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Bill Tracy's Heart of Darkness

Waldameer's Whacky Designer

Philip Langdon

Offering insights on Erie's walkability

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The upsets and landslides leading to midterms

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Managing Editor:

Nick Warren

Copy Editor:

Matt Swanseger

Contributing Editors:

Ben Spегgen

Jim Wertz

Contributors:

Maitham Basha-Agha

Mary Birdsong

Charles Brown

Jonathan Burdick

Tracy Geibel

Lisa Gensheimer

Angie Jeffery

Miriam Lamey

Tommy Link

Aaron Mook

Dan Schank

Tommy Shannon

Ryan Smith

Jen Sorenson

Ti Sumner

Cara Suppa

Bryan Toy

Cover Design

Nick Warren

Photographer:

Maitham Basha-Agha

Publisher's Assistant:

Emily Hanisek

Intern:

Thomas Rosenthal

Hannah McDonald

1001 State St. Suite 1315
Erie, Pa., 16501
contact@eriereader.com

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**CONTENTS:****May 23, 2018****Low Turnouts for High Offices – 5**

What to take away from the primary upsets and landslides leading to midterms

Stepping into Philip Langdon's shoes – 9

Urban writer shares ideas on improving Erie's walkability

Everybody's Waldameer – 13

Park reinforces sense of belonging

Heart of Darkness – 14

MATT BOLAND

Whacky Shack, Pirates Cove designer Bill Tracy's spirit remains at Waldameer

Spotlight on Erie – 17

I guess my invite was a spiritual error, a restitution via PayPal and pressure

Music Reviews – 27

Post Malone, Mark Kozelek, Beach House, and Illuminati Hotties

Crossword Puzzle – 29

The Latest Stumper from David Levinson Wilk

Evil Genius Delivers News on Infamous Erie Event – 30

The Netflix documentary series sheds new information on the Pizza Bomber Case

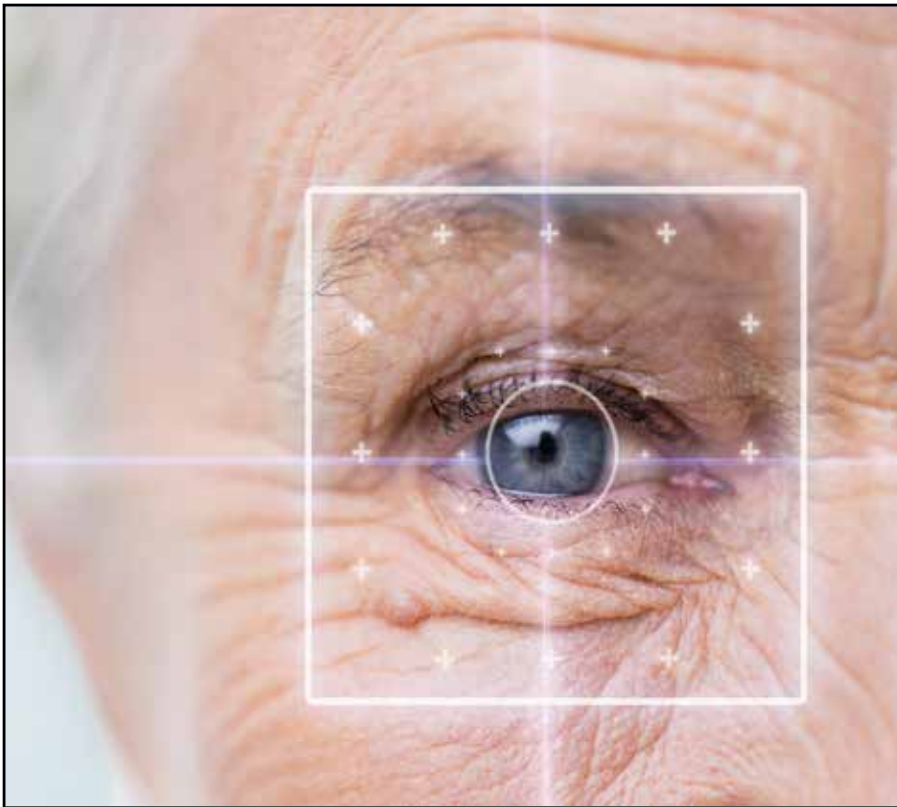
From the Editors**Can anybody find me
nobody to love?***I ain't got nooobody.**I ain't got nobody.**I ain't got no body either.*

Throughout the decades, three beheaded picaresque skulls have been reciting these lines ad infinitum. Are they acting out some sort of Sisyphean curse for all of time, or is it just until the lights go out? Either way, it's a simple play on words, transitioning from solitude to beheadedness in a matter of seconds. The first starts with a low bel-low, then the second agrees. The third skull chimes in — his voice eerily similar to Curly Howard of The Three Stooges — to hammer home the vaudevillian punchline. Whistles, air horns, and hissing smoke work in chorus create a great cacophony of that we've come to know and love. It's the Pirate's Cove, a funhouse adorned with a giant fiberglass Captain Hook on its roof. It sits in the northwest corner of an amusement park in Northwest Pennsylvania. It gives many people joy. First built in 1972, it has a sibling close by, two year the elder, called the Whacky Shack. Both were designed by Bill Tracy, the master of what's known on the amusement circuit as "dark rides." These rides live on year after year, surviving on a combination of camp, nostalgia, and a love for the quaintly bizarre. Matt Swanseger has unearthed a good deal of information on Tracy, his history, and his legacy. In tandem, Jonathan Burdick has brought you a historical overview of the park itself, our own precious "woods by the sea," Waldameer Park and Water World.

Forgoing the greased tracks of other carnival rides, the Pirate's Cove is a walkthrough attraction, bucking the most basic definition of an actual "ride." Walkability is something not only valued by pirates, but also by city planners and those giving urban critiques. There are, as it stands, only a finite number of these experts in the world and one of them happens to be Philip Langdon. Journalist and Erie City Council member Liz Allen caught up with, fresh off the publication of his book *Within Walking Distance: Creating Livable Communities for All*. Ease of walkability builds stronger communities, which reasons that fewer individuals will feel like they have nobody in their life.

Sadly, places that had fewer bodies in them on May 15, 2018, turned out to be polling stations. With a turnout of just over 20 percent, the primary elections decided the fate of many important races. Some are very nearly sealed, thanks to voting demographics, while some will become battlegrounds come midterms in November. Ben Spегgen takes a look at these numbers, and gives a rundown and analysis of what may be to come.

Whilst May gives way to June, let's hope we all have somebody we can enjoy the summer months with. As it turns out, these lamenting pirate heads have been incorrect for years. They've each been maintaining a stable, albeit nontraditional, relationship for 46 years now. To give new meaning to the closing line of *Some Like It Hot*: "nobody's perfect."



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Low Turnouts for High Offices

What to take away from the primary upsets and landslides leading to midterms



MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

By Ben Speggen

Tuesday, May 15, 2018 brought some firsts for Pennsylvania. First amongst those firsts was a look at new districts after redistricting took place earlier in the year when the State Supreme Court ruled the previous voting map unconstitutional.

Another first was the “Strong Wins for Democratic Women” for House Representatives, as the New York Times headline read the very evening votes were still being tallied. The results, however, were strong enough to call the races early.

“It was a night of victories for at least seven Democratic women running for the House in a state that has an all-male congressional delegation of 20 and a Statehouse dominated by male politicians,” the New York Times’ Trip Gabriel reported. “Female candidates showed strength in nearly every region of Pennsylvania, from the Philadelphia suburbs to the conservative southwest.”

That “nearly” does exclude Erie, Pennsylvania; however, the races will be exciting to watch statewide, as the Keystone State’s representation will reflect the new composition come January 2019.

Those newly redrawn ballot battle lines did affect Erie, shifting Rep. Glenn Thompson out of Erie County, giving the new PA-16 the whole county. Previously occupying PA-3, Incumbent Rep. Mike Kelly — or his challenger — will speak for all of Erie County now (along with Crawford, Mercer and

Lawrence counties, as well as the western portion of Butler County).

While Kelly, a car salesman from Butler, is seeking his fifth term in congress (he unseated current Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper in 2010), Erie attorney Ron DiNicola won his Democratic bid against two challengers in a race that wasn’t all that close.

The Associated Press called the race at 10 p.m. for DiNicola with less than two-thirds of the precincts counted.

What did not come as a surprise were DiNicola’s strong numbers on his home turf. With 87 percent of the vote, he led Butler County lawyer Chris Rieger, who notched just 10 percent followed by Farrell physician Robert Multari, who gained just shy of 2.5 percent of the Erie vote.

Although the numbers weren’t as high overall, DiNicola’s strong showing led to a commanding win, as he took 60 percent overall, with Rieger trailing at a distant 25 percent and Multari in the basement at 15 percent.

DiNicola isn’t a stranger to this race — and that may have played a significant role in his decisive victory. More than twenty years ago, DiNicola came within just two percentage points of defeating then-incumbent Republican Phil English.

Since then, DiNicola stayed away from running. But couple the redistricting with what many predict will be a midterm blue wave washing over the country in response to the 2016 elections and the seat seems more attainable — especially for someone

Scenes such as this were all too common during the May 15 primaries, when just 22 percent of registered voters turned up at the polls.

who’s been there before and nearly won within the previous, even more Republican-favored lines.

Ultimately how much support DiNicola receives from his party at the national level will be telling of whether Democrats believe they can ride the blue wave and flip the seat. Kelly — who ran unopposed in the primary — reportedly has around \$2 million ready for the race with more GOP money likely to pour in.

Closer to home, most attention from the May 15 primary was focused on the Pennsylvania House 2nd District seat. Of the three Democrats vying for the post held by Rep. Flo Fabrizio, who announced in February he wouldn’t seek re-election for what would be a ninth term, Bob Merski emerged victorious over Jay Breneman and Rick Filippi.

Of the Republicans, Tim Kuzma, who last ran an unsuccessful write-in bid for Erie School Board, took nearly 61 percent of the vote, handily defeated Laban Marsh. Both are real estate agents, and this marked Marsh’s first foray into politics.

Similar to Erie’s mayoral post, the 2nd District Pennsylvania House seat has been held by a Democrat since the 1960s, which makes the path to victory on Nov. 6 a more challenging one for Kuzma.

On the Democratic side of the primary election, City Councilman Merski won with 47 percent of the vote, topping former County Councilman Breneman’s 33 percent and former Erie Mayor Filippi’s 19. Merski was an early favorite in the contested race, as he garnered the key endorsement of Fabrizio, who is continuing to battle pancreatic cancer.

In a feature prior to the primary vote, I wrote about how much a victory here would mean for each one of the three contenders. For Merski and Breneman, it was the second time they were pitted against each other — having just come off of the heels of the 2017 Mayoral Election, where Merski finished second and Breneman third.

“A loss on top of a loss could be a nail in the political coffin of either candi-

date, especially if one finishes last in the race,” I noted. Merski’s win was decisive, notching 855 more votes than Breneman. However, Breneman’s second-place finish with 871 over Filippi was a respectable showing despite coming up significantly short.

For Filippi, it’s a different story.

“In a sense, this is the culmination of the rebuilding and rebranding of Filippi in the political arena,” I previously noted of the Erie attorney who, while serving as Erie’s mayor, “battled state prosecutor allegations of using his position as mayor to broker real estate deals near the then-proposed \$80 million lakefront gambling enterprise. Those allegations arose prior to 2005’s primary election, and although Filippi was acquitted of all charges facing him, the publicity the case drew may have been a factor in the 2005 election.”

Whether Erie voters have had the final word here on Filippi remains to be seen. Where Filippi goes from here isn’t clear; however, the message as it stands is: political wounds of more than a decade ago haven’t fully healed yet.

