

Erie's only free, independent source
for news, culture, and entertainment

May 29 - June 11 Vol. 3 No. 11 / ErieReader.com

ERIE READER

LAKE ERIE IN PERIL

FOUR LOOMING THREATS TO OUR
MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE

Frank Garland, Mike Kelly's "Fox & Friends," Millcreek School Board Results, Horsing Around: Don Tucci's Pending Lawsuit, Hate Speech and Rich McCarty's CNN Appearance, Black Flag Comes to the crooked i, Erie's Wild Rib Cook-Off and Music Festival, Q&A with the Mountain Goats' John Darnielle, and Back in the Day with Barry Casselman

Invasive
Species

Micro
Plastic

Global
Warming

Algae
Blooms

P E N N S Y L V

FREE

WATERFRONT FUN FOR EVERYONE!

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Port Authority offers recreational opportunities for boating, waterfront camping, touring and dining. Among the Bayfront amenities are: sail cruises, charter fishing excursions, water taxi services, programming at the Liberty Park Burger King Amphitheater, bikeways, walkways, miniature golf, marinas, transient boating facilities, boat rentals and more!

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- [7/9] Blues guitar great **WALTER TROUT AND THE RADICALS**
- [7/16] Bikes and blues with **RICK MCGEE & THE ROADHOUSE ROCKERS 7/23**
- [7/23] Party funk of **BIG SAM'S FUNKY NATION**
- [7/30] Local blues legend **JAKE'S BLUES**
- [8/6] Disco and dance hits with **THUMPDADDY**
- [8/13] Pop music with **SIXPENCE NONE THE RICHER**
- [8/20] Jazz with **ERIE JAZZ & POP COALITION / TONY MONACO**
- [8/27] Country night with **THE STICKERS**

WATERFRONT EVENTS 2013

JUNE

- [3, 10, 17, 24] **CRUISE THE BAY**
Bayfront Park & Ride lot
Produced by Lake Erie Car Classics Club 814-474-5183
- [29] **BUFFET ON THE BAY**
4pm, Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by the Second Harvest Food Bank

JULY

- [1, 8, 15, 22, 29] **CRUISE THE BAY**
Bayfront Park & Ride lot
Produced by Lake Erie Car Classics Club 814-474-5183
- [4] **PICNIC IN THE PARK WITH FIREWORKS!**
5pm, Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by the Perry 200 Commission 814-459-8000



- [9, 16, 23, 30] **8 GREAT TUESDAYS**
6:30pm, Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by the Erie Port Authority 814-455-7557
- [27] **BEER ON THE BAY**
Sessions at 12pm and 4pm, Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership 814-454-7191

AUGUST

- [10] **CARDBOARD BOAT REGATTA**
Bayfront Maritime Center
456-4077
- [5, 12, 19, 26] **CRUISE THE BAY**
Bayfront Park & Ride lot
Produced by Lake Erie Car Classics Club 814-474-5183
- [6, 13, 20, 27] **8 GREAT TUESDAYS**
6:30pm, Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by the Erie Port Authority 814-455-7557
- [24, 25, 31] **LAND LIGHTHOUSE TOURS**
Erie Land Lighthouse
Produced by Erie Playhouse Youth Theater 814-454-2852
- [25] **GOSPELFEST**
Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by New Jerusalem Lutheran Church 814-455-1972

SEPTEMBER

- [1, 5, 7, 8] **LAND LIGHTHOUSE TOURS**
Erie Land Lighthouse
Produced by Erie Playhouse Youth Theater 814-454-2852
- [7] **WALK FOR SMALL ANIMALS**
Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by Because You Care, Inc. 814-866-5039
- [8] **PERRY 200 GRAND FINALE**
6pm, Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by Perry 200 Commission 814-459-8000
- [9, 16, 23, 30] **CRUISE THE BAY**
Bayfront Park & Ride lot
Produced by Lake Erie Car Classics Club 814-474-5183
- [14] **HEART WALK**
Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by American Heart Association 814-836-0013
- [21] **WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S**
Burger King Amphitheater/Liberty Park
Produced by Alzheimer's Association 814-456-9200



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For your safety, no pets, bikes, rollerblades, skateboards, or alcohol may be brought into Liberty Park. Free EMTA shuttle during 8 Great Tuesday concerts. Calendar subject to change.





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May 29, 2013

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Frank Garland

From the Editors

On Saturday, May 25, approximately 145,000 took to the streets of Erie to celebrate the 10,000 more marching in commemoration of Erie's role in the Battle of Lake. Despite a slight chill in the air, Erie came together as a community to participate in the Grand Patriotic Parade -- the topic on the cover of the last issue of the Erie Reader. And if you remember, the parade committee told Alex Bieler it was anticipating 100,000 attendees; the 145,000 number reported by WICU's Emily Welsh in an interview with former Erie Mayor Joyce Savocchio, one of the people on the planning committee, well exceeds that original estimate. So what's the takeaway? Erie doesn't mind a little brisk breeze. And Erie loves itself a good parade.

But what's more important is that Erie knows how to come together

to celebrate its past -- something in which this community takes great pride. After all, the fleet that Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry led was built right here in our bay. So post-War of 1812 America unfolded the way it did largely because of Erie's role in the U.S.'s victory in the Battle of Lake Erie, a lake after which we draw our city and county's namesake. "Our history was formed around [Lake Erie]," writes Jay Stevens in this issue's cover story, "and our region's economy and livelihood depends on it. In a sense, we are defined by Lake Erie."

And such reverence in our proud past gives us hope for our bright future.

But, as Jay writes, our Great Lake is in trouble.

In this story, Jay explores four threats facing our greatest resource: microplastics, algae blooms, invasive species, and climate change. How dangerous are these threats? Is it too

late for us? What's our future in light of the future of our lake?

All questions explored in Jay's story.

But there lies another question Jay poses: What can we do to pressure local officials to take action?

This is a pertinent question since local officials affect our day-to-day life, making decisions that shape our future here.

According to the final batch of unofficial primary results provided by the Erie County Courthouse sent out at 10:17 p.m. Tuesday, May 21, only 26.35 percent took to the polls to cast their ballots. That's just one out of every four registered voters.

Is this why pundits were surprised by several outcomes? Maybe.

This primary election saw former U.S. Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper unseat democratic incumbent Barry Grossman, who was seeking a second term, to represent the Democratic party in this fall's

General Election for the position of Erie County Executive. Newcomer Jay Breneman unseated Ronald "Whitey" Cleaver, who was seeking a third term, to represent the 4th District in the General Elections.

Originally, the unofficial results had Edinboro University of Pennsylvania Professor Lisa Austin ousting Democratic Incumbent Joe Giles -- who had served on County Council since 1982 -- for the 2nd District nod. But when the official vote came in, it was discovered that one precinct had not been counted and Andre Horton had actually bested Austin by 10 votes. Yes, just 10 votes separated the winners, leading Austin to challenge the count to determine who will face Republican challenger Ned Smith, who was unopposed in the primaries, in the General Elections Tuesday, Nov. 5.

Erie's immediate future is at stake -- from our Lake to our Bayfront and beyond. If Erie knows how to do one thing right, it's celebrate its past. And if there's ever a chance to learn from our past, it is this: we must care as much about that bright future as we do that proud past.

BACK IN THE DAY

Leon Dryfoos, a Town Character

By: Barry Casselman

You have to be a senior citizen in Erie to know the name of Leon Dryfoos, one of the city's great characters in its long history.

Born in 1892, Dryfoos grew up in Erie in the colorful turn-of-the-century era when the city was still a major port and a growing industrial center, and was just beginning to formalize the cultural institutions which have continued to this day.

Leon's father, Moses Dryfoos, owned the town's general store at Fifth and State streets, and it was a prime gathering place for sailors and travelers, as well as the theatrical and vaudeville performers appearing around the corner at the Park Theater on North Park Row. The Dryfooses had come to the U.S. from Alsace-Lorraine a generation before, settling in Cincinnati, and Moses was reportedly a cousin of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, the French military officer accused unjustly of treason at the time Leon was born. The Dreyfus case and trial became the biggest news story in the world of that time, and only when French author Victor Hugo (he wrote "Les Miserables") came to his defense was his conviction ultimately over-

Leon Dryfoos was restless. He was an accomplished poet (although his poems always rhymed), and when the new phenomenon of radio appeared, he quickly became one of its first local reporters.

turned, and French society turned upside down.

It was a lot quieter for the Dryfooses in Erie, however, where Moses had settled, married, and opened his general store.

