & Suites
@ 10am / \$5-\$15
The Erie Record Riot RETURNS! It's a GIANT vinyl record POP-UP sale at the Quality Inn & Suites. Sat Nov 16th. 10000+ vinyl records in ONE ROOM! Great music and amazing family fun. LPs, CDs and 45s. Quality Inn & Suites Conference Center Across from Casino, 8040-A Perry Highway. recordriots@gmail.com, 609-468-0885

Stuff the Cruiser for Toys for Tots!
@ 12pm

Stuff the Cruiser is a public toy collection event to support the Erie County Toys for Tots campaign. 1825 Downs Dr, 1825 Downs Drive. jeffjsn@yahoo.com, 814-450-0726

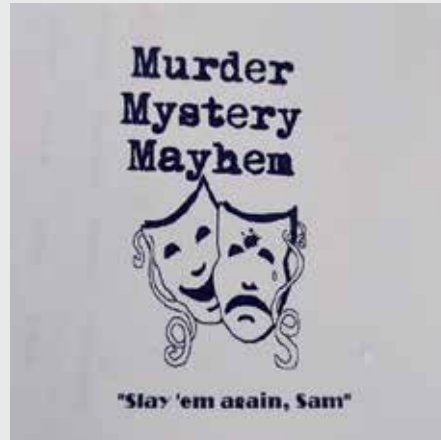
Featured



JUNGLE/JUNGLE/JUNGLE
@ 10pm / \$10
FEED Media Art Center, 1307 State Street



Featured



Murder Mystery Mayhem: "Slay 'em Again, Sam" Murder Mystery Dinner Theater at Madeline's
@ 6:30pm / \$45-\$55
Madeline's Dining and Events, 8844 Pennsylvania 18, Cranesville



Fri 11/22

McKinley Elementary Silent Disco Fundraiser
@ 5pm / \$25
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach Street

Sat 11/23

Featured



FEED x STATIK Fall Market
@ 12pm / Free
FEED Media Art Center, 1307 State Street



CLUB SLEAZE

@ 10pm / \$10
FEED Media Art Center, 1307 State Street

Wed 11/27

Gobblers
@ 5pm / \$5-\$20
FEED Media Art Center, 1307 State Street

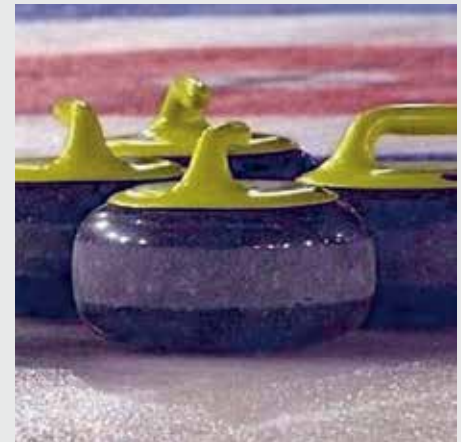
Thu 11/28

ERC Turkey Trot
@ 7:30am / \$12-\$15
Presque Isle State Park- Beach 1

Only The Bravest Thanksgiving Give Back 5k
@ 9am / \$15
Lawrence Park Fishing Club, 3702 E Lake Rd

Sat 11/30

Featured



Experience Curling!
@ 7pm / \$30
LECOM Sports Park, 8159 Oliver Road



CLUB NINTENDO II

@ 10pm / \$10
FEED Media Art Center, 1307 State Street

Sun 12/01

Macaulay Culkin
@ 6:30pm
Warner Theatre - PA

Wed 12/04

Straight No Chaser
@ 7:30pm
Warner Theatre - PA

Calendar information is provided by event organizers. All events are subject to change or cancellation. This publication is not responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in this calendar.