In a district that favors Democrats, with the support of Fabrizio, with a record favoring the wins column, and with a strong message, Merski will head into November as the odds-on favorite. The night of the election, Merski told Erie Times-News’ Matthew Rink: “It’s a testament to the hard work that we’ve done. It’s a testament to Flo Fabrizio, his reputation in this district and his endorsement. I think it carried a lot of weight.”

No doubt, the endorsement of the outgoing incumbent does mean a lot — and will continue to mean a lot. Merski also told Rink on the night of his victory that he credits running a different style of campaign. “We ran a much more grassroots, person-to-person campaign, meeting voters at their doors and I think that made the difference,” he said. What will matter, too, is how Democrats rally around Merski following one of the more heated local elections in recent history.

The upset of the night, though, belongs to John Fetterman. The Mayor of Braddock — dubbed the Mayor of Rust, and the Mayor of Hell, amongst

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NEWS & VIEWS



MATHAM BASHIA-AGHA

various other monikers — began receiving nationwide attention for his efforts in the (mildly put) economically distressed spot outside of Pittsburgh. Fetterman, who last ran unsuccessfully for the Democratic nomination in the Pennsylvania Senate, toppled Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor Mike Stack. Stack, who finished fourth overall, was more than 160,000 votes behind Fetterman, who took 37.5 percent of the overall vote. In Erie, Fetterman took nearly 61 percent, just shy of a 40 percent lead over his closest challenger Kathi Cozzone, who finished third statewide.

Sure, a recent appearance on Anthony Bourdain's *Parts Unknown* Pittsburgh episode might've helped a bit, and likely so did Vermont Senator Bernie Sander's stumping. But neither likely swayed the election *that* much, as Fetterman's win was both significant and a surprise. It came in a race for a position that typically goes with little coverage and has little excitement bubbling up around it.

Fetterman's "big takeover," as the Washington Post called it, though, signals a leftward shift for Pennsylvania Democrats.

The welcoming of Fetterman's less-conventional take on politics could draw more Dems to the polls in November, as he speaks to a different brand of Democrat than sitting Governor Tom Wolf does. Wolf will — as many predicted — go head-to-head against Pennsylvania State Senator Scott Wagner, who echoes the national swamp-draining message.

In a race that's guaranteed to be exciting because of the headlines, the addition of Fetterman on November's ballot

In the race to earn the Democratic bid for PA-16 and challenge incumbent Mike Kelly this November, Ron DiNicola was the overwhelming favorite in Erie County with 87 percent of the vote (60 percent overall).

made it all the more interesting.

The big loser of the night was voter turnout. Live tweeting with fellow Reader editors Nick Warren and Jim Wertz, I joked:

Knock-knock.

Who's there?

Three-quarters of a chance it's not an Erie voter.

Bad, I know — both the joke and the turnout. Erie's 22 percent turnout wasn't special, as turnout statewide averaged between 20 and 25 percent.

Blame Pennsylvania's closed primaries, blame voter apathy, blame various impediments to getting to the polls, blame the discord of national politics, blame it all. Whatever the reason, voters didn't feel encouraged to get to the polls any more than in past elections.

Whether that change comes November — with any swell of any waves, blue or red — will tell us whether voters are more talk than action. Right now, it's talk.

To say the least, there *are* interesting races, intriguing candidates, and changing landscapes. With eyes on Pennsylvania in the fall, let's hope the discussion fixes on those elements and not the dearth of voters making critical decisions at the local, state, and national level.

Ben Speggen can be reached at bSpeggen@ErieReader.com and you can follow him on Twitter @BenSpeggen.

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Stepping into Philip Langdon's shoes

Urban writer shares ideas on improving Erie's walkability



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[left] Author and urbanism expert Philip Langdon cites walkability as a key component of the city-dwelling experience; while he was impressed with areas like Lawrence Park, he noted room for improvement elsewhere (e.g., lack of sidewalks near Buffalo Road). **[bottom right]** The North Coast Apartments look like row houses you'd find in Philadelphia, but the building was designed by Kidder Wächter Architecture & Design in Erie for Housing and Neighborhood Development Services in the 300 block of West 18th Street, in Erie's Little Italy neighborhood.

By Liz Allen

In Erie's Little Italy, freelance journalist and urbanism expert Philip Langdon detected a hint of Philadelphia.

At Independence Hill, an eclectic, historic area near West 26th and Peach streets, he came up with some bold ideas to promote the neighborhood and its businesses.

And his tour of downtown Erie, which took place despite a steady downpour, yielded good conversation and ideas about how to preserve Erie's legacy as we make plans to reshape our future.

During his week in Erie, Langdon, the author of the 2017 book *Within Walking Distance, Creating Livable Communities for All*, saw some shining examples of our built environment, including Lawrence Park Township, which has been approved for placement on the National Register of Historic Places.

Langdon also noted some of Erie's shortcomings, such as the lack of sidewalks on east-side Erie streets near Buffalo Road.

I always enjoy learning about how visitors view Erie, but Langdon's impressions of our community have special significance. A Connecticut resident for many years, Langdon, 71, is a native of Greenville, Pa., in Mercer County, and spent his adolescence here, attend-

ing Glenwood School and graduating from Wesleyville School in 1965, then going on to Allegheny College.

He is happy that both of his old schools have found adaptive reuses — Glenwood as the Erie Federal Credit Union and Wesleyville as the Willow Commons Apartments. Wesleyville School (which had been K-12) has been converted into "affordable apartments for seniors, with lots of nice features and very reasonable rents. It's a good location for senior housing, a very short walk to stores and other businesses on Buffalo Road," Langdon says.

When I learned that Lisa Austin, a founder and current board member of Preservation Erie, had landed Langdon as the keynote speaker for Preservation Erie's annual Greater Erie Awards on April 25, I cheered. In 2002, I did a phone interview with Langdon for my newspaper column, about how front porches create a spirit of community and a sense of security.

I wrote the column after Erie City Councilman Jim Casey suggested a study on whether to make front porches a mandatory part of new housing construction. Casey's idea unleashed a slew of criticism about big-government intrusion, but I knew that he wasn't alone in embracing the benefits of front porches. Langdon had written for *The Atlantic*

magazine about why Robert Davis required porches when he developed the new town of Seaside, Fla. Langdon later expanded his story into a book, *A Better Place to Live*.

"Davis really wanted a place that was sociable and where people would see one another and strike up conversations with people passing by and feel like it was friendly and inhabited," Langdon told me in that long-ago interview.

Now I'd have a chance to meet him in person, to talk about front porches and other ways to enhance city livability.

But while Langdon was eating breakfast at the cozy Lawrence Park Dinor with Preservation Erie board member Terry Cavanaugh and the people working to put the township on the National Register of Historic Places, I was skimming the heart-healthy menu at UPMC Hamot, where I had undergone a heart catheterization the day before.

I consider most parts of Erie "within walking (and biking) distance" for me, but it turns out that my daily exercise routine couldn't compensate for a family history of heart disease.

So instead of chatting with Langdon about mixed-use developments, outdoor dining, start-up businesses, linked parks, neighborhood activism and, yes, front porches — some of the topics he covers in his book about walkability — I

interviewed some of the folks who spent time with Langdon and followed up with an email interview.

Cavanaugh, a retired Erie attorney, says that Langdon seemed delighted by the experience of walking through Lawrence Park, which famed city planner John Nolen designed as a company town for General Electric. Cavanaugh says he enjoyed seeing how Nolen's plan tied together housing for "the working class and middle management and the more elite" residents of Lawrence Park.

In Wesleyville, Langdon says that his "biggest surprise" was seeing Curry's Spectacle Shop, at 3202 Buffalo Road, in an old bank building. "The owners have done a remarkable job of preserving much of the bank interior," he says.

Cavanaugh also joined Langdon and a group of civic leaders and city officials for a walking tour of downtown Erie. Langdon noticed the Jimmy John's sub shop in the Richford Arms apartment building on State Street and Perry Square. Instead of building a stand-alone fast-food restaurant — or tearing something down for a restaurant chain — Jimmy John's has been incorporated into an existing building, and that's a good sign, says Cavanaugh.

"The walking tour of downtown — even though it rained the whole time — proved productive in that it got people

talking to one another about current and proposed projects that hadn't previously been considered. Sometimes it's helpful to slow down and simply talk," says Melinda Meyer, president of Preservation Erie.

Heather May Caspar, executive director of the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network, agrees that Langdon's visit was fruitful. Langdon spent time in both the west- and east-side neighborhoods served by SSJNN.

"We talked in general about revitalization work that the SSJNN has done, including work with the city and with PennDOT for the new sidewalks and curbside gardens on 18th Street," she says. "He shared thoughts on where he'd visited (in Erie) up to that point, and my takeaway was this: While strong attention has been paid to concentrated areas, Phil believes that there is rudimentary planning and groundwork to be laid at City Hall. Some very elementary (his word) walkability obstacles exist across many areas of the city, including connectivity between areas that have been developed, suggesting policy change was going to be required to establish walkability as a citywide priority."

Langdon has been busy since he returned to Connecticut. He just spent three days in Ottawa, at the International Making Cities Livable Conference, where he spoke on walkability.



LIZ ALLEN

But he's also stayed in touch with the people and organizations that hosted him during his Erie stay, sharing additional suggestions about steps that neighborhoods might take to foster community and improve walkability.

In his book *Within Walking Distance*, Langdon writes about six cities where walking has become a "central and sociable element of daily life." His first chapter offers lessons from some of Philadelphia's vibrant neighborhoods, which are tightly packed with mixed-use buildings, especially row houses. He got to know Philadelphia by spending weekends there after he started his journalism career at the Harrisburg Patriot-News, 100 miles to the west of Philly, in 1969.

Because of his familiarity with Philadelphia's housing styles, it's not surprising that in Erie, he liked the Greek Revival-style North Coast Apartments, in the 300 block of West 16th Street, in Little Italy. The apartments aren't row houses — they just look that way.

"What really impresses me is that these handsome units are HUD housing, developed by an organization in Erie called Housing and Neighborhood Development Services (HANDS)," he wrote in an email he shared with Gretchen Gal-

agher Durney, neighborhood manager for the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network. The apartments were designed by Kidder Wachter Architecture & Design of Erie.

Langdon elaborated on his thoughts about the row house-like apartment building in his e-mail to me. "Jeff Kidder at Kidder Wachter architects tells me the buildings actually consist of affordable first- and second-floor apartments. The apartments are dignified and draw on Greek Revival architecture — the beautiful style found in the Erie County Courthouse and nearby buildings, a part of downtown Erie I've always admired."

I visited Little Italy to see what Langdon had pointed out. He was right. Standing on the west side of Hickory Street, which intersects with 18th Street, I admired the stately façade of the 10-unit apartment row houses, shaded by leafy young trees and accented with black wrought-iron fencing. The housing opened my eyes to how well-crafted new construction of affordable housing can enhance old neighborhoods.

Langdon also shared ideas with people making plans for Independence Hill, after he joined a group for lunch at Federal Hill Smokehouse, 2609

Peach Street. "Federal Hill (or Independence Hill) occupies a very interesting piece of Erie's geography. There's no other intersection quite like it. My sense is that it could blossom," he wrote in an email in which he talked about some "bold" ideas that highlighted the East Side neighborhood in Portland, Oregon. Independence Hill "is a bit rough and the vehicular traffic is intense, so it might make sense to draw attention to the business area by doing something like painting part of the street with an imaginative design," he wrote.

Langdon also spent time on Erie's east side, at meetings organized by the East Side Grassroots Coalition, the Quality of Life Learning Center, the city of Erie's *Erie Refocused* team and the Erie School District.