In those days, few Erieites went to college. Leon's formal education stopped at high school, but thanks to the visitors to his father's general store, he had tickets to every show at the Park Theater around the corner. The Park Theater was then a major regional theater on the national professional touring circuit. Many of the productions were of Shakespeare's plays, performed by the leading actors of the era, and Leon, who had a prodigious memory, learned most of Shakespeare's plays by heart, a feat that amazed his friends and relatives for the next 80 years.

Speaking of his relatives, I was his nephew, and spent a delightful part of my childhood in his company.

I think he did some acting and odd jobs, and helped out his father for a number of years, and then after World War I, he opened a pet store. He married the eldest of the Masiroff girls, Sylvia, in the 1920s. (Morris Masiroff had emigrated to Erie from Russia, opened a furniture business circa 1899, and had seven children.)

But Leon Dryfoos was restless. He was an accomplished poet (although his poems always rhymed), and when the new phenomenon of radio appeared, he quickly became one of its first local reporters. Among other innovations,

he broadcast the appearance of Gov. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, running for president, from the old Nickel Plate Station on East 18th Street in October 1932. (I know about this because with him at the time was his friend, and future brother-in-law, my father, then a young physician at Hamot Hospital.)

His radio work blossomed over the years into a daily radio show filled with news, poetry, gossip, and general commentary that all was listened to faithfully by generations of Erieites for almost 50 years until the 1970s.

The pet store business went sour in the Depression, and Dryfoos went into the antique business with my Aunt Sylvia on East Seventh Street. Not settling for doing anything in a small way, Leon became a nationally-recognized expert on antiques.

He befriended Ed Warman, who was the leading publisher of antiques magazines and books, and wrote articles for him. Major collectors from around the nation made a stop in Erie to visit the Dryfoos antique shop. Several times a year, Leon and Sylvia got in their car and drove to the major antique shows across the country. At the same time, Leon became a devoted numismatist and dealer at a time before coin collecting became popular and financially rewarding.

Dryfoos recited with great frequency his original poems on the air, and eventually State Representative Forrest Hopkins of North East introduced a bill in the state legislature, which passed, making Leon Pennsylvania's first official state poet laureate.

Also a tireless Erie historian, Dryfoos filled his radio shows with the lore of Erie's past, including stories about the various historical characters of the previous century. At his store, he bought and sold many of the mementos and relics of Erie's history.

I was fortunate to have a number of interesting and loving aunts and uncles while growing up in Erie. Uncle Leon, however, was an education, instilling in me a love for Erie history, antiques, and coins. When I opened a bookstore in Erie at 26th and Peach streets in 1970, it was Uncle Leon, recalling Erie's General Anthony Wayne's penchant for sartorial eccentricity, who suggested the bookstore's name -- "Mad Anthony's Hat." Aunt Sylvia, who played violin for the Erie Philharmonic for many years, read almost every book (as did my mother) in the Erie Library, and inspired in me a love of music and literature.

Leon Dryfoos died in 1991 at the age of 99. He was a unique character who became part of Erie's everyday life and history. He should not be forgotten. ■

Barry Casselman, an Erie native, now lives in Minneapolis. He has been a national political commentator for many years, as well as a widely published author of poetry and short fiction. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://erirdr.com/xiuxl>



NEWS of the WEIRD

By: Chuck Shepherd

Government in Action

"Consider all the ways we're taxed," wrote Maryland's community Gazette in April -- when we're born, die, earn income, spend it, own property, sell it, attend entertainment venues, operate vehicles and pass wealth along after death, among others. Maryland has now added a tax on rain. To reduce stormwater runoff into the Chesapeake Bay, the Environmental Protection Agency assessed the state \$14.8 billion, which the state will collect starting in July by taxing "impervious surfaces" -- any land area in its 10 largest counties that cannot directly absorb rainwater, such as roofs, driveways, patios and sidewalks. [Gazette.net (Gaithersburg, Md.), 4-5-2013]

The Washington Post reported in April that the federal government is due to spend \$890,000 this year to safeguard ... nothing. The amount is the total fees for maintaining more than 13,000 short-term bank accounts the government owns but which have no money in them and never again will. Closing the accounts is easier said than done, according to the watchdog Citizens Against Government Waste, because the accounts each housed separate government grants, and Congress has required that, before the accounts are closed, the grants must be formally audited -- something bureaucrats are rarely motivated to do, at least within the 180 days set by law (though there is no penalty for missing the deadline). [Washington Post, 4-24-2013]

It's good to be the county administrator of Alameda County, Calif. (on San Francisco Bay, south of Oakland). The San Francisco Chronicle revealed in March that somehow, Susan Muranishi negotiated a contract that pays her \$301,000 a year, plus "equity pay" of \$24,000 a year so that she makes at least 10 percent more than the next highest paid official, plus "longevity" pay of \$54,000 a year, plus a car allowance -- and that she will be paid that total amount per year as her pension for life (in addition to a private pension of \$46,000 a year that the county purchased for her). [San Francisco Chronicle, 3-25-2013]

The Way Washington Works: (1) Congress established a National Helium Reserve in 1925 in the era of "zeppelin" balloons, but most consider it no longer useful (most, that is, ranging from President Reagan to the Democratic congressman who in 1996 called it one program that, if we cannot undo it, "we cannot undo anything"). The House of Representatives recently voted 394-1 to continue funding it because of "fears" of a shortage that might affect MRI machines and,

of course, party balloons. (2) In rare (these days) bipartisan action, congressional military "experts" of both parties are about to force the Army to continue building Abrams tanks -- when the Army said it doesn't want them and can't use them. The tank manufacturers, of course, have convinced Congress that it needs the contracts, no matter what the Army says (according to an April Associated Press analysis). [Washington Post, 4-26-2013] [Associated Press via Yahoo News, 4-29-2013]

Great Art!

The Jewish Museum in Berlin is currently staging what has become popularly known as the "Jew in the Box" exhibit to teach visitors about Judaism -- simply featuring one knowledgeable Jewish person who sits in a chair in a glass box for two hours a day and answers questions from the curious. Both supporters ("We Germans have many insecurities when it comes to Jews") and critics ("Why don't they give him a banana and a glass of water (and) turn up the heat?") are plentiful. [Daily Mail (London), 3-29-2013]

The weather in Hong Kong on April 25 wreaked havoc on American artist Paul McCarthy's outdoor, 50-foot-tall piece of "inflatable art" in the West Kowloon Cultural District. "Complex Pile" (a model of an arrangement of excrement) got punctured, which mostly pleased McCarthy's critics since his recent work, reported the South China Morning Post, has often centered around bodily functions. [South China Morning Post (Hong Kong), 4-26-2013]

Police Report

News of the Weird has reported several times on the astonishing control that inmates have at certain prisons in Latin American countries, with drug cartel leaders often enjoying lives nearly as pleasurable as their lives on the outside. However, according to an April federal indictment, similar problems have plagued the City Detention Center in Baltimore, where members of the "Black Guerrilla Family" operated with impunity. Between 2010 and 2012, corruption was such that 13 female guards have now been charged, including four women who bore the children of the gang's imprisoned leader, Tavon White. Cellphones, drugs and Grey Goose vodka were among the smuggled-in contraband, and the indictment charges that murders were ordered from inside. (Baltimore City Paper had reported 14 stories in 2009 and 2010 on the gang-related corruption at the center, but apparently state and federal officials had failed to be alarmed.) [DailyBeast.com, 4-26-2013; Washington Post, 5-6-2013]

Frequent Flyers: (1) Chicago police have arrested Ms. Shermain Miles, 51, at least 396 times since 1978, under 83 different aliases, for crimes ranging from theft (92 times) to prostitution and robbery. According to the Chicago Sun-Times, she is a virtuoso at playing "the system" to delay her proceedings and avoid jail time. (2) Alvin Cote, 59, passed away in February of poor health in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, following a "career" of 843 public-intoxication arrests. [Chicago Sun-Times, 4-20-2013] [Star Phoenix (Saskatoon), 2-13-2013]

Street Corner SOAPBOX

Here We Go Again

By: Jay Stevens

Those of us around during the Clinton years remember well the Lewinsky scandal and the impeachment that followed it. House Republicans, apparently driven to a kind of obsessive madness by repeated political defeats at the hands of a popular president, decided to drive to the brink of political crisis over a minor sexual affair. For nearly a full year, the Lewinsky scandal paralyzed Washington, as Clinton was investigated, accused of perjury by a special prosecutor, impeached by the Republican-led House in a strictly partisan vote, and subsequently acquitted by the Senate.

It was pretty obvious to Americans what was going on: manufactured scandal meant to embarrass a president. Approval ratings for Clinton shot up. More than 60 percent of Americans approved of Clinton's presidency during the height of the scandal.

House Republicans
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to the president and
his administration.

And so – House Republicans are at it again, desperately searching for something – *anything* – to stick to the president and his administration.

First it was Solyndra – an alternative energy company that went bankrupt despite receiving millions in government loans. House Republicans held hearings and tried to find evidence that there was an improper relationship between the Obama administration and the energy company. There was none.

Then it was Benghazi. Extremist Islamic militants attacked the U.S. embassy in Libya, killing four Americans. House Republicans held hearings and tried to find evidence that the president and his administration deliberately lied about the nature and cause of the attacks directly after the incident. They didn't.

Now it's the IRS scandal. A group of employees in the IRS' Cincinnati office apparently

targeted Tea Party groups for extra scrutiny over their claimed nonprofit status. The workers were reigned in. Now House Republicans are holding hearings to try to find evidence that the administration knew about, or even ordered the scrutiny for the 2012 election. They won't.


As if on cue, President Obama's job approval ratings are beginning to rise. According to a recent CNN poll, Obama's approval rating is up 2 points to 53 percent. Meanwhile, that same poll showing that Republican Congressmen are suffering with a 35 percent approval rating and a record-setting 59 percent *disapproval* rating.

Here's the thing. As Republicans grope blindly for something to stick to the president, they're overlooking the bigger issues of the "scandals." Instead of focusing, say, on the president's statements after the Benghazi attack, they could've asked, sincerely, about the state of funding for security at embassies worldwide. Instead of trying to depict the IRS scandal as some kind of politicized electoral tool for the president (instead of the bureaucratic snafu it *really* was), they could

see the opportunity to question the difficulty in disciplining or firing federal employees, or even holding federal employees accountable to performance standards.

No. Instead we get Congressmen who obsess about bringing down the administration. Who grandstand for partisan crowds. Who showboat. Like our own Mike Kelly, who uses these "scandals" to get airtime on Fox Television.

Nation faced with a debt-ceiling crisis? Kelly uses it to urge fellow Republicans to "kick the shit out of" Democrats. Solyndra? Kelly's grilling in those hearings got him a seat on Fox Business News to rant against federal investment in green technology. Benghazi? Kelly's angry tirade against State Department officials in a House Oversight Committee hearing earns the Congressman a seat on "Fox & Friends." IRS scandal? Another tirade in his committee hearing, another stint on "Fox & Friends."

Given a little safe haven of a Congressional district by the recent state redistricting, Kelly has chosen to use his power, not to be a leader on real and pressing issues facing the country – or even to bring a little federal funding to the region to help alleviate, say, distressed school systems or to repair decaying infrastructure. Instead, he's chosen partisan rancor, division, and distraction. He's chosen "Fox & Friends." 

Jay Stevens can be contacted at Jay@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Snevets_Yaj. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://eridr.com/mkba2>



Readers' Choice

Stan Worby, 39, made headlines internationally in February when, dressed as Batman, he hauled fugitive Daniel Frayne, 27, into a Bradford, England, police station. It turns out he was just helping his friend Daniel turn himself in (on an outstanding arrest warrant). In a separate incident in April, the two "friends" were arrested together and charged with burglarizing a garage in Bradford. (2) In a confessional in the April GQ magazine, the sportswriter Buzz Bissinger (creator of TV's "Friday Night Lights") admitted that his later-in-life fame had enabled a narcissism that caused him to impulsively buy 81 leather jackets in a three-year period, plus 75 pairs of boots, 41 pairs of leather pants, 32 pairs of upscale jeans, 10 evening jackets and 115 pairs of leather gloves, among other extravagances and aberrations. (3) A 5-year-old boy in rural Cumberland County, Ky., accidentally shot and killed his 2-year-old sister in April, firing his own .22-caliber rifle. The weapon (a "Crickett") is marketed as "My First Rifle" by the Keystone Sporting Arms company. (4) Henry Gribbohm, 30, admitted in April that he had blown his \$2,600 life savings trying to win an Xbox at a rigged ball-toss game at a Manchester, N.H., carnival, lamenting to WBZ-TV, "For once in my life, I happened to become that sucker." (Gribbohm complained to the operator, but was given only a large stuffed banana as consolation. However, when news broke, an Internet website took up a collection and purchased the banana from him for \$2,600.)



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Somewhat Backwards DUI: Danielle Parker was hospitalized and awaiting DUI charges after a crash near Gaston, N.C., in March, even though she had been in the passenger seat of the car. She had handled the wheel momentarily because Brittany Reinhardt, 19, in the driver's seat, was busy texting. (Reinhardt, apparently sober, was charged with "aiding and abetting" a DUI.) [Gaston Gazette, 3-29-2013]

The Weirdo-American Community

The biggest news out of Newtown, Conn., recently -- not involving the tragic shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School -- came when local environmental officials announced on April 29 that they were investigating the finding of "200 to 300 one-gallon plastic jugs" filled with urine in a home "in a state of disrepair." No charges were filed against the homeowner, but officials sought to assure neighbors and users of the property that no health hazard was present. (The average person, reported the Connecticut Post, produces about six cups of urine a day.) [Danbury News Times, 4-30-2013]

Strange Old World

Mr. Datta Phuge perhaps overly personifies India's national obsession with the beauty of gold. For special occasions, he outfits his "knuckles, neck and wrists" with golden "signet rings, chunky bracelets and a medallion," wrote BBC News in April after Phuge had also purchased a crinkly gold tailored shirt made for him for about \$250,000. The 7-pound shirt (from Rankar Jewellers in the city of Pune) has a velvet lining to keep it from irritating his skin, and he must, of course, always travel with a bodyguard. [BBC News, 4-14-2013]

Readers' Choice

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TECH WATCH

Tweeting in a Tornado

By: Dakota Hoffman, Epic WebStudios

Social media today is not about the tools, but the technology and behavior — virtual collaboration, information sharing, and grass-roots engagement — that transforms monologues into dialogues. Social media empowers individuals, providing them a platform from which to share opinions, experiences, and information from anywhere at any time.

Individuals have increasingly used social media in disasters as well. As the popularity and accessibility of

While the response to the Oklahoma tornado indicates a significant advancement in the use of social media for public safety, there remain several challenges and questions

online and mobile technologies has grown, we have experienced these events firsthand, through photos, text, online posts, and videos captured from the ground, posted to Facebook and shared via Twitter, YouTube, and other tools. We have watched the fall of governments, water rescues, train crashes, wildfires, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and school shootings from our computers and mobile phones. Throughout these events, social media emerged as a popular and powerful tool used by the public to engage and share information.

Personally, when I first started thinking about social media's role in natural disasters, I envisioned the image of a teenage girl running down the road tweeting, "OMG! It's a twister, it's a twister! #SOS #ERIEWEATHER"

With that absurdity out of the way, I began to think more seriously about how social media can actually act as

a pseudo-alert system keeping users in the know about what is going on around them in the face of a disaster, natural or manmade. The Twitter account Erie Alerts comes to mind.

From raising money to locating survivors, it's clear that social media is quickly becoming the most efficient outlet for managing disaster response.

As I was reading up on last week's tornado that tore through Oklahoma, I found a Facebook group dedicated to locating the owners of items and photographs displaced by the storm and returning them. The group has, as of Thursday, May 23, 12,348 members and it is constantly growing.

The overwhelming response has seen thousands of precious photos and documents back to their owners.

I heard another heartwarming story in the form of an elderly woman looking for her lost dog. The woman was searching through rubble and being interviewed by a reporter. The dog was presumed dead, but right in the middle of the interview, the dog popped its head out of the rubble in the background.

The video has gone viral and has inspired those with Internet service uninterrupted by the storm to create Facebook groups for locating lost pets.

Social media truly excels, however, in illustrating and highlighting hope in the face of tragedy.

One image from the tornado is spreading inspiration as it's shared.

The image shows tattered materials from a home, including a decorative plaque that reads, "The most important things in life aren't things."

As the image continues to be shared via social media, many commenters have expressed their appreciation for the reminder, especially during times of distress.

While the response to the Oklaho-

ma tornado indicates a significant advancement in the use of social media for public safety, there remain several challenges and questions, varying from how to get messages out to non-social media users, how to establish a cohesive and well-known response process, or how to streamline the sheer volume of posts and diversity in social media to make it more efficient. Further research, technology development, assessment, discussion, as well as additional funding, policy, and procedures are needed before many of these can be addressed.