Sister Michele Schroeck, director of the House of Mercy, which is part of the Grassroots Coalition, said Langdon was "surprised that a lot of places didn't have sidewalks." Finding remedies for that is part of the coalition's new strategic plan.

Gary Horton, director of the Quality of Life Learning Center, said that Langdon's time with the coalition members at the JFK Center, 2021 E. 20th St., was "very constructive and productive." Horton was

Philip Langdon's book *Within Walking Distance* details six cities where walking has become "a central and sociable element of daily life."

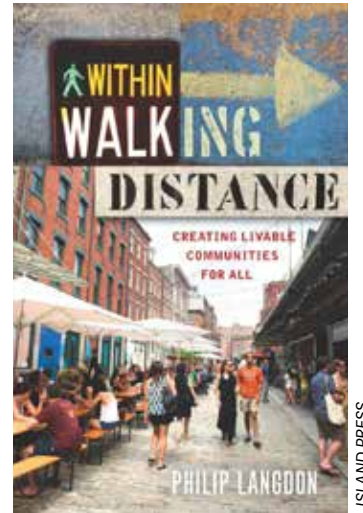
happy that Langdon got to see that teenagers are engaged in devising revitalization plans for Erie's east side.

"We tell them leadership is a full-time job. You have to practice it all the time, like you do dance, basketball or soccer," Horton said.

Cavanaugh is pleased that Preservation Erie found a speaker with "a connection to Erie and a basis of reference" when discussing ideas about how to bolster our pedestrian scale.

And you can't have walkability without sidewalks. "I saw many blocks where the sidewalks were badly deteriorated or nonexistent, making it difficult for students to walk to school and for all sorts of people to walk to destinations," Langdon wrote to me. "Erie also needs safer crosswalks, with markings on the pavement to make it clear that pedestrians can expect some degree of safety," he wrote.

I'm impressed that although Langdon has departed from Erie, his ideas are still floating around and sparking creativity. Caspar, the director of the



ISLAND PRESS

SSJ Neighborhood Network, says her organization is mapping the murals and community gardens in Little Italy. That map, she says, could lead to a walking tour of the neighborhood. Langdon would concur.

"I think people can get a greater appreciation of their neighborhoods if tours that explain their history, architecture and earlier residents are offered," he said. "Tours of parks or natural areas are also useful; they give people a sense of what's there and of what makes a place special."

Liz Allen, a member of Erie City Council, has developed a walking tour of her street, Lincoln Avenue, which has lots of front porches. You can reach her at lizerie@aol.com.

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Everybody's Waldameer

Park reinforces sense of belonging



MICHAEL ORLANDO/WIKIMEDIA

By: Jonathan Burdick

There's just something about Waldameer Park. It can be difficult to put into words, but you sense it while walking the grounds — the blazing July sun on your skin, the aroma of the Potato Patch hanging in the air, the excited squeals of kids riding the Comet. There's a charm, a sense of nostalgia, an authenticity, a perception that the park is somehow *yours*.

Cedar Point may pack more thrills, but Waldameer reminds one of simpler times — and for those of us who grew up here, it does feel like it's somehow *ours*.

Waldameer Park has been a vital part of the city's fabric for well over a century. It rests upon an area once known as Hoffman's Grove, a 19th century local hotspot for picnics and beach-going. It was in 1896 when the Erie Electric Motor Company recognized the area's potential and they leased the land to create a trolley car park, renaming it Waldameer — German for “woods by the sea.”

As Erie entered the 20th century, working-class laborers found their 64-hour work weeks diminished thanks to a newfound national emphasis on progressive labor legislation. As a laborer's time spent at work decreased, their

leisure time increased. Subsequently, amusement parks such as Waldameer experienced a boom throughout the United States.

By the early 20th century, Waldameer had its first carousel installed. They soon erected a dance hall, a theater, a beer garden, aerial swings, and their first wooden rollercoasters. A walk down a ravine led patrons to a boardwalk that crossed the lagoon to the beach.

John Miller wrote in his 1909 book on Erie County that Waldameer was a “fine park and pleasure resort” and he complimented the Erie Motor Company for having “more soul than any corporation has credit of possessing ... [as they] cherished [Waldameer] with care and consideration.”

The original Ravine Flyer opened in 1922. As the well-known story goes though, it was torn down after a tragic death on the ride in 1938. That same year, a traveler's guide to Erie described the expanding Waldameer as having a “bathing beach, ballroom, concessions, amusement devices, restaurant offering music, dancing, floor show, and refreshments.”

It was also known for its natural beauty. “From the entrance of Waldameer Park, the highway winds down a cliff overlooking Lake Erie and Pr-

[left] The Ravine Flyer II, a hybrid wooden roller coaster featuring a 120-foot drop, was ranked the best new ride of 2008 by *Amusement Today* magazine. [bottom right] Captain Hook looms large over the Pirate's Cove, the labyrinthine walkthrough funhouse erected in 1972. Designer Bill Tracy passed away two years later.

esque Isle Bay,” the guide book detailed. “Tall, slender trees form a canopy over the highway. A constant lake breeze sweeps the entire peninsula, cooling the flat, sunswept beach.”

Despite many challenges, including the First World War, prohibition laws shutting down the beer hall, and the Great Depression, the park continued to evolve into a major summer destination in Northwestern Pennsylvania.

It was in the summer of 1945 when a young boy from Dunkirk, New York, not yet a teenager, was hired to work at the park. His name was Paul Nelson. By 1965, Paul Nelson was running the park. By 1978, he owned it outright.

Mr. Nelson oversaw the installation of the Whacky Shack, Pirate's Cove, Sky Ride, and other classic rides throughout the 1970s. In the '80s, he made the decision to construct an adjacent water park, naming it Water World. The '90s saw numerous other classic rides make their initial appearances, including the Sea Dragon, Ferris wheel, and Thunder River.

Seven decades later and Mr. Nelson, along with many of his family mem-

bers (including daughter Nancy, company president and son-in-law Steve Gorman, and grandson and vice president of operations Brian Gorman) still walk the park day after day throughout the season. It truly is a family-run park — and its momentum for expansion has only increased in recent years.

The construction of the award-winning Ravine Flyer II, the addition of numerous other new rides, and the unprecedented expansion of Water World (including the wave pool, a new Kid Zone, and an extraordinary Battle of Lake Erie themed water complex) has made the park not only a delightful getaway, but a legitimately thrilling and nationally competitive amusement park.

Waldameer also remains one of the very few amusement parks throughout the United States choosing not to charge admission, parking fees, or for line-hopping passes.

“I want the kid in poverty to come to Waldameer and I want the rich kid to come too,” Mr. Nelson told the *Erie-Times News* in 2016. “I want everyone here.”

On a hot summer day, it can seem like everyone is at Waldameer. I have a feeling that is just how Mr. Nelson likes it.

Jonathan Burdick runs the historical blog Rust & Dirt. Follow them on Twitter @RustDirt, and on Instagram @RustandDirt.



NICK WARREN

Heart of Darkness

Whacky Shack, Pirate's Cove designer Bill Tracy's spirit remains at Waldameer



NICK WARREN

By: Matt Swanseger

Bill Tracy spent a lifetime cleaning skeletons out of his closet, and those who were lucky enough to have been recipients of his goodwill are eternally grateful.

Whether you “ain’t got no body” or carry around the full complement of flesh, there is no question the late amusement industry designer’s macabre creations help formed the soul of many summer experiences. In Erie, they still do — The Whacky Shack (1970) and Pirate’s Cove (1972) are two of only eight Tracy attractions still in operation, and represent half of those (mostly) fully intact in the world. What they lack in G-forces and adrenal thrills they make up for in morbid curiosities and charm — to remove them from Waldameer Park would be to partially lobotomize it, to scoop signature personality traits from its skull and scatter them to the wind like an upturned bowl of Dippin’ Dots.

Like the unmistakable musk that permeates the passageways of the Pirate’s Cove, memories of Tracy attractions indelibly lodge themselves into the rafters of amusement park patrons. Bloggers Wayne R. Bahur and Brandon Seidl, co-founders of the Bill Tracy Project, are two such people. Growing up, the Pittsburgh native Bahur was mesmerized by Kennywood’s Le Cachot (“The Dungeon”) and Waldameer’s offerings. After beginning his research into Tracy’s legacy, he stumbled across a kindred spirit in Seidl, who had me-

ticulously cataloged the inner workings of The Haunted House at Trimpner’s Amusements in Ocean City, Md. on his own website (ochh.net). Together they shed an ultraviolet light on the uniquely, humorously dark imagination behind Tracy’s vision.

Tracy was born on July 16, 1916 in Toledo, Ohio, the son of lawyer Newton A. Tracy and housewife Juanita L. Tracy. As with many children brought up in devoutly religious households, Tracy had a rebellious streak and a passion for testing boundaries. He lobbied for a field trip to an insane asylum (his mother eventually acquiesced) and visited graveyards hoping to bridge the barrier between living and dead. His preoccupation with the creepy and unsettling would stick with him until his death in 1974. It would also allow him to carve out a major niche as the foremost designer of dark rides and attractions of his time.

Tracy first garnered attention as an artist after his sculpture “Jonah and the Whale” was featured in the Syracuse Ceramic Show at the Museum of Fine Arts in Syracuse, N.Y. and the *Life* magazine article (Nov. 11, 1940) that covered it. After further refining his talents, he served as Art Director for the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in Sarasota, Fla. from 1952-54, where he designed motley floats, props, and costumes. As a sculptor, he was an early champion of a lightweight, unbreakable, weatherproof, and inexpensive colloid-treated fabric called Celastic, which he would imple-

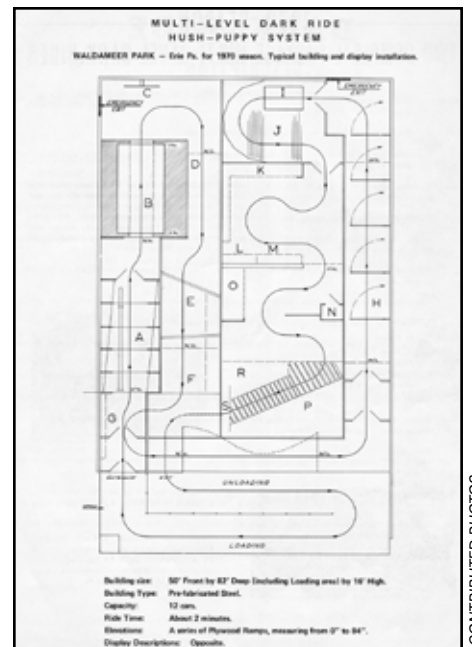
[left] The Whacky Shack facade showcases several signature elements of dark ride designer Bill Tracy’s style — colorful and cartoonishly creepy. [bottom right] (top) Bill Tracy, regarded for his goofy and macabre sense of humor, often posed for his own catalog advertisements. (left) The diminishing hallway effect, seen here in Erie’s Pirate’s Cove, was characteristic of Bill Tracy’s use of optical illusions in his dark attractions. (right) The original blueprints to Waldameer’s Whacky Shack, which opened in 1970.

ment in much of his work. During that same time frame, he signed a contract with Macy’s Department Store to build window displays and floats for their famous Thanksgiving Day Parade. His designs were often sold for profit after the parades, a testament to the appeal of his work.

Encouraged by his successes with the Ringling Bros. and Macy’s, Tracy would establish his own company called Tracy Parade and Display Company (later shortened to Tracy Displays, Inc.) The Bamberger’s Thanksgiving Parade of

1955 was a seminal project to Tracy’s professional and creative development, utilizing a series of alternating incandescent and ultraviolet lights to create special effects. It was unprecedented at the time and would become a mainstay of the dark rides and attractions Tracy began designing later on as a freelancer for established manufacturers such as Pretzel Amusement Ride Co., who incidentally would become his biggest competitor after he again established his own entity in 1960.