Establishing processes and educating citizens on how to respond online to disasters is much like establishing a fire escape route with a family. For instance, if Erie were to establish one well-known Twitter hashtag, #erieaid per se, first responders can follow geo locations in those tweets to quickly and accurately locate disaster victims.

A challenge in using social media for emergency response lies in how scattered its use could be. One disaster victim might use the #erieaid hashtag while another other may not — or users may even incorrectly use a variation of that tag, such as #erieaids.

As the popularity, acceptance, and technological capabilities of social media tools continue to grow, so too will the need for standardizing methods, creating funding streams, and providing guidance. With each new event comes an opportunity to learn from past mistakes and to apply new technologies in an operational environment. It is essential to address these challenges now, to ensure these tools are used to the full extent of their abilities, and to help guide the development and application of social media tools for public safety in the future.

Dakota Hoffman can be contacted at Epic@ErieReader.com. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://eridr.com/ag3dm>



THE WAY I SEE IT

New Lessons, A Horse by Any Other Name

By: Rebecca Styn

The primary elections wrapped up this past Tuesday, May 21, and I'm here to tell you all about them — well, some of them. Seeing as many of my columns have focused on the Millcreek School Board, I thought it might be fitting to inform you of your newly elected officers — as well as a handful that are still in waiting — for the General Election.

Let me reiterate — in case you haven't noticed, I have focused several of my columns on issues related to the Millcreek school district — from the poor leadership of Superintendent Michael Golde to the once approved, then stalled, then dissolved \$110 mil

No matter who ultimately wins, the board faces difficult challenges ahead, and I can only hope they are addressed efficiently and with far more insight than the predecessors had.

renovation project — and most times I wasn't very complimentary. My criticisms often featured a number of words that a school board (or any governing agency) doesn't ever want to see in the media — audit, investigation, improper transfer of funds, incompetency — to name a few. But the times, they are a-changin' — slightly. And hopefully with a few new faces on the panel, it will only be for the better.

Due partially to a dismal — but rather typical — turnout of 23 percent, only two of the four seats changed. Democrats nominated incumbents Michael Kobylka and John DiPlacido for the November General Election. Kobylka was the only vote against a \$110 million consolidation project. Democrats also nominated two newcomers to the

scene, which include business owner Donna Reese and John Pitzer, a territory manager at Erie Industrial Supply.

On the Republican front, those nominated, include: Kobylka, Reese Pitzer, and Lou Aliota, who has been a strong voice of opposition in the McDowell project. Of the four seats that were open, three locked in spots: Reese, Kobylka, and Pitzer. Come November, Incumbent John DiPlacido, who took the democratic nomination, and candidate Lou Aliota, who took the republican, will square off.

Third-party and Independent candidates have until Aug. 1 to enter the race.

No matter who ultimately wins, the board faces difficult challenges ahead, and I can only hope they are addressed efficiently and with far more insight than the predecessors had.

A horse by any other name...

Speaking of difficult challenges, the GOP candidate for Erie County executive is facing a few of his own. Republican and Tea Party member Don Tucci — a local entrepreneur and marketing executive — is being sued by a woman who claims he owes her over \$50,000 in a business venture.

The lawsuit, filed Monday, May 20 in Erie County Court, seeks \$51,951.03 from Tucci — plus interest. The filing regards Equestrian Endeavors LLC, which operated a nonprofit horse-rescue organization that both Tucci and the plaintiff had ownership stakes in.

However, this isn't the first time he's been in trouble. Back in February, Tucci had to appear in court because his girlfriend had filed a protection from abuse order against him.

Now, like everyone else, he's innocent until proven guilty — and although there were no findings of abuse, Tucci consented to the PFA. And the fact that he's being sued for any amount of money, doesn't bode well for his candidacy.

So, stay informed voters. No matter what his future holds, in as long as he remains on the right side of the law — he will square off against Democrat and former U.S. Congresswoman Kathy Dahlkemper in the Nov. 5 General Election.

Love? Hate? Agree? Disagree? I want to hear from you. Email me at rStyn@ErieReader.com and follow me on Twitter @rStyn. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://eridr.com/dsnmx>



JUST TOYIN' WITCHA By: B. Toy



LGBT VOICES

Hate Speech and Free Speech

By: Rich McCarty

Last week, my students and I were discussing arguments for and against the legal recognition of same-sex marriage. One of the arguments against same-sex marriage suggests that if homosexuality is fully approved by law and society, such approval will result in certain religious people being condemned as “bigots” for declaring homosexuality a sin. The class went on to discuss whether religious condemnations of same-sex relationships really amount to “hate speech,” or if

Disagreements are worthwhile when they are grounded in concern for human well-being and the up-building of the community.

these simply represent one of many views on the topic.

Curiously enough, however, the concern that religious condemnations of homosexuality might be designated as “hate speech” has been a recent point of national debate. In fact, last week the controversy centered on a string of comments made by Chris Broussard on ESPN after an NBA player, Jason Collins, came out of the closet as a gay man. While commenting on Collins’ announcement, Broussard interjected his religious belief that homosexuality was “open rebellion” to God. Broussard qualified his statements by saying that

non-marital heterosexual sex is also sinful — but there was no question that the central force of his religious commentary was on the subject of homosexuality.

Within a few days, a colleague of mine at Texas Christian University called and asked if I would comment on the hate speech debate for a CNN author, who was working on his weekly “Belief” column for CNN.com. I accepted, and was happy to see that CNN used one of my comments in the opinion piece on May 5. In short, CNN quoted me as saying that debate about contested issues — like homosexuality — can be good, because those debates help us to settle disputed issues.

But anytime I am quoted in media, whether local, state, or national, I always consider how my words might be interpreted by those in my own community. As a professor and pastor, I do not want students or congregants reading my public comments and thinking that they need to parrot those back to me in order to get a good grade or to get closer to God. To the contrary, I want them to think for themselves.

What is more, as a public LGBT advocate, I always want to articulate the urgent need for equality, and yet I also want to create room for discourse—and, depending on the quote journalists take from me, I can sound like a “one-issue” partisan, or a lukewarm moderate without conviction. So when CNN.com chose to quote me on why debate about homosexuality “can be good,” I thought it might be worthwhile to bring the conversation back to the Erie Reader in order to engage our local community on the “hate speech” debate. So as to not focus on any local religious community or person, I thought we might use the Collins/Broussard/ESPN controversy as a spring board for discussion. To that end, here’s the rest of what I had

to say to CNN:

In my view, a religious belief is not exempt from ethical analysis. While religious perspectives are always personal, they are never so private as to be beyond reproach. For example, as 21st Century Americans, we have no trouble criticizing those 18th and 19th century Christian views that promoted slavery. Likewise, most Americans repudiate those 20th century Christian views that denied interracial couples marital legitimacy, or women equal rights under the law. And so it seems rather self-evident to us (now) that certain religious speech has indeed been a location of “hate speech.”

The careful balance we strike as Americans, however, is to accept freedom of conscience, even as we disagree with our fellow citizens on any number of social or moral issues. That is to say, one part of the great American experiment is to grant one another freedom of speech, and to fight for our rights to engage in free speech, even if we disagree with what our fellow citizens are saying.

With respect to Chris Broussard’s comments, then, he may be “free” to express his religious beliefs in a public forum — so long as he does not incite violence — but the context in which he made those remarks, and the spirit with which he made them, may very well result in history remembering his speech as hateful.

Those prophetic voices who call for the full acceptance of LGBT equality — which I do — will absolutely categorize Broussard’s speech as unduly narrow, if not outright immoral, arguing that what he said is on the wrong side of human rights and human flourishing (morally), the wrong side of civil rights (socially and legally), and on the wrong side of Christian ethics too (biblically and theologically).

However, the reality we face in a democratic society is that we require discourse and debate in order to “settle” moral and social disputes. This is a temporal reality. Namely, what appears to us as antiquated and prejudicial now (e.g., racial slavery, patriarchal rule, etc.) was once a “disputed issue” that required debate. Without that debate, we either chain ourselves to oppressive traditions indefinitely or insist upon progress without discourse.

Neither option reflects respect for free-



dom of speech, nor respect for liberty of conscience. To that end, we live in a time in human history when the morality and social acceptance of LGBT people is a “disputed issue.” In this sense, Broussard’s comments represent a real view of many Americans.

But it is not the only view. And if polls are to be trusted, Broussard’s views are quickly becoming the “antiquated” views that history will remember as “prejudiced.”

In a historic sense, then, Broussard’s comments are representative of current opinions of a shrinking minority of Americans — if not a shrinking perspective among Christian persons in America too. However, in the long arc of history, Broussard will be sorry he said it, and those who (now) call his speech narrow, immoral, unsubstantiated—and yes, even hateful—will likely be vindicated by a future in which religious moralities are no longer baptized in heterosexism.

But that’s that the national debate about Broussard’s religious comments about sexual morality. Let’s move the conversation back to Erie. Surely we will disagree with one another on LGBT issues. As an out gay man, I actually don’t mind when people want to debate about matters of sexual morality, religious views, or legal issues. However, there is a categorical difference

between discourse and diatribe.

What the Broussard controversy can teach Erie, then, is that we need to be careful — if not care-filled — in our discourse about sexuality. Disagreements are worthwhile when they are grounded in concern for human well-being and the up-building of the community. But when condemnations come from rote parochialism, fear, or prejudice, no one will be surprised when history remembers such comments as wrong—or hateful.

Ultimately, then, the Erie community has the opportunity to shape the way we are remembered about our speech on LGBT issues. Hopefully our community’s choice will be the one in which we won’t have to apologize for what we said, or how we said it.

Rich McCarty holds a Ph.D. in Religious Studies, specializing in sexual ethics. McCarty works in Erie as a professor, serves the community as an ordained minister, and proudly identifies as a member of the LGBT community. You can contact him at rMcCarty@ErieReader.com.

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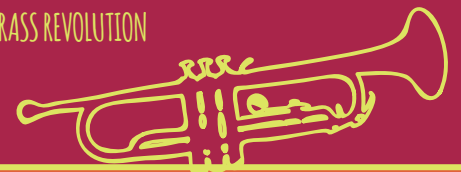
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LAKE ERIE IN PERIL

Four Looming Threats to our Most Valuable Resource

By: Jay Stevens

Compared to the other Great Lakes, Lake Erie is the least of them all. While it has more surface area than Lake Ontario, it's the shallowest and contains the least water. We could pour three Lake Eries into Lake Ontario, and 25 into Lake Superior. Even its shape is unremarkable. Lake Huron from above looks like a wolf's head. Lake Erie resembles a man's slipper.

But Lake Erie is ours. It defines us. Our city and county takes its name from it. Our history was formed around it, and our region's economy and livelihood depends on it. In a sense, we are defined by Lake Erie.

And it's in trouble.

Wherever we have gone in the world, we humans have drastically altered the natural landscape and its delicate ecosystems. We tear down hills, fill in wetlands, cut down forests. We dig holes in the ground and extract metal, oil, gas. We bring with us disease and animals and plants. We consume. We waste.

Ever since we humans settled on Lake Erie and its tributaries, we dumped garbage into the water and on its banks. Native Americans left shell middens at their campsites. Early Euro-American sailors and settlers littered the lake bottom with the wrecks of their wooden sailing ships.

And as technology and industry advanced, so did our waste.

There have been low points. There was so much industrial and agricultural waste in the water, Lake Erie was considered "dead" by some in the 1960s. In 1969, the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland – which empties into Lake Erie – contained so many pollutants, it caught fire. Presque Isle Bay not long ago was afflicted with toxic waste and raw sewage.

We are again at a crossroads. Massive algae blooms are cropping up. Invasive species threaten the habitat of native fish. A survey recently found the highest concentrations of waterborne microplastics recorded in the world in Lake Erie. And climate change promises to severely alter our region's weather, transforming the lake in ways we can't imagine.

This is our lake.

Last summer, the Flagship Niagara took on a group of scientists and college students and spent several days on Lakes Superior, Huron, and Erie, pulling a trawl behind her. Dubbed the "Manta" for its two distinctive wings that kept it afloat and made it



Each spring from 2008 to 2011, severe algae blooms occurred on Lake Erie. The 2011 bloom broke all records for size, covering more than 2,000 square miles of the lake surface.

resemble the ray of the same name, the trawl was skimming the surface water with a net. Its prey wasn't fish; instead, the Manta was after plastic.

"The first sample we took on Superior," said Dr. Sherri "Sam" Mason, a chemistry professor at SUNY Fredonia, and one of the scientists on the Niagara performing the plastic survey. "We caught a big piece of seaweed with big hunks of plastic on it. But the vast majority of what we were finding was really, really small."

So small, in fact, it was not visible to the naked eye. When the Manta was hauled inboard and the net inspected, everyone aboard the ship would crowd around as the contents were revealed. But there wasn't much to be seen. A cigarette wrapper, once. A piece of Styrofoam. Crew and students alike were disappointed.

"I remember having a conversation with Captain Wes [Heersson]," said Mason. "And he said, 'I hear you're not catching anything,' and I said, 'No, I don't think that's true.'"

"It's hard when you're looking at this mass, you

see fish and bugs and seaweed and plankton, and there are no big things of plastic and you think, you're not catching anything. But I knew that there was more to the story. Once we got back to the lab, we started getting those counts."

What Mason and her team found in Lake Erie were large concentrations of microplastic – plastic pieces less than one millimeter in size. They found one sample with 450,000 plastic particles per square kilometer in Lake Erie, about twice as many particles as found in any other sample from the ocean...or anywhere else in the world, for that matter. The Pacific Ocean may get all the press for its floating island of plastic – the "Great Garbage Patch" – but Lake Erie's waters have the highest concentration of plastic in the world.

"For the biggest counts we got," said Mason, "we'd sit down and ask ourselves, 'okay, this wasn't right around the time we did a swim call, was it? Or right after a deck shower?' We made sure the galley didn't release any gray water or anything like that, because the counts seemed so

high."

Where are all these particles coming from? Mason and her team aren't sure, but there are two likely explanations: the particles are from larger pieces that have been degraded over time, or they've been released directly into the lake.

"We think, because of what we found – these perfectly little spherical beads of plastic," said Mason, "we suspect they're being released directly as these little microbeads."

The suspected culprit? Common household consumer products, like facial cleansers, toothpaste, and hand cleansers, which are, yes, often suffused with tiny plastic beads. These tiny bits are not cleansed by the wastewater treatment process and are released into the lake.

That's right, you may be brushing your teeth with plastic.

The results surprised the scientists. That's because most of the plastic particles found in the ocean were between 1 and 5 millimeters in size, and, because the majority of the particles had



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Common household consumer products are often suffused with tiny plastic beads or microplastics.

migrated into the ocean from the Great Lakes and other inland areas, they expected to find that a majority of plastic in the lakes would be larger than 5 millimeters. They expected to find that, as plastic moved towards the ocean, it would break down on the journey into ever-smaller pieces. Instead, they found the opposite. Smaller particles upstream.

So why is this? One reason is dispersal. The ocean is so big that, once the particles reach the ocean, they disperse and aren't easily counted. Another reason is that they could be "going away along the path," as Mason put it.

"As they go through the water, we know they pick up these bio films," said Mason, "these little colonies of organisms that live on top of the plastic." If the build-up of bio film is great enough, it could cause the particles to sink to the lake bottom, where they might be consumed by mussels or other benthic organisms. Or they could be mistaken for natural food by fish in the lakes, and consumed.

Either way, it's very possible that microplastic is entering the food chain. And that's the greatest danger these bits of invisible plastic pose.

"The smaller the plastic, the easier it mimics natural food," said Dr. Lorena Rios-Mendoza, another scientist that participated in last summer's sampling, and a professor of chemistry at University of Wisconsin at Superior. Again, while scientists aren't sure about the effects of the plastic on lake fauna, Rios speculated that ingested plastic could be negatively impacting fish nutrition.

"If the fish eat this plastic, what's going on with the endocrine system in the fish?" asked Rios. "What happens if the fish dies? Are the same components released into the environment? What if the fish are eaten?"

Rios also confirmed that these bits of plastic absorb industrial pollutants, such as PCBs, a deadly toxin that adversely affect plant, animal, and human life. Now banned, PCBs – or Polychlorinated biphenyl – was a common industrial substance, but has links to liver and breast cancer, and lymphoma.

"If the fish eat this plastic, what's going on with the endocrine system in the fish?" What happens if the fish dies? Are the same components released into the environment? What if the fish are eaten?"

If the microplastic did enter the food system, being eaten by mussels or fish, then these toxins likely would be concentrated and passed along the food chain, altering the very DNA of the organisms that consumed it, and doing molecular-level damage that might last generations.

But the biggest problem with microplastics is this:

"Plastic isn't biodegradable," said Rios. "It lasts a thousand years."

During the Lake Erie region's industrial heyday, dumping of sewage and industrial waste into the lake was unregulated and commonplace. As a result, Lake Erie suffered from regular algae blooms – thick coatings of toxic algae that covered swaths of the lake and made much of it uninhabitable for fish and other lake life. The algae fed off of the wastes in the water, sucked oxygen out of the water as it decayed, and emitted toxic substances that were harmful to human health and the environment. The algae also drove

boaters off the water and swimmers from the beaches, severely impacting tourism on the lake.