Through the appropriately-named Outdoor Dimensional Display Company (or O.D.D.), Tracy bolstered his reputation for whimsically outlandish and outrageous designs and built serious cachet with amusement park owners, beginning in the Northeast (O.D.D. was headquartered in North Bergen, N.J.) By ramping up advertising and promotions via catalog (e.g. 1962’s “We Work In The Dark,” referring to the craftsmanship transpiring under black lights), word-of-mouth, and appearanc-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

es at NAAPB (National Association of Amusement Parks, Pools, and Beaches) Conventions, Tracy was able to parlay his original visions into approximately 80 design contracts across the United States. Tracy himself participated in nearly all aspects of the process, including supervising and assisting with the installation of the projects on-site. His specialties included dark rides (e.g., the Whacky Shack), walkthrough fun-houses (e.g., the Pirate's Cove), and kiddie dark rides.

Changing times and financial challenges (O.D.D.'s assets were seized due to IRS debts) saw Tracy's operations shift headquarters twice, first within the Dark Ride & Display Division at Universal Design Limited (Wildwood, N.J.) in 1964, then as Amusement Display Associates, Inc. in 1966 (backed by Messmore and Damon, designers and builders of full-scale mechanical animals, dinosaurs, and monsters for film). Tracy was a master at both conceiving new rides from the ground up and adapting them to circumstances, even those seemingly hopeless (disused buildings, etc.), which earned him the nickname "The Wizard of the Worst

Case Scenario." His dark rides consisted of three key elements: an elaborate facade to lure patrons in, complex interior stunts and props (with "triggered" events) often moribund in nature, and a ride system.

Erie's Whacky Shack exemplifies many of the hallmarks of vintage Tracy. The facade stands nearly five stories tall and intrigues passers-by with what Bahur and Seidl characterize as a "Dr. Seuss meets Scooby Doo" aesthetic, featuring rotating flowers, rolling eyeballs, scrolling windows, crooked roofs, and a sense of being generally off-kilter. The riders' minds are toyed with through the use of tricky optical illusions, creepy props (severed heads and rats), and startling surprises (the bang doors the car crashes through). The "Hush Puppy" ride system, which was state-of-the-art at the time, allowed the cars to navigate all sorts of uncanny twists and turns, enhancing the effect. And of course, traces of Tracy's sense of humor can be found throughout his works — many Erieites can recite The Whacky Shack's "instructions" by heart.

So beloved was the Whacky Shack

that Waldameer owner Paul Nelson commissioned Tracy to build another attraction, the Pirate's Cove in 1972. Pirates, sharks, and skeletons populate warped corridors and tilted rooms patrons have perused (among other activities) for decades. The TLC the Waldameer staff administers to these attractions is a major reason Tracy's work is not extinct:

"Thanks to Waldameer, they are meticulously maintained for many to hopefully enjoy for years to come. They give Waldameer much of its character and are truly unique and historic amusement park attractions the likes of which will never be designed and built again. In my opinion they are as important as historic roller coasters, antique carousels, and other vintage rides and must be preserved," says Bahur.

One contingency "The Wizard of the Worst Case Scenario" didn't account for is the lassitude or outright negligence of many amusement park owners. To be fair, though, many of the Tracy's older creations were built in structures not exactly up to code — without modern sprinkler systems and with a

surplus of continuously operating mechanical props, grease, and wood for kindling, much of his portfolio literally went up in smoke. With Erie's Whacky Shack and Pirate's Cove (there were other Tracy attractions bearing the same name, but with totally different layouts and stunts) coming towards the end of Tracy's career, they stand a much better chance to remain standing.

Waldameer has been in Erie's bones since 1896. Even if Bill Tracy's contributions aren't the park's backbone, they continue to send tingles down the spine — or, failing that, at least a smile to the face as we are properly greeted as Earthlings.

For more information and insight into the life and accomplishments of Bill Tracy, as well to view a host of cool artifacts, visit ochh.net/tracyindex.

For a full schedule of Waldameer park and Water World hours, visit waldameer.com/calendar

Matt Swanseger can sometimes be found on the SkyRide avoiding responsibility, or at mmswanseger@eriereader.com



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Getting Heavy with Sworn In at Basement Transmissions



FRIDAY, MAY 25

Putting any specific label on a band these days can be a daunting task. Genres have splintered off into countless subgenres from which artists pull influence; arguably none has done more so than heavy metal. That may be why, according to their Facebook page, Illinois based band Sworn In choose to just define themselves as “heavy.”

In reality, Sworn In plays a blend of Rise Records-esque metalcore, clean vocal choruses and all, like on the song “Make It Hurt” off of their latest album *All Smiles*, mixed with nu-metal vocal patterns with a rap-like delivery, and disgustingly sludgy beatdown guitar riffs like the opening of the song “Endless Gray.” So yeah, simply calling themselves “heavy” is a bit easier.

When Sworn In comes to Erie at the end of this month, they’ll be joined by bands with a more clear-cut genre to be placed in. Florida deathcore band Bodysnatcher and Georgia hardcore band Revenge Season make up the touring package, and filling out the local end of the bill are Erie metalcore Shiver, Erie hardcore Livid Life, and regional metalcore quintet Narwhal Bloodbath. — Tommy Shannon

6:30 p.m. // 145 W. 11th St. // \$15 Advance, \$20 doors // All Ages

Medium House Roasts and Dark Indie Sounds

SATURDAY, MAY 26

Ember + Forge, Erie’s newest locally owned coffee shop is primed to host the next installation of its monthly Coffee Shop Series which features local musicians. On Saturday, May 26, songwriter Brent Knight will perform.

Knight also fronts Shadow Tribe, an experimental indie rock band from Cambridge Springs who blends their unique sound with elements of folk and psychedelic rock. These can be seen on their album *Darkness of Death*, released in November of last year. Knight wrote and produced Shadow Tribe’s album.

“The Coffee Shop series is a monthly event organized by Ember + Forge

and Jess Royer to feature singer/songwriters,” said Ember + Forge’s owner Hannah Kirby. Musician and event organizer Jess Royer continued Kirby’s sentiment, explaining that “the intention is to provide singer songwriters with an environment to express to an attentive audience, away from the bar scene.” That Saturday will also feature dessert specials featuring different pastry chefs and bakers from around the area. Pen and ink works by talented local artist Dana Manon will also be on display. — Hannah McDonald

6 p.m. // 401 State Street // free // emberandforge.com

Lagoon by Pontoon Rides Begin Memorial Day Weekend



FRIDAY, MAY 25

Presque Isle State Park will kick off Memorial Day weekend with free pontoon rides that continue throughout the summer.

Each one-hour pontoon ride features a trip through the lagoon, where people might spot turtles, great blue herons, beavers, and other wildlife specimens

that the peninsula has to offer.

Rides leave the boat launch at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Sign-up for rides is first come, first served and begins at 10 a.m. at the pontoon station.

Sign-up is limited to 6 seats per person, but each pontoon ride can accommodate 16 guests plus crew.

Rides take place daily from at least Friday, May 25 to Monday, June 4 with more dates through Monday, September 3. Programming is subject to modification or cancellation. — Tracy Geibel

10 a.m. // Presque Isle State Park, Lagoon Boat Launch, 301 Peninsula Drive, Suite 1 // free // 814-833-7424 // events.dcnr.pa.gov

Friends, Food and Music Comprise Sunset and Jazz at Lakeview Wine Cellars



SATURDAY, MAY 26TH

This weekend, Lakeview Wine Cellars will host the first of a seasonal series consisting of several summer favorites, including food, live music, and of course, wine. Running every Saturday through June, Lakewood Wine Cellars’ Sunset and Jazz concerts will invite local favorites to lay down a soundtrack for the sunset, kicking things off with Eric Brewer and Friends on May 26th. The jazz-rock fusion band released their debut album *Seeing Sideways* in 2013, while

Brewer was most recently spotted playing with Charles Brown at the artist’s album release show at Kings Rook Club. Ron Yarosz and The Vehicle are slated to bring their unique brand of funk and blues to the series’ second week, and the pair will trade off weekends for the rest of the month.

While these featured artists perform original music, patrons are encouraged to bring chairs, blankets, and picnic baskets in preparation to watch the sun set over the vineyard. No outside alcohol is permitted, but food, wine and Pennsylvania-produced beers will be available, alongside kid-friendly slushies, making this a must-attend event for the whole family. — Aaron Mook

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 10:30-11:15AM Wed • May 30, Jun 20, Jul 18, Aug 8
 9:30-10:15AM Sat • May 26, Jun 23, Jul 21, Aug 11

Arts in the Arboretum Performance Series
FREE Thurs July 5 through August 9 7-8:30PM
FREE Sun July 1 through July 29 Noon-1PM

Movies at LEAF FREE family movies 8:30PM
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 Aug 10 - THE LAND BEFORE TIME

ArborEAT'em Party in the Park 21+
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 (814) 453-LEAF • leaferie.org
info@leaferie.org

Ten for Troika

An Orthodox start to festival season



Troika will again feature the talents of internationally renowned Russian music-and-dance ensemble Barynya, who lend an air of authenticity to the festival that is hard to rival.

FRIDAY, JUNE 1

According to Christian existentialist Nikolai Berdyaev, “the meaning of existence is the conquest of loneliness, the acquisition of kinship and nearness.” If you subscribe to this philosophy at all, then Troika should be your purpose — if you purport to be a real person, that is.

“We try to be as authentic as we can,” says Daria Devlin, who has been co-chair of the Russian heritage festival since the beginning.

It starts with the setting, the unmistakable Church of the Nativity at 257 E. Front Street, noted for its distinctive architecture (highlighted by the golden onion dome towers) and the detailed iconography of Fr. Theodore Jurewicz

that decorates its interior. The parish was founded by Russian Old Believer immigrants fleeing political unrest in their mother country (namely the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 that gave rise to the Soviet Union). They predominantly settled in the historic East Bayfront neighborhood, due to its proximity to the docks and the plentiful work available at the teeming port. The original church was erected in 1919; a new church was built on the same site following a fire in 1986.

The parish now stands at about 150 families, split between descendants of the original group of immigrants and non-Russians who have joined throughout the years. Despite the more diverse demographics, it remains committed to preserving the Old Rite of the Russian Orthodox Church. In a similar spirit, Troika looks to pay homage to tradition while also embracing the larger community. Also owing to that Orthodox tradition is where Troika falls on Erie’s busy ethnic festival schedule — the inaugu-

ral event (a fundraiser for church expansion) was planned after Orthodox Easter, which occurs later in the spring than Western Easter due to the Julian Calendar. As such, it preempts the others, functioning as a sort of unofficial kickoff to the season. “We love that we’re in that position,” says Devlin.

Even if you haven’t been practicing your *prisyadka* (“knee-bending” element of the Ukranian *hopak* dance), you’ll surely get a kick out of the high-quality entertainment, food, and drink options that have become Troika’s signature. Barynya, an internationally renowned Russian dance ensemble that will perform throughout the weekend, represents a major expense to the Troika organizers, but lends an unbeatable purity to the experience. And the comestibles? They’re simply the *borscht* — and so much more. “It’s not what people are accustomed to, and people enjoy that,” says Devlin.

Some of the more popular unorthodox items offered at the Orthodox Church include the baked mushrooms, beet salad, *vareniki* (dumplings filled with fried cabbage and onions, comparable to a pierogi), and Russian hamburgers (infused with fresh herbs, dill, and bread-

crumbs, fried up and served on brown bread). Dessert options include poppy seed rolls, *blini* (crepes) with fruit sauce, and *matryoshka* (nesting doll) cookies, beautifully decorated by Mavra Jurewicz, daughter of Fr. Theodore and proprietor of Sugarstorm Cookies. Sunday morning will feature a Russian breakfast consisting of scrambled eggs, kielbasa, Russian pancakes, and kasha (Russian porridge) for \$10.

Venture capitalists will seize the opportunity and staid socialists will give equal credence to perusing the beverage menu, with imported and local beers (including the heady Sash’s Russian Imperial Stout, from our own Lavery Brewing Company), spirits, and wine. As you give power to the proletariat (your very hard-working liver), you can bask in the knowledge that your dollars and/or rubles are supporting a good cause — the church’s charitable ministries in the East Bayfront and beyond.

Za nashu druzjbu (to our friendship)! — Matt Swanseger

4 to 9 p.m. Friday, noon to 6 p.m. Saturday, noon to 8 p.m. Sunday // 251 E. Front St. // churchofthenativity.net/troika

Sip N’ Paint

Jun. 2 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars,
9440 W. Main St. North East,
PA 16428 piwine.com.

Gospel Hill Garden Club Picnic

Jun. 5 — 6:30 p.m.
Lawrence Park Fishing
Club, 3700 E. Lake Rd.
greeneriepa.org.

MOVIES

Flight of the Butterflies

Ongoing — 11 a.m. & 4 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental
Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.
biggreenscreen.com.

Earthflight

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

Mysteries of the Great Lakes

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

Aircraft Carrier

Ongoing — 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental

Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.
biggreenscreen.com.

Mad Max: Fury Road Black & Chrome

May 23 — 5:30 p.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State
St. filmsocietywpa.org.

Killer Workout (1987)

May 25 — 8 to 11 p.m.
Erie Movie House will present
the R-rated 1987 slasher film
Killer Workout. For individuals
over 21, the event is BYOB
and all are invited to arrive
an hour before showtime
for various arcade games.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W.
Lake Rd. facebook.com.

Wonder Woman

May 27 — 1:30 to 4 p.m.
Matinee showing of Patty
Jenkins’ hit 2017 superhero film
Blasco Memorial Library, 160
E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

The Suspect (1944)

Jun. 1 — 8 to 11 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W.
Lake Rd. facebook.com.

The Death of Stalin

Jun. 6 — 5:30 p.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State
St. filmsocietywpa.org.

VISUAL ARTS

Plastics Lost and Found

Ongoing through May 28
Tom Ridge Environmental Cen-
ter, 301 Peninsula Dr. treceptl.org.

95th Annual Spring Show

Ongoing through Jul. 1
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. erieartmuseum.org.

Kate Nash, Paintings

Ongoing through Jul. 3
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th
St. glassgrowersgallery.com.

Sr. Angelica Cummings

Ongoing through Aug. 10
Mercyhurst University Cum-
mings Gallery, 501 E. 38th
St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Vintage Neon: Images by Chuck Biddle

Ongoing through Sept. 9
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. erieartmuseum.org.

Gary Spinosa: Divine Instinct

Ongoing through Jan. 6, 2019
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. erieartmuseum.org.

James McMurray:

Faces and Paces

Ongoing through June 10, 2019
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. erieartmuseum.org.

THEATER

My Heart is So Full of You

May 23 — noon & May 26 — 5:30
p.m. & May 27 — 2:30 p.m.
Station Dinner Theatre, 4940
Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

Alice Through the Looking Glass

Jun. 1, 2 — 7:30 to 10 p.m.
& Jun. 3 — 3 to 5:30 p.m.
AllAnAct’s annual student
production of 2018 is Alice
Through the Looking Glass,
an adaptation of Lewis
Carroll’s classic novel.
All An Act Theatre, 652 W.
17th St. allanact.net.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime

Jun. 1, 2 — 8 p.m.
Dramashop, 1001 State St.
Suite 210, dramashop.org.

Things My Mother Taught Me

Jun. 5, 6 — noon
Station Dinner Theatre, 4940
Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

SPORTS

Erie SeaWolves vs Trenton Thunder

May 25, 26 — 6:05 p.m. &
May 27, 28 — 1:35 p.m.
UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th
St. milb.com.

Erie Commodores vs Buffalo

May 26 — 2 p.m.
Edinboro University, 219
Meadville St. Edinboro, PA
eriecommodores.com.

Erie SeaWolves vs Binghamton Rumble Ponies

May 29, 30 — 6:05 p.m. &
May 31 — 11:05 a.m.
UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th
St. milb.com.

Erie Commodores vs Syracuse

Jun. 2 — 2 p.m.
Edinboro University, 219
Meadville St. Edinboro, PA
eriecommodores.com.

Volleyball Doubles League

Jun. 5 — 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Beach 6 Volleyball Courts
at Presque Isle State Park, 1
Peninsula Dr. treceptl.org.

Erie SeaWolves vs

Hartford Yard Goats

Jun. 5, 6 — 7:05 p.m.
UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th
St. milb.com.

COMMUNITY

2018 Presque Isle State Park “Big Month” Birding Competition

Ongoing through May 31
Presque Isle State Park, 1
Peninsula Dr. treceptl.org.

DiscoverE: Birds

May 23 — 2 to 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Cen-
ter, 301 Peninsula Dr. treceptl.org.

America’s Most Contentious Presidential Elections

May 23, 30 — 4 to 6 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society,
3207 State St. jeserie.org.

AI Stone Lecture Series

May 24 — 9:30 a.m.
Edinboro University’s Diebold
Center for the Performing Arts,
217 Meadville St. Edinboro, PA
16444 events.edinboro.edu.

Adult Art Classes

May 24, 31 — 1 to 3 p.m.
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier

Thollem's "Technicolor Grey Zone" Stresses Innovation and Collaboration at the Art Museum



FRIDAY, JUNE 1

Thollem McDonas has an impressive — and eccentric — resume.

Working primarily as a pianist, he's collaborated with an impressive list of noteworthy people. If you like experimental rock, he's collaborated with members of Wilco, the Minutemen, Deerhoof, Can, and the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. Like jazz? He's worked with William Parker, Rob Mazurek, and Suzie Ibarra. If you're a cinephile, he has collaborated with experimental filmmakers Michael Snow and Matthew Barney. When all that isn't keeping him busy, he's also an essayist, an educator, and a committed political activist.

At the Erie Art Museum on June 1, Thollem will perform his "Technicolor Grey Zone," an evening of live electronic music and film screenings. As you might

guess, it's another collaborative effort. The screenings will prioritize stop-motion animation, socio-political commentary, and fragmented narratives. Thollem's music will accompany animated shorts from Pennsylvania native Martha Colburn and Italian artist Tuia Chericci. Dancers Germaul Barnes and Peter Sparling will also appear on screen. Thollem's sounds will also respond to glass objects made by multidisciplinary artist Alison Leigh Holt. Finally, the performance will feature the contemplative work of filmmaker ACVilla — who will also be in attendance.

I'm not going to lie — I'm not quite sure what this is going to look or sound like. But the prospect of something truly unexpected should be enough to spark serious interest. If your favorite hangout in Erie is the PACA building, or if you eagerly await the next entry in the Electroflux Experimental Music Series, this should be right up your alley. If not, drop by the museum with an open mind. This performance will surely be memorable. — Dan Schank

8 p.m. // Pay what you wish, suggested donation \$20/person // Erie Art Museum // thollem.com

Mystery and Mathematics Collide in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*



FRIDAY, JUNE 1

Fifteen-year-old Simon is a math whiz who decides to become an amateur detective when his neighbor's dog dies under strange circumstances. His subsequent sleuthing leads to some uncomfortable truths about his family, a journey to London, a University entrance exam, and several tense confrontations with loved ones. As the story progresses, you'll soon learn that Simon lives with an undiagnosed autism spectrum condition, which the play explores thoughtfully through his often-troubled interactions with the world.

When British novelist Mark Haddon

released *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* in 2003, it was praised by the British Medical Association for avoiding "the opposing pitfalls of either offending people with autism ... or turning Christopher into an object of pity." When playwright Simon Stephens brought it to the stage a decade later, it won five Tony awards. And for six nights at the start of June, the production will come to Erie.

Incident will open on June 1 to a sold-out audience at the Renaissance Centre on State Street. It's the latest production from Dramashop, one of Erie's most innovative grassroots theater companies. Expect the contemporary flair and DIY ethos that the organization is known for. If you're looking for an empathetic take on adolescent mental health, this might be the play for you. If you're simply looking for a fun, twisty mystery, *Incident* delivers on that accord as well. — Dan Schank

Fridays and Saturdays June 1 through June 16, 8 p.m. // 1001 State Street, Suite 210 // \$5 to \$12 depending on date // dramashop.org

Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

The Buzz on Bees

May 24 — 6:30 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. nwpabeekeepers.com.

#ErieOpioidProject: One Story; Many Stories

May 24 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Lagoon by Pontoon

May 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 & Jun. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — 10 a.m.
Lagoon Boat Launch at Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. treppi.org.

Candlelight Ghost Walk

May 25, 26, 27 — 8 p.m.
Dobbins Landing, 1 State St. candlelightghostwalks.com.

Humanity against Heroin Part III

May 26 — 2 to 11 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com.

Cigar Night

May 26 — 5 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. bourbonbarrelerie.com.

Comedy Showcase

May 26 — 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W.

Lake Rd. facebook.com.

Greater Calvary Full Gospel Baptist Church Anniversary

May 27 — 11 a.m. & 5 p.m.
Greater Calvary Full Gospel Baptist Church, 2624 German St. facebook.com.

Erie Freedom Challenge

May 28 — 7:30 a.m.
Walnut Creek Baptist Church, 6015 W. Ridge Rd. erie15k.com.

The Bill of Rights and Civil Liberties: A Primer

May 28 — 4 to 6 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Have You Met My Single Friend

May 29 — 5 to 8 p.m.
Room 33, 1033 State St. facebook.com.

Gracchi, Marius, Sulla, and the Crisis of the Roman Republic

May 29 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society President Dr. Ferik Ferati will lead a lecture focusing on the reforms of the Gracchi brothers, the populist movement following the end of the Punic Wars and more.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Nutrition and Aging: Eating

to Prevent Disease

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

Evening Lagoon by Pontoon

May 30 & Jun. 1, 6 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Lagoon Boat Launch at Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. treppi.org.

Goodell History Night: Share a Story of the Sisters

May 31 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Goodell Gardens & Homestead, 221 Waterford St, Edinboro, PA 16412 goodellgardens.org.

Spring Night Hikes

May 31 — 8 to 9:30 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. asburywoods.org.

Addressing Inequity and Inequality: Steps to Building a Just Erie

May 31 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
A Harlem native and 2016 recipient of a Loeb Fellowship at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Karen Abrams is set to host program on addressing the problem of inequity and inequality at the Jefferson Educational Society.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

10th Annual Troika

Russian Festival

Jun. 1 — 4 to 9 p.m. & Jun. 2 — noon to 6 p.m. & Jun. 3 — Noon to 8 p.m.
Church of the Nativity Community Center, 109 German St. churchofthenativity.net.

Crossing the Frontier 5K/10K

Jun. 2 — 8 a.m.
Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. runsignup.com.

Boy Scouts of America 5K Run/Walk

Jun. 2 — 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
Harborcreek Community Park, 3133 Clark Rd. bigwhitetrailer.com.

Career Fair

Jun. 2 — 9 a.m. to noon
Hooch & Blottos Palm Room, 8071 Peach St. visitscott.com.

Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community

Jun. 2 — 9 a.m. to noon
The 2018 Children's Miracle Network walk team is looking to add supporters to its mission and find participants for the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community, taking place next month.
Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. facebook.com.

Coloring for Grown-Ups

Jun. 2 — 10 a.m. to noon

Iroquois Avenue Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. erielibrary.org.

Windowsill Herb Garden

Jun. 2 — 1:30 to 3 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. asburywoods.org.

Rescue Pups

Jun. 2 — 3 to 5 p.m.
Splash Lagoon, 8091 Peach St. splashlagoon.com.

St. Boniface Summer Festival Days

Jun. 2 — 6 to 10 p.m. & Jun. 3 — 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
St. Boniface Church, 9367 Wattsburg Rd. stbonifaceparisherie.org.

Community Open House

Jun. 3 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Shriners Hospitals for Children, 1645 W. 8th St. shrinershospitalsforchildren.org.

Pilates Fusion with Michele Curtze and the Erie County YMCA

Jun. 3 — 11 a.m. to noon
Goodell Gardens & Homestead, 221 Waterford St, Edinboro, PA 16412 goodellgardens.org.

Four-Week Daytime Wheel and Hand-building

Jun. 4 — 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Erie Clayspace, 1505 State

St. erieclayspace.com.

Yoga on the Beach

Jun. 4 — 5:30 to 9 p.m.
Barracks Beach at Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. treppi.org.

Trackside Bocce League

Jun. 4 — 6 p.m.
The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. brewerrie.com.

Positive Discipline: Parenting with Confidence Support Group

Jun. 4 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Ananda Montessori, 17 E. Main St. North East, PA 16428 ananda-montessorichildrenshouse.com.

Summer Clay for Kids: Elementary Hand Building

Jun. 6 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Erie Clayspace, 1505 State St. erieclayspace.com.

Summer Clay for Kids: Elementary Wheel Throwing

Jun. 6 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Erie Clayspace, 1505 State St. erieclayspace.com.

Arundel Trivia Night

Jun. 6 — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co., 11727 E. Main Rd. North East, PA 16428 arundelcellars.com.



The Russian Orthodox
Church of the Nativity
Presents the 10th Annual

TROIKA

Russian Festival

Friday, June 1, 2018 - 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Saturday, June 2, 2018 - Noon to 6 p.m.
Sunday, June 3, 2017 - Noon to 8 p.m.

Church of the Nativity Community Center
109 German Street Erie, PA 16507



Russian Food • Ice Bar • Children's Area • & More

Russian Breakfast

Sunday, June 3rd at 10 a.m. to Noon

Entertainment

World-renowned Barynya
Russian Dance Ensemble

Benefits

Helps to support the church's neighborhood
improvement and charitable outreach projects.

www.churchofthenativity.net/troika

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Mazza Vineyards is our family's first location and home to many of our traditional European, or vinefera, varieties like Cabernet Franc and Merlot.

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*select days



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SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2018

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AUDRA MCDONALD



501 members enjoy a variety of exclusive benefits, including advance access to tickets, premium seats at performances, entry to private receptions and two tickets to The Summer Soirée.

Memberships will be available until June 17.

To secure your membership, visit mercyhurst.edu/501.



Erie Food Truck Festival

June 2nd | 1 - 8 p.m. | eriefoodtruckfestival.com
G.E. Fields, 800 Water St., Lawrence Park

Brews

Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co.
Black Monk Brewery Erie Brewing Company
Lavery Brewing Company VooDoo Brewing Company

Bands

PRESENTED BY



Lindsay Vendetti with Charlie Meyer
Jack Stevenson, Lead Singer Jackson Station
Key West Express First To Eleven Whiskey for Three

Bites

A Waffle Miracle Bruster's Ice Cream
Cluck Truk Coffee In the Park
Cold Stone Creamery Fat Boys Philly's
FooDoo Truck Hawk's Smokehouse
JEB Concessions Juice Roadies
Kona Ice Lake Effect Lunches
McCullough's Ice Cream Sticks & Bricks
SorcERIE Food Truck The Big Cheese Food Truck
The Chameleon Three Guys Apple Fries

Sponsors



The Rook's New Summer Reign

Extensive outdoor events fill club's summer nights



FRIDAY, JUNE 1

Erie's home for live original music is ready to shake things up for summer. Beginning Friday, June 1, the King's Rook Club is reinventing itself, with Outback Jack's, its revamped outdoor patio complex.

"Memories are going to be shared and made this summer," stated Ryan Bartosek, the club's promoter and assistant manager. "This will be the first time in roughly 15 years it's really been fully opened and put to use for people to enjoy," he said of the new area. "We want to take advantage of it being somewhat of a time capsule. The overall decor and vibe of Outback Jack's is meant to be similar to a little cabana beach bar you'd

The King's Rook Club will employ a different format this summer, featuring singer-songwriters (such as John Welton, foreground) and DJs on its Outback Jack patio.

find in Jamaica, or a beer joint in Mexico. Very rustic, comfortable and homey."

Featuring the new outdoor "Funky Munky" bar (flanked by two life-sized sharks), a small stage, lounge chair and table seating, marble fire pits, and sand pit (with free cornhole and bocce every night), the new patio will also make itself available to local food trucks The Big Cheese, SorcERIE, The Atacolypse, The Cluck Truck, Curry Point, and A Waffle Miracle.

Forgoing their usual model of having full live bands each Friday and Saturday, this summer will now feature singer-songwriters, along with DJ sets — with acts already scheduled until the end of August. Acoustic acts will perform from 9 to 11 p.m., with a DJ taking over duties from midnight until 2 a.m.

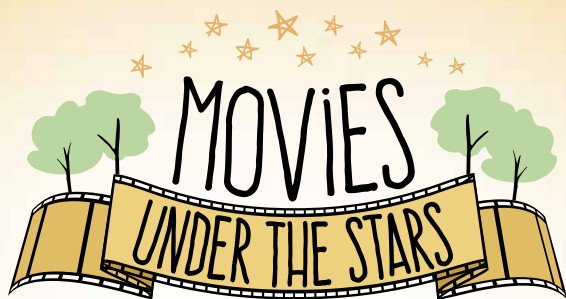
Thursdays, which were previously reserved for open mic nights, will now be privy to special fun events. Karaoke nights, game nights, and trivia nights will happen eight weeks over the summer, all hosted by songwriter/princess/bartender Brooke Surgener. Alyssa Santangelo will continue her successful run of paint nights, happening three Thursdays over the summer. The club has

plans to return to its regularly scheduled programming beginning August 31. Three Saturdays will make way for "Flow Nights" featuring DJ Voto, and fire spinning by Hekate performing arts.

Those familiar with the deceptively capacious venue are aware of the various areas (upstairs has a full bar, stage, game room, and upper patio, while the downstairs contains a mid-sized venue and bar). Most current members of the club, however, are relatively unaware that the back patio even exists. Their parents are another story, however. Patrons of the club in the 1990s will remember that part of the club vividly (though some memories may be admittedly spotty), as Outback Jack's was first set up in 1991. Bartosek reasoned that they "want our members in their early 20s to be able to bring their parents with them to check the club out, and their parents to instantly feel like they've stepped back in time."

"We want to have something for everyone, and have a laid-back vibe," Bartosek explained. Finding the perfect recipe for summer nights, under the stars, he concluded that "we really want it to feel like a big backyard BBQ." — Nick Warren

10 p.m. // 1921 Peach St. // 21+ // facebook.com/kingsrookclub



BRINGING THE BIG SCREEN TO THE COMMUNITY

Enjoy summer evenings under the stars while watching movies hosted by The Community's College. Admission and parking are free! Just bring your blankets and lawn chairs and relax outdoors on the beautiful Porreco College campus.

Food trucks will also be on location.

All movies Thursday nights at 9pm:

June 7: **Jumanji - Welcome to the Jungle**

June 14: **CoCo**

June 21: **Thor Ragnarok**

June 28: **Beauty and the Beast**

Sing A Long Version

PORRECO COLLEGE
OF
EDINBORO UNIVERSITY

2951 West 38th Street, Erie | Porreco.Edinboro.edu

In partnership with the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania and the Edinboro Film Series

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ELI COPPOCK
BRITTNEY SHAW
LISA SIMONIAN

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

BY SIMON STEPHENS

DIRECTED BY
ZACH FLOCK

JJ HODGES,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
NORA SCHILLINGER,
STAGE MANAGER

OPENING WEEKEND:

JUNE 1 & 2 @ 8PM **SOLD OUT!**

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*Goodell
History Night*
May 31, 6:30pm
Share your stories
of the Goodell Sisters



GOODELL GARDENS
Farmers Market



Edinboro, Pa

Starts June 13th
Wednesdays, 3-6pm

221 Waterford St. (Route 6N),
Edinboro, PA 16412
www.goodellgardens.org
814-734-6699

CALENDAR

Discover Great Local Eats and Entertainment at the First Erie Food Truck Festival



SATURDAY, JUNE 2ND

As far as culinary trends go, food trucks are one of the latest to enter the cultural lexicon, and their popularity has led to one of the season's most anticipated events. Erie is no stranger to festivals and block parties, but with 16 food trucks, five bands and almost half a dozen local breweries appearing, the inaugural Erie Food Truck Festival is shaping up to be one of the city's largest yet. According to organizer Kate Philips, the festival is anticipating several thousand guests.

"As soon as we announced, the festival

was trending locally, and we have now more than 12,000 people interested in the festival on Facebook," says Philips. "It's been a true pleasure for our committee members to overhear people chatting about the festival at the grocery store or at their kids' sporting events."

Featured breweries include Arundel Cellars, Black Monk, Erie Brewing, Lavery, and VooDoo. The local lineup on the Northwest Stage is comprised of Whiskey For Three, Jack Stevenson and Jackson Station Unplugged, First to Eleven, Key West Express, and Lindsay Vendetti with Charlie Meyer. Vendors include McCollough's Ice Cream, Hawk's Smokehouse, Fat Boys Philly's, and many more. Philips elaborates on the appeal of these food trucks to local foodies.

"A big part of what I love about food trucks is the direct cook-to-client experience," says Philips. "This spring, I traveled to Rincon, Puerto Rico, where a food truck alley was established...it was fanciful, accessible, laid-back and charming all at the same time. These trucks were gathered as a destination,

and that's exactly what the Erie Food Truck Festival will be...I'm hoping that our patrons will have a similarly exciting experience."

An entrepreneur, Philips understands the courage and resources it takes to manage a business — even a mobile one. But if the community's response has been any indication, she has no doubt the Erie Food Truck Festival awaits an even bigger future.

"At its heart, running a food truck is running a business while doing something you love — the perfect combination for a joyful profession. A terrific example, our festival t-shirts will be made on site by No Dress Code Studios, a locally owned mobile t-shirt screening business. The excitement is so palpable that we are already planning to extend to a two- or three-day event next year. Erie was hungry for a local food truck festival and we are planning to deliver a terrific experience." — Aaron Mook

1 p.m. to 8 p.m. // Water Street,
Lawrence Park // \$5 Entry

David Murray and Kahil El'Zabar Talk It Out at Artlore



Saxophonist David Murray and percussionist Kahil El'Zabar will strike up a lively conversation in the language of jazz at Artlore Studio on June 5.

olo's chocolates and refreshments are also included.

Murray and El'Zabar's conversation will reveal a large vocabulary from the language of music and their shared African-American experience. It is an important conversation to hear.

They are never boring and always intriguing. It's an articulate chat fest of the highest level. Even if you are unfamiliar with them — or jazz in general — bring an open mind and ears and you will be nourished and inspired. El'Zabar brings out Murray's relaxed and playful sides. He chants, hollers and propels Murray on hand drums and drum kit into exuberant solos or calms him into soft reflections.