Lake Erie was so bad that it was written off by many environmentalists as “biologically dead,” and the pollution in the Great Lakes was so severe that it prompted the United States and Canada to sign a treaty in 1972 agreeing to protect the water quality in the area.

Since then, the lakes' condition has improved vastly, and large algae blooms became rare.

That is, until recently.

Each spring from 2008 to 2010, bad algae blooms occurred, only to be topped by the 2011 bloom, which broke all the records for size. That year, the bloom covered more than 2,000 square miles of the lake surface – nearly twice the area of Erie County – and grew to a thickness of over 10 inches in certain places. The bloom was so large, it was easily seen from space, and NASA satellite photos show sickly green tendrils starting at the lake's west end stretching east past Cleveland on the south bank and Port Stanley on the north.

The 2011 bloom consisted of the algae, *Microcystis*, which not only created dead zones in the lake's center, devoid of oxygen and nutrients, but also secreted a liver toxin into the lake waters.

This spring, a team of researchers led by Anna Michalak, a professor of Environmental Earth System Science at Stanford University's Carnegie Institution for Science, released a paper examining the record-setting bloom. “The two main things we were trying to do relative to the record breaking algae bloom in 2011,” said Michalak, “was to understand the causes, and whether the factors responsible are consistent with what we expect so see in the future.”



It's possible that microplastic is entering the food chain. And that's the greatest danger these bits of invisible plastic pose.

According to Michalak, the group considered a variety of factors: agricultural land use, such as crop choice, in the area; regional agricultural practices surrounding applying fertilizer; precipitation patterns; and the position the lake wind and currents. What they found was that all these factors – except for land use – came into play for the 2011 event. “And all of these factors,” said Michalak, “including land use, are expected to

continue into the future.”

That is, that record-setting bloom was far from a freakish or unique event. Barring change, it will probably happen again.

Essentially what happened is that unusually large and frequent spring storms in May and early June of 2011 washed fertilizer off of fields and into the lake. The phosphates in the fertilizer fed algae, which bloomed early and quickly

because of the lake's unseasonably warm water. Wind was low, and currents relatively stagnant, too, which normally churn the water, discouraging algae from growing.

A factor in the chain of events that led to the bloom is that farmers typically apply fertilizer to the top of soil, avoiding tilling and help preserve nutrients in the soil. This method of application makes the fertilizer more susceptible to erosion during large storms. Still, explained Michalak, we shouldn't point fingers at farmers.

“It's in nobody's interest for fertilizer to run off fields,” she said. “Farmers aren't interested in fertilizing algae, they're interested in fertilizing crops.”

Really, if there's a culprit in the 2011 algae bloom – and the others in recent years – it's climate change, which, according to climate models, is responsible for the increase in early storms' frequency and intensity. And, according to Michalak, that will likely only continue. “We're not expecting a shift in the total amount of precipitation,” she said, “just in the timing and intensity.”

Rising temperatures also means that Lake Erie's waters will likely continue to trend warmer in the spring, too. “There are some recent papers suggesting wind speeds on Lake Erie are likely to decrease as a result of climate change,” said Michalak, “or have already been observed to decrease.” Wind pushes water, which creates current. With decreasing wind and current, Lake Erie's spring waters will be more suitable for the growth of algae.

Still, it's important to note that it took a variety of factors to create the bloom. Farming practices alone didn't cause the algae bloom, [Cont. on 20]

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THURSDAY 5.30

Dramashop Presents: [title of show]

The first and only musical of Dramashop's 2012-

2013 season is about two men that are trying to write their own musical -- about trying to write a musical. The show at Gannon's Schuster Theatre features humorous dialog as well as witty song lyrics as the two men struggle to achieve their goal. General admission is \$15 and \$5 with a student ID.

When: 8 p.m.
Where: 620 Sassafra St.
Contact: dramashop.org

FRIDAY 5.31

Gallery Night

Heralded as one of the best ways to spend an evening in downtown Erie, Gallery Night returns. Head to one of the 13 participating venues to view exhibits free of charge and enjoy free appetizers, drinks, and entertainment. Visit at least five galleries and earn a chance to win a \$25 gift certificate to a participating gallery.

When: 7 to 10 p.m.
Where: Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St.
Contact: ErieArtMuseum.com

Face Down in High Water

For the past decade, local band Face Down in High Water has been performing up a storm

that's made them plenty of fans here in The Gem City. The local rock sextet returns to Sherlock's for a show that should go rather swimmingly. In fact, the show should be much better than that joke.

When: 10 p.m.
Where: Sherlock's, 508 State St.
Contact: 453.7760

SATURDAY 6.01

Eerie Roller Girls vs. Little Steel Derby Girls

Head out to Presque Isle Skating -- formerly Evan's Skateland -- for the Roller Girls second home bout of the 2013 season as they look to kick, smash, pass, and beat the gals from Youngstown. Tickets are \$12 at the door, but if you buy in advance, you can save \$2 -- which you can use at the concession stand during the match or at the after party at the Oasis Pub immediately following the event.

When: Doors 6:30; whistle 7:30 p.m.
Where: Presque Isle Skating 3162 West Lake Road
Contact: eerierollergirls.com

10th Annual Car Show hosted by VVA Chapter 435

It's time to finally show off that flashy and impractical car your spouse didn't want you to buy. Enter your vehicle for \$3 or come as a spectator for free. The event will feature oldies music, raffles, a silent auction, and trophies. All proceeds go to local veterans and their communities, so get your ride in shipshape and head to the Erie Soldiers & Sailors Home to support a great cause.

When: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Where: 560 E. Third St.
Contact: herbieshang38@yahoo.com

One Erie One Love Part II: A Benefit Artshow for Kids

We all like to give back to the community, and few people in Erie work as hard as The Box does to ensure we have every opportunity to help those around us. For just a \$3 cover, you can help support Big Brothers Big Sisters and attend this all-age event featuring artwork from some of Erie's premier artists while enjoying performances by William Weyes, Doc Proto, Flannel Gang, Hollahouse, Dommy Doo, T Speed, E-Slaya, C. Brown, L'Cardio, K-Sanz, and Whodat Peez. This event truly is One Erie, One Love.

When: 2 to 7 p.m.
Where: PACA, 1505 State St.
Contact: paca1505.ning.com/

Aqueous w/ Jeff Bujak

Some bands go around and play the same set list for every show. Luckily, there are groups like Aqueous. The groove-tastic rock band is swinging back through Erie to wow both devoted fans and newcomers with their electric live shows and improvised tunes. With intelligent dance music master taking the stage as well, this Saturday is meant for fun and dance-worthy jams.

When: 10 p.m.
Where: the crooked i, 1013 State St.
Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

SUNDAY 6.02

GEAE Educational Forum

Every year Greater Erie Alliance for Equality hosts an educational forum, and this year's topic is: Religious Allies of the LGBT Community. An interfaith panel about religious support for LGBT people and relationships will be present, so bring your questions and your friends who need to hear that there is support amongst religious communities. The event is free and open to the public and tea, coffee, and cookies will be served.

When: 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Where: 21 La Rux Dix, 21 W. 10th St.
Contact: GreaterErieAlliance.com

Perdition w/ guests at Basement Transmissions

There are many types of metal. You've got iron, cobalt, brass, copper, nickel, and all sorts of others. However, despite all of those fine lustrous chemical elements, we tend to focus on the more musical varieties of metal, so we'd suggest you go see local rockers Perdition when they return to shred on the Basement Transmissions stage.

When: 5:30 p.m.
Where: Basement Transmissions, 1501 State St.
Contact: basement-transmissions.webs.com

MONDAY 6.03

TREC and the Big Green Screen

Get your week off to a great start with a trip down to the Presque Isle. And any trip down to the Peninsula isn't complete without a stop at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center. While you're there we suggest you check out one of the incredible films now showing on the Big Green Screen, especially the new Tornado Alley. We've seen recently the awesome destructive power a tornado unleashes. This movie puts you right there, as the tornado is born. Hold on tight!

When: 11 a.m., 1 and 3 p.m.
Where: TREC, 301 Peninsula Dr.
Contact: 814.838.4123

TUESDAY 6.04

Lagoons by pontoons

Arise and go now, if always night and day you hear the lake water lapping with its low sounds by the shore calling you away from the grey. At least William Butler Yeats said something like that, and if it's good enough for Yeats, it's good enough for us. And now thanks to the Tom Ridge Environmental Center, you can take a midday break and enjoy the natural beauty of the Presque Isle Lagoons with a one-hour interpretive boat tour.