El'Zabar has performed here many times as part of the Ethnic Heritage

Ensemble and he is a wonderfully entertaining presence. He flies his "freak flag" high and is one of the liveliest new friends you'll ever meet.

Murray has over 100 recordings as a leader since 1976 when *Flowers for Albert* began my eavesdropping. His performance with the World Saxophone Quartet in Erie was a musical highlight for me that year. His openness to playing anything from free improvisations to Latin, Blues, Gospel, Afro-beat and Bop will keep you engaged. His ability to integrate tradition and innovation with an astonishing dynamic range is thoroughly entertaining. Listen to his tongue-in-cheek exuberance and control at the highest registers of the sax and bass clarinet. He just shares his joy in the moment. If we are lucky, they might even play "Jitterbug Waltz!"

To prepare, listen to their recording *We Is: Live At the Bop Shop*, or come with newborn ears. It may be the best eavesdropping and jaw-dropping experience in your life. — Michael Plasha

8 p.m. // Artlore Studio, 3406
Westlake Rd // \$15 // artlorestudio.com (814) 520-8800

TUESDAY, JUNE 5

Did you ever eavesdrop on a conversation in a restaurant listening mindfully to the play of consciousness?

On June 5, you can listen to an engaging conversation at Artlore Studio between saxophone and bass-clarinet player David Murray and Kahil El' Zabar on percussion and drums. It's the perfect setting. Stephen Trohoske and Lena Logvina have created an intimate, relaxed and loving atmosphere. Rom-

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Post Malone
beerbongs & bentleys
 Republic Records

★★★

Post Malone's sophomore album, *beerbongs & bentleys*, is the musical equivalent of a Michael Bay film. Take this as you will; for some, the album's nearly indistinguishable 18 songs — much like a *Transformers* film, which does nothing to justify its length — will be more of what fans love from the 22-year-old singer/songwriter/rapper. For others, the album will prove to be a grating experience, no buts about it — non-fans need not apply. The recipe for a Post Malone song is rather straightforward: take one of Malone's formidable bleating hooks (the man sings like a goat), add two verses about partying, pour over a distorted beat with trap drums and garnish with a blockbuster-sized feature to outdo the man on his own track. Deviations from this formula are few and far between; highlights include the three-song stretch of "Otherside" through "Blame It On Me," including the somewhat stunning acoustic ballad "Stay." But on opening track "Paranoid," Malone drops corny lines about "politicians and their lies," and on "Spoil My Night," he undercuts a refreshing guest verse from Swae Lee with a line about "beautiful boobies." These moments highlight Malone's worst habit: self-sabotage. — Aaron Mook



Mark Kozelek
Mark Kozelek
 Caldo Verde Records

★★★★

Following his work with The Red House Painters and Sun Kil Moon through the 2000s, Mark Kozelek began making variations of the same record around 2015. His magnum opus, *Benji*, combined the songwriter's gorgeous guitar work with a known knack for intimate and detailed storytelling, effectively opening the floodgates to a brand new version of Kozelek, strictly focused on journal entries, spoken word interludes and a general stream-of-conscious delivery. It's interesting, then, that this is the album he chose to self-title, as nothing truly sets *Mark Kozelek* apart from most post-*Benji* releases. At nearly 90 minutes long, its average song length is eight minutes. Throughout, Kozelek delivers stories and sentiments both meaningful and vapid (often within the same track), humorous (the astonishing "diarrhea" chant at the end of "The Mark Kozelek Museum") and depressing ("The Banjo Song"). Simply put, those who are familiar with Kozelek's shtick will already know how they'll feel about this album, and there's not a lot of room for a lukewarm response. Still, *Mark Kozelek* is decidedly leaner than its predecessor and decidedly focused on its beautiful, minimalist arrangements. — Aaron Mook



Beach House
7
 Sub Pop

★★★★★

For more than a decade, Beach House has been on the cutting edge of dream pop's coastal vision. Presiding over the somber side of the movement that re-birthing shoegaze for a new generation. They're the spoiled, albeit gifted children of the Beach Boys and My Bloody Valentine. For the band's aptly-named seventh album, they continue to hold the keys to the mansion, maintaining their relevance in an almost unprecedented string of amazing releases. *7* is a tonal immersion, a deep well brimming with emotion. Singer Victoria Legrand's lyrics remain aurally indecipherable, though a read-through proves truly rewarding, unearthing a lugubrious, solemn poetic style. It's a dark illustration, detached and pensive, yet ultimately beautiful. Legrand, along with Alex Scally, the other half of the musical duo, shape another gorgeous selection of tracks. Standout tracks include the infectious warm flow of "Lose Your Smile," and "Woo," the former being one of the album's few tracks that would sound more at home in the late '60s than the late '80s, a clear influence on the latter. The deep bass of this record is trance-inducing, and a signpost of the glacial move to darker sounds. — Nick Warren



Illuminati Hotties
Kiss Yr Frenemies
 Tiny Engines

★★★★★

Gloriously varied and bursting with its own personality, humor, and pathos, this debut record is astounding. The grinningly-titled *Kiss Yr Frenemies* is worthy of becoming a cult favorite with its own dedicated following. Not content with any single, repetitive tone, the album wavers between the absurdist humor of Colleen Green and the intimate vulnerability of Vagabon in regards to both instrumentation and vocal delivery. The opening punches of the record — especially "(You're Better) Than Ever" — are funny, fast, and memorable. "Paying Off the Happiness," an uptempo cut at the album's midpoint, encapsulates millennials' acceptance of debt, in an tongue-in-cheek celebration. The soft, emotionally resonant moments like "For Cheez (My Friend, Not the Food)" and the album's heartbreaking closer "Declutter" hit with equal measure. Behind it all is Sarah Tudzin. An accomplished studio engineer and producer living in Los Angeles, some of her credits include the latest from Macklemore and Slowdive, and even the soundtrack for *Hamilton*. It's safe to say that the album sounds great, but it's far from aurally showy, using the vernacular of lo-fi bedroom albums, translated into a refreshingly high fidelity. — Nick Warren



TOMMY IN TOON — BY TOMMY LINK



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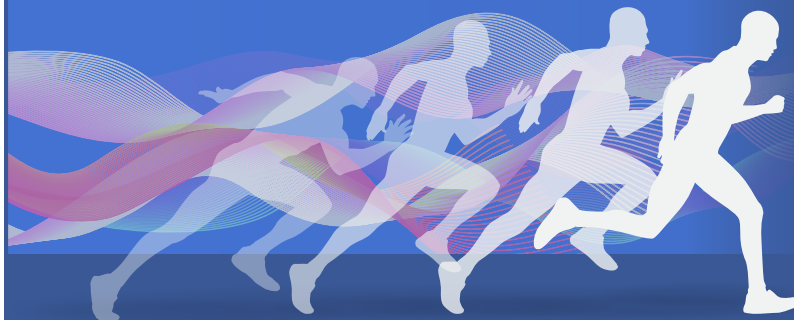
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8:30 a.m. Registration closes
8:55 a.m. Pre-race instructions
9:00 a.m. 5K Begins
9:05 a.m. 1 Mile Wellness Walk Begins
10:15 a.m. Awards Ceremony

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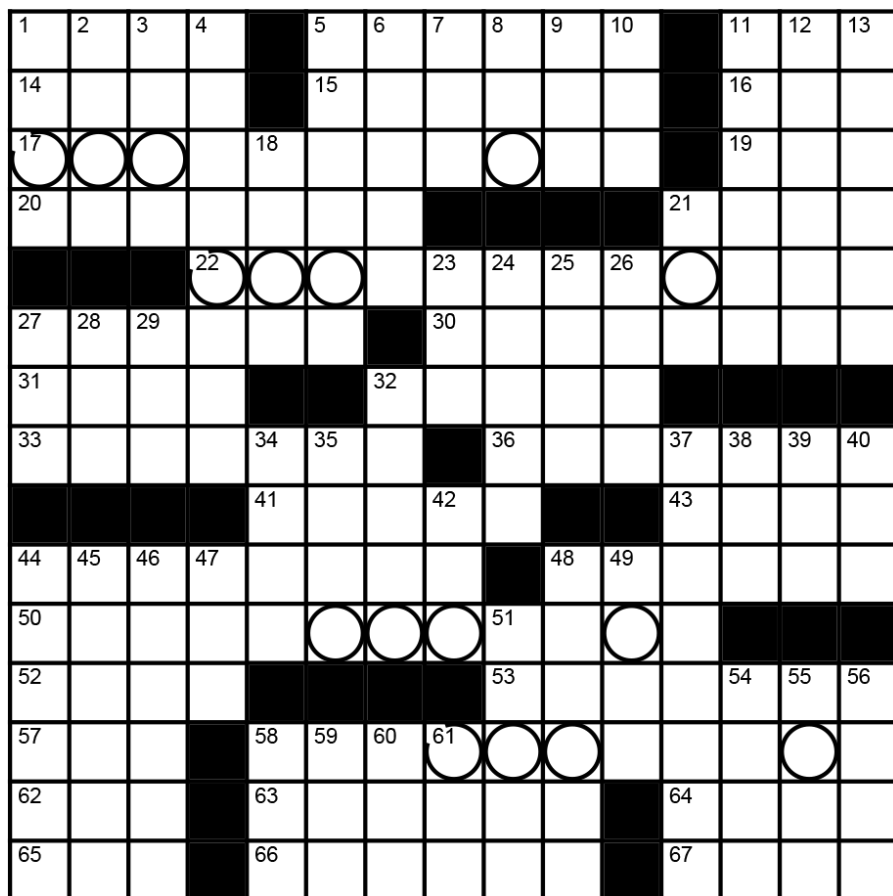
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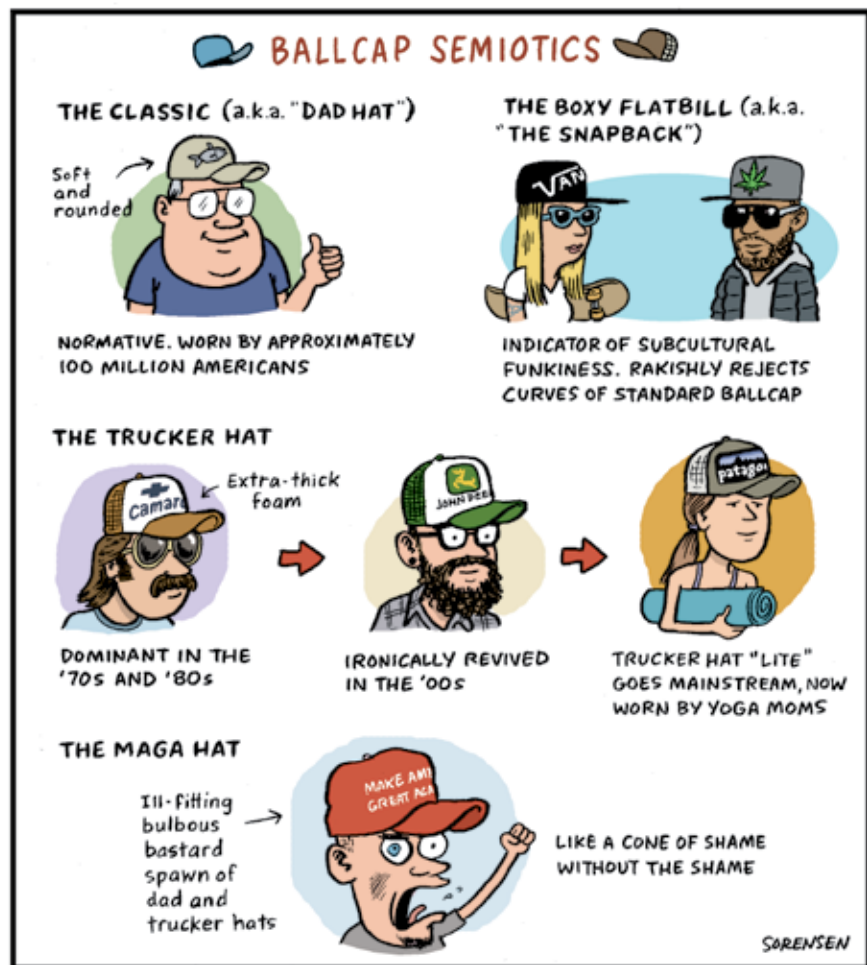
Across

- 1. Grin from ear to ear
- 5. 2011 Leonardo DiCaprio film with the tagline "The Most Powerful Man in the World"
- 11. Fraternity letters
- 14. Folk singer Guthrie
- 15. Groups appearing in striking photos?
- 16. Funny Gasteyer
- 17. Misses
- 19. Opposing vote
- 20. Like the "Iliad" or the "Odyssey"
- 21. Prohibits
- 22. Something posted by PewDiePie, say
- 27. Plays the siren
- 30. Pesto ingredients
- 31. Mine, in Montreal
- 32. Fortuneteller's card
- 33. With 36-Across, 1981 Grover Washington Jr./Bill Withers hit whose title is aptly sung before the words seen in 17-, 22-, 50- and 58-Across
- 36. See 33-Across
- 41. "See if I care!"
- 43. Grandma, familiarly
- 44. Hairstyles that usually involves clips or pins
- 48. Nearing midnight
- 50. It might include spurs, chaps and a ten-gallon hat
- 52. Princess captured by Jabba the Hutt
- 53. Unhelpful
- 57. QB's try: Abbr.

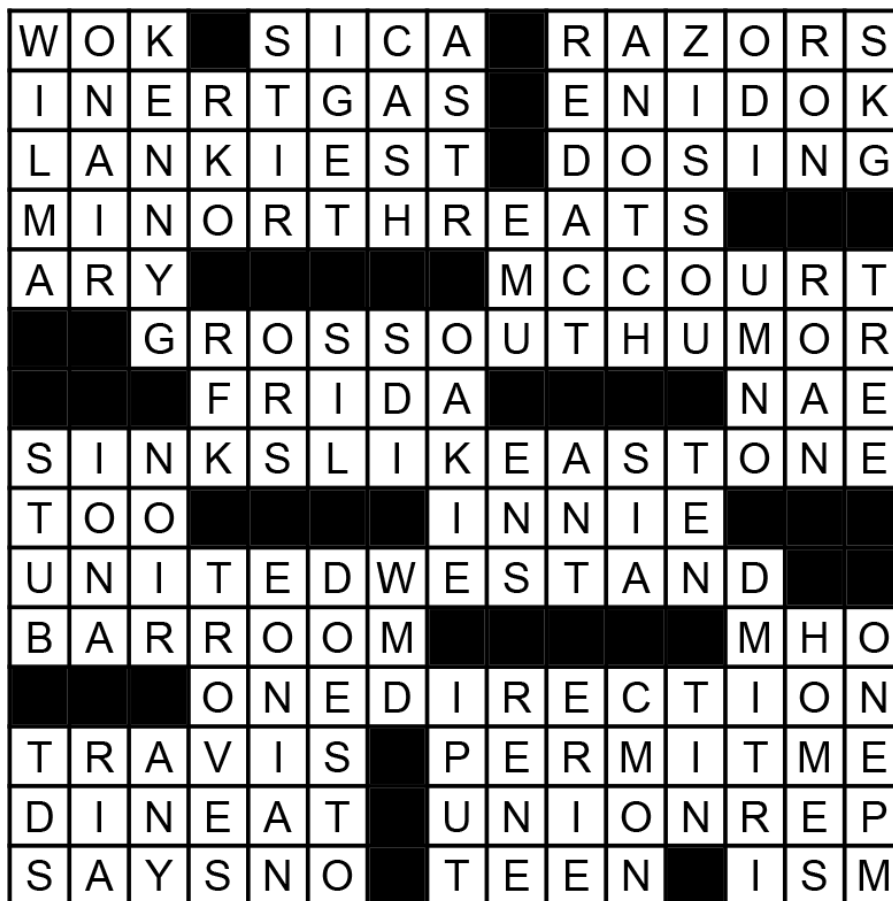
Down

- 1. Evan or Birch of Indiana politics
- 2. Suffix with stink
- 3. Reunion attendee, briefly
- 4. House that drains finances, slangily
- 5. Dr. J's actual first name
- 6. Pass
- 7. Performed
- 8. "There but for the grace of God ____"
- 9. Suffix with meth- or prop-
- 10. Online news aggregation inits.
- 11. Paradise
- 12. How butterflies might be caught
- 13. Final approvals
- 18. Small cavern, in poetry
- 21. Recycling receptacle
- 23. Words before "tree" or "creek"
- 24. What to expect when you're expecting
- 25. Sufficient, for Shakespeare
- 26. Presidential "no"

- 27. ____ Mahal
- 28. Bird on Australia's coat of arms
- 29. Hip-hop's ____ Def
- 32. Players often pick it up
- 34. Baseball exec Epstein
- 35. Nephew of Donald Duck
- 37. Directly paired
- 38. Like on Twitter, informally
- 39. French "a"
- 40. ____ Juan, Puerto Rico
- 42. Nittany Lions of the Big Ten: Abbr.
- 44. Students with the motto "Fiat Lux," informally
- 45. Beautifully worded
- 46. On/off ____
- 47. Org. for which Mike Tyson twice held the heavyweight title
- 48. Gush
- 49. Dryer screen buildup
- 51. Sweetums
- 54. Crafts the U.S. government has never recognized
- 55. Nitwit
- 56. Website used by a lot of artisans
- 58. ____ fly
- 59. Name on Chinese restaurant menus
- 60. Winner of the first three Fiesta Bowls, for short
- 61. "So's ____ old man!"



Answers to last issue's puzzle





TELEVISION

Evil Genius Delivers News on Infamous Erie Event

The Netflix documentary series sheds new information on the Pizza Bomber Case



Produced by the Mark and Jay Duplass, *Evil Genius* tells the story of Marjorie Diehl-Armstrong, William Rothstein, and the many people drawn in around the 2003 death of Brian Wells.

By: Nick Warren

[DISCLAIMER: This contains spoilers for the series *Evil Genius*]

Released Friday, May 11 as a four part series, *Evil Genius* is the latest high-profile true crime offering from the online streaming giant, Netflix. Upon its release, it served as featured content, and has likely been viewed by millions (only a guess since Netflix is notoriously taciturn regarding their actual rating numbers). It tells the story of Marjorie Diehl-Armstrong and is, according to its subtitle "The True Story of America's Most Diabolical Bank Heist."

The events surrounding the death of pizza delivery man Brian Wells have captivated people from day one, and it's no mystery why. On August 28, 2003, Wells received a call to Mama Mia's Pizzeria just north of the Millcreek Mall on Peach Street. He drove to 8631 Peach Street across from New Motors in Summit and was outfitted with a homemade collar bomb around his neck and a specially-fashioned cane gun, receiving written instructions to rob the PNC Bank at the Summit Towne Centre (now closed). Wells was apprehended by the police, where officials soon discovered the collar bomb. Wells died surrounded by police, while being filmed by local news outlets as the bomb went off. The events of that day made their way around the world, with a nearly endless maze of bizarre details. As events unfolded, the story become even more lurid, leading to two more deaths, a frozen body, and a stockpile of government cheese.

If you live in Erie, and especially if you did between 2003 and 2010, chances are you're well acquainted with the basics of this story. You already know the main cast of characters: Diehl-Armstrong, Wells, William Rothstein, and Kenneth Barnes.

Evil Genius highlights each of these individuals. It also touches on the deaths

of Wells' coworker, Robert Thomas Pinetti, and Diehl-Armstrong's ex-boyfriend James Roden, the titular "Frozen Body" in the second episode, and discusses Floyd Stockton, who after serving a prison sentence for rape, now lives in Washington state and was accused by Diehl-Armstrong of putting the collar around Wells' neck.

Most significantly, the series concludes with a filmed confession from Jessica Hoopsick, who maintains Wells' innocence. The series refers frequently to a notebook page written by Wells showing the names of several area prostitutes. Among those names was Hoopsick's, one of his favorites. The two formed what seemed to be a deep and legitimate friendship. Hoopsick was serving a prison sentence at the State Correctional Institute in Muncy, Pennsylvania during the same time as Marjorie Diehl-Armstrong. After Hoopsick's release, she met up with filmmaker Trey Borzillieri. On camera she revealed that she helped Armstrong and Rothstein select Wells to do the robbery. This contradicts Armstrong's comments, as well the court testimony from Barnes. Hoopsick's timeline also conflicts with that of witness Michael Douglas, who testified that he saw Wells on the afternoon of the robbery.

Full of expertly crafted tension, the series is riveting to watch. It's made all the more surreal being familiar with the settings, like upper Peach Street. The filmmakers refrain from making any direct judgments about Erie itself. There are numerous tracking helicopter shots of the Bayfront as well as Summit and McKean. Absent are the all-too-familiar dreary scenes of abandoned manufacturing buildings shown in nearly every "post-Trump" news story. It casts its law enforcement officials in a neutral-to-positive light (and downright glowing when compared to the Manitowoc County Sheriff's Department in *Making a Murderer*), and it attempts to treat the perpetrators and victims with respect. It's notable that the first words visible in the title sequence, before "Netflix" or "Duplass," are "Erie, PA." As much as one's confirmation bias seeks

to make Erie a character in this series, the documentary is about a specific series of events and the people around them, and there's plenty there.

As well as the filmmakers do at trying to string together a linear narrative, there might just be too many moving parts to make that happen. Nearly every detail of the case is able to branch out, raising more unanswered questions.

From the opening seconds of the series, it's clear that Marjorie Diehl-Armstrong is not being intentionally demonized here. Throughout, there are countless references to the beauty of her youth and her intelligence — despite how you choose to interpret the title.

On the other side of the law, the person most often on camera is FBI Special Agent Gerald "Jerry" Clark, the lead investigator in the case (FBI Major Case #203). Clark retired from the FBI in 2011 and still resides in Erie. He's now a professor at Gannon University, holding a Ph. D. in criminology. In 2012, Clark, along with the Erie Times-News' Ed Palattella — who has covered the case from its beginning — wrote *Pizza Bomber: The Untold Story of America's Most Shocking Bank Robbery*, a 448 page first-hand account of the events. The two also teamed up to pen *A History of Heists: Bank Robbery in America* in 2015, and *Mania and Marjorie Diehl-Armstrong: Inside the Mind of a Female Serial Killer* in 2017.

The reviews of the series have been favorable overall, with many citing its binge-worthy presentation. *Evil Genius* is the heir apparent to *Making a Murderer* (with this year's *Wild Wild Country* vying for the position as well). The 2015 hit Netflix original series debuted 9 months after the conclusion of HBO's landmark six part series *The Jinx*. These two series were arguably the most notable entries in the zeitgeist of true crime that followed the release of the podcast *Serial* in 2014. The Wells case has been the subject of numerous podcasts itself, including a 2017 episode of *My Favorite Murder*.

After the cliffhanger of Hoopsick's confession, the filmmakers are open to a following season, though there is nothing announced at this point in time.

Nick Warren can be contacted at nick@eriereader.com

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