When: Signups at 10 a.m.; tours at 11 a.m., 1, and 2 p.m.
Where: Lagoon Launch, Presque Isle State Park
Contact: TRECPI.org



Thu. May 30

Rift

Fri. May 31

Face Down in High Water

Sat. June 1

Old School

Thu. June 6

Dead Iron & From Ashes

Fri. June 7

Thirst and Howl


Sat. June 8

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WEDNESDAY 6.05

Mid-Day Artbreak with Sam Hyman

Today kicks off the popular Mid-Day Artbreak series. Join Sam Hyman for a lunchtime performance of classic pop and blues on the 5th Street patio of the Erie Art Museum. While enjoying the free tunes, you can grab a quick lunch at the Wave Cafe.

When: Noon to 1 p.m.

Where: Erie Art Museum, 20 E. Fifth St.

Contact: ErieArtMuseum.com

THURSDAY 6.06

Jake Banta

You can't complain about a chance to go catch some killer blues and drink some delightful brews. They work so well together, they even rhyme. That being said, Jake Banta of Jake's Blues fame will be treating the crowd at Sprague Farm and Brew Works with some tasty licks and funky blues riffs.

When: 6 p.m.

Where: Sprague Farm and Brew Works, Venango

Contact: 398.2885

Crooked Bass

DJ NatasK, along with the rest of the local 814 Bass Crew -- Ghost Alive, Matter, and Matisflex -- welcome Smartie Roc and Get Nasty to The Gem City. For those pining for ear-numbing bass and dubstep/techno beats of the new generation, accept no substitutions, and hear us loud and clear: Get to the crooked i to start your weekend early.

When: 10 p.m.

Where: the crooked i, 1013 State St.

Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

FRIDAY 6.07

The Fabulous Thunderbirds

Would you walk 10 miles on your hands and

knees or wrestle with a lion and a grizzly bear -- at the same time, nonetheless? Only those Tuff Enuff will -- and they'll be catching The Fabulous Thunderbirds' performance at Presque Isle Downs and Casino at their Racetrack Patio for a mere \$10-15.

When: 7 p.m.

Where: Off I-90, Exit 27, 8199 Perry Hwy

Contact: 1.866.ERIE.FUN

"A Night in Espana"

If you haven't made it out to an Erie Chamber Orchestra show this recently, you best be going to see "A Night in Espana," as it closes out the classical music crew's season. If you have been to a show, then you'll not want to miss this one as Classical guitarist Nicholas Goluses joins the ECO as it performs Rodrigo's "Fantasia para un gentilhombre."

When: 7:30 p.m.

Where: First United Methodist, 707 Sassafras St.

Contact: <http://www.gannon.edu>

SATURDAY 6.08

B.T. Sessions Vol. 1 CD Release

Growing up, most of us learned that sharing is caring. Well, some local artists really care about their listeners with the B.T. Sessions Vol. 1 CD Release (see page 16 for Matthew Flowers' review of the album), three different artists will share the spotlight. In promotion of their new split CD, Optimistic Apocalypse, Life(Liss), and Amber Alley will play a one-time-only group performance with A.D. Wondersound.

When: 7 p.m.

Where: Basement Transmissions, 1501 State St.

Contact: basement-transmissions.webs.com

SUNDAY 6.09

All An Act Theatre presents: "The Diary of Anne Frank"

In cooperation with Triple Threat Studio, All An Act's Footlights Theatre Program presents

Wendy Kesselman's heartfelt drama directed by KC McCloskey that centers on the lives of eight people holed up in an attic attempting to escape Nazi captivity. Efforting to cultivate Erie's young, talented rising stars, the drama captures the fear, the hope, the laughter, and the grief -- all told through the world's most famous diary.

When: 3 p.m.

Where: All An Act Theatre, 652 W. 17 St.

Contact: 450.8553

MONDAY 6.10

Four Perspectives of Presque Isle and the Bay Area Photography Exhibit

Head down to the Tom Ridge Environmental Center for this intimate look at Erie's most beautiful and precious asset. Local photographers Brian Berchtold, Marty Drabic, Steve Friel and Ron Vollentine share their interpretations of scenic Presque Isle and Presque Isle Bay in this exhibit which continues through Labor Day. It's

located on the second floor, and is available for your viewing pleasure free of charge.

When: now through Labor Day

Where: TREC, 301 Peninsula Dr.

Contact: 814.833.7424

TUESDAY 6.11

Black Flag with Good for You

If you haven't heard by now, you've been living under a rock. If you have heard, you know you're ready to rock. But back to those of you who haven't -- you're hearing it now and for the last time: Founding member Greg Ginn has reunited Black Flag and will rock the crooked i tonight, not only with the formative punk-rock legends, but with the Mike Vallely-fronted Good for You. Shows like this don't come around often enough, so head to the crooked i -- you'll be glad you did.

When: 8 p.m.

Where: the crooked i, 1013 State St.

Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

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UPCOMING EVENTS



TROPADELIC

WITH SPECIAL GUEST B-SIDE DUBS

MAY 30 // THURSDAY @ 10:00



GOLD

WITH SPECIAL GUEST WHISKEY REVERB

MAY 31 // FRIDAY @ 10:00



AQUEOUS

WITH SPECIAL GUEST JEFF BUJAK

JUNE 1 // SATURDAY @ 10:00



BLOWFLY

WITH SPECIAL GUEST THE COUCHRIDERS

JUNE 7 // FRIDAY @ 10:00



THE BLIND OWL BAND

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS AMANDA BARTON AND BILL WARD

JUNE 8 // SATURDAY @ 10:00



BLACK FLAG

WITH SPECIAL GUEST GOOD FOR YOU
FEATURING MIKE VALLELY

JUNE 11 // TUESDAY @ 10:00

TUE: Songwriter Showcase & Vinyl Night
SUN: Open Mic & Jam

To-do List

By: Alex Bieler

Black Flag

Late into the first night of April, many an Erieite could be found with their eyes affixed on one of many gleaming rectangles that would, once the clock hit midnight, display just what iconic band would be playing at the crooked i Tuesday, June 11 after the folks at the crooked i had earlier announced that they would be hosting an iconic band for the biggest show in the venue's history. Once everyone's computer calendars switched over to read April 2, it was announced that hardcore punk legends Black Flag would be coming to Erie instead of visiting Cleveland, Pittsburgh, or Buffalo, making quite a few locals pleased and some out-of town club owners a wee bit jealous.

Again Erieites eagerly wait, this time for the

Once everyone's computer calendars switched over to read April 2, it was announced that hardcore punk legends Black Flag would be coming to Erie instead of visiting Cleveland, Pittsburgh, or Buffalo.

actual night when Black Flag and Good For You come to State Street, a show that should wow more than just punk fans.

"Black Flag is probably one of the most important bands because they were one of the first punk rock bands that jumped across the fan base of just punk-rock kids," Marty Schwab says on how the band managed to incorporate more than just hardcore influences into their music. "They're one of those bands that through their music have become iconic in that even if you're a Phish fan, you know who Black Flag is."

Marty, the proprietor of the crooked i, first became a fan of the Hermosa Beach, Calif. band back in the '80s as the group started catching the ears of listeners out east through constant touring and an adherence to a do-it-yourself attitude that helped inspire countless bands to come.

"They are truly punk rock in that sense," Schwab says of the independent ethic. "They've changed music, they changed the way bands looked at how they could get out there. They're the beginning of DIY."

After stepping aside for a while, the members of Black Flag decided to come back and show the new kids how it's done, reforming early this year when founding member and guitarist Greg Ginn reunited with "Jealous Again"-era vocalist Ron Reyes to once again play the widely influential punk sound that spawned a legion of fans along the west coast before spreading out across the nation. In addition to playing with Black Flag, Ginn will be performing with opener Good For You along with skateboarding star Mike Vallely.

Even after Black Flag and Good For You finish rocking your brains out, the night won't be over, as the crooked i will be holding a punk-rocked themed Vinyl Night until its doors close early the next morn.

Let's be clear here: this is a big show, and Marty's got high hopes for both June 11 and for concerts to come.

"I'm really, truly excited for this show," he says. "This is the kind of show that for somebody in my position, this is kind of like the pinnacle for me. Hopefully Erie responds to it"

With numerous people from out of town ready to make the trip to The Gem City for Black Flag, make sure to snag your tickets for the show at blackflagerie.eventbrite.com and support your town. Doors open at 8 p.m. show starts at 9 p.m., and minds should be blown shortly after.

Erie's Wild Rib Cook-Off and Music Festival

There's a magical time each year when Perry Square transforms into a saliva-inducing playground for the carnivorous characters of this fine town. A period of a few days where the Perry air is filled with the intoxicating scent of smoked meat and saucy treats.

It's time for Erie's Wild Rib Cook-Off and Music Festival.

The four-day affair kicks off Wednesday, May 29 in Perry Square, an event marked down in the calendars of many a flesh hound.

"It's the kick-off to summer," says Performance & Event Management CEO and Rib Fest Producer Kathi Danielson. "People have been waiting all year. As soon as it's over, I hear tell that they can't wait until it's back again, so it's much anticipated."

Once again, the park will be packed with sauced-covered smiling faces chowing down on award-winning slabs of perfection and other delectable grub, all while enjoying performances by The Vendettas, Black Widow, The Flow Band, and other meat-supporting rockers.

While past events, like the "Best Ribs" judging and awards presentation, return, even more items dot the Rib Fest's schedule. Wednesday calls for a Pin-up Contest from 4 to 8 p.m., while the Open Class Cruise-In goes from 5 to 10 p.m. Saturday calls for a Ladies Night VIP Party that is exclusive to only those who reserve a spot in advance. A Rib Kidz Fun Zone will be out all four days for the younger meatheads. QR Codes can be found around Rib Fest so that you can share photos of your friends rolling around in the human hamster ball or sauced-up from a barbecue binge during this year's Rib Fest.

"I think this is going to be the best one yet - I'm so excited about it," Danielson says. "I can't wait for it to get here."

With all the music, activities, and hundreds of pounds of smoked and grilled goodness, make Rib Fest the meat-and-greet to start off your summer.

Official Meat Correspondent for the Erie Reader Alex Bieler can be reached at aBieler@Erie.Reader.com, you can follow him on Twitter @Catch20Q, and you can find him barbecue-sauce stained and downtown for four days straight starting Wednesday, May 29. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://eridr.com/usg8s>



Q&A with the Mountain Goats' John Darnielle

The songwriter speaks about his upcoming duo tour, Twitter, and the petition to name him U.S. Poet Laureate

By: Alex Bieler

Every so often you come across a songwriter that can capture your attention with a single phrase, a certain arrangement of words that turn into a story and end up as something rather meaningful to the newly enchanted fan. John Darnielle is one of those songwriters. For over two decades Darnielle has written and performed as the Mountain Goats, releasing lo-fi home recordings for years before moving to a recording studio with a band for 2002's "Tallahassee." The Mountain Goats will swing through Pittsburgh to play Carnegie Music Hall Tuesday, June 11 with bassist Peter Hughes for the first tour as duo since 2007, so I chatted with Darnielle about the tour, his time spent on Twitter, and what it's like to have fans try to get him named as the next U.S. Poet Laureate.

"I think other people have some weird view of songwriting of when they wait for lightning to strike them in the brain, and then they write a song instead of waking up in the morning, picking up your instrument, and saying, 'Well what do I have today?'"

Alex Bieler: Are you excited about going back and touring as a duo again?

John Darnielle: Yeah, I am. We tried it in Poland last year. We hadn't played a duo show in a long time and we were kind of rusty [laughs]. We had a good time, but at that time we hadn't had a chance to meet up, we just got this spur-of-the-moment Polish offer and it was like 'Let's go to Poland.' So we tried it and it was really fun pulling a bunch of stuff [out]. [Peter]'s come down here to stay here and practice about three weeks ago.

AB: So are you going to miss [drummer] Jon Wurster at all?

JD: Working with Jon Wurster is the best thing. Not having Jon in the van means you have less fun. Jon is one of the funniest people alive, so having Jon around is always a plus.

AB: You seem so active on Twitter. What really drew you to that platform?

JD: Nothing really. The thing is, I was avoiding it. I'm not a tech-phobe or anything, but whenever there's a new technology and you have people writing pieces on how it's the next big deal, I can't stand that. So I always avoid them as long as I can, but then I wrote this song that

I really wanted to share with people quickly and I thought, 'Well, what's going to be the quickest way to get it to the most people that would be into it,' and it looked like Twitter was where everybody was at. Once I got on, it's really cool if you're a person that has practiced condensing your phrases, which you do as a lyricist – that's cool to be able to try and express things in short bursts. That's a great discipline to have daily. Also, in terms of how I talk to people who are into music, it's a great place to be because the nature of it is sort of like being at a party, where you say, 'hello,' exchange words quickly, and move on to the next person.

AB: Yeah, you seem to have a lot of fun with it. You had one tweet about going to Beantown, which read: "OK let's see what's going on in Beantown, literally'- thing I said while checking beans on stove. I'm not sorry and I'd do it again."

JD: [Laughs] Well, let's think about this. That's the other thing about it that really – if you are a person that sort of wants to be able to share, to give up yourself without having to give up your boundaries. If you say something funny to yourself in the kitchen, and you're like 'Oh, people that like my jokes might enjoy this,' it's a great level of engagement and it's really cool.

AB: You've put out so many different songs. Do you know how many you've actually released?

JD: I don't think it's actually that huge. I'm on autopilot when I talk about stuff like this, but if a songwriter were to write 15 songs a year, is it really a lot of songs for a guy who calls himself a songwriter? No, it's not that many. I do a little better than one a month, but I just think that's not much to ask of a songwriter.

Back in the day, I think almost three-quarters of what I was writing was coming out, and I wrote all the time – especially with that whole style of songwriting, so much of it was about spontaneous expression about whatever idea I had right then. They all adhere to some pretty basic songwriting conventions; they weren't Gershwin. [Laughs] But if you look at Gershwin or Rodgers and Hart, those guys wrote a lot of songs, but if you're a songwriter, that's what you ought to be doing.

This is a spiel that I give, but I think other people have some weird view of songwriting of when they wait for lightning to strike them in the brain, and then they write a song instead of waking up in the morning, picking up your instrument, and saying, 'Well what do I have today?'

AB: Do you ever get sick of playing certain songs or can you mix it up enough that it feels fresh all the time?

JD: I don't get sick of them, but sometimes you'll find yourself skipping a verse, and it'll be like your body telling you that you are no longer thinking about it. As soon as you sing the first couple of words, you slip into the skin of it. There are people that have been doing "Cats"



John Darnielle (left) and Peter Hughes of the Mountain Goats will be playing Tuesday, June 11 at Carnegie Music Hall in Pittsburgh.

for 20 years, but when they think about going to do "Cats" then they're like, "Oh, I can't do 'Cats' again," but I'm certain that as soon as the curtain comes up, they feel different, because you are then in it. For me, that's the case, like I don't play "Going to Georgia" anymore, but we did play it for the longest time and I would think, "Oh, it's time to do 'Going to Georgia,'" and then as soon as it would start, I would get excited. It's hard to get sick of things, and if you feel that something is starting to get weathered, you just kick it off the set list.

AB: I was listening to "The Best Ever Death Metal Band Out of Denton" and I noticed that the three band names that the people in the song were considering were Satan's Fingers, The Killers, and The Hospital Bombers. Any inkling in your mind that a certain popular band that might have listened to that song and gotten any ideas?

JD: I don't know. Very shortly thereafter there was this New Order video where New Order played a fake band called The Killers where that band took their inspiration from. I would be shocked if New Order had thought 'This is a cool Mountain Goats song.' I don't really think the Mountain Goats are really on New Order's radar.

AB: So are you waiting around for someone to call themselves Satan's Fingers?

JD: Well, there are bands by both of those names now. If you watch Rian Johnson's movie "Brick" through to the end credits, you will see, as I did to my great surprise, in the music credits is The Hospital Bombers Experience, which is Rian's brother, so that was pretty exciting.

AB: I never realized that, and I really liked "Brick."

JD: Yeah, you have to watch it clear through the end. Rian has listened to my music for a long

time, and we're friends now. But yeah, I went to see this movie, and I'm one of those guys that sits in the theater until the lights come up and the credits are rolling, and I'm looking and suddenly it says, "Music by The Hospital Bombers Experience," and I'm like "Are you kidding? That's awesome."

AB: When you see these things that have been inspired by your songs, does it still surprise you? Does it touch you?

JD: It's always moving. As far as surprised, I've been around a bit, I don't surprise easily. There was a guy, I feel like he's from Tennessee, but I know I saw him at the Asheville [N.C.] show who had a "Heretic Pride" tattoo and it was one of the coolest things I've ever seen.

AB: People seem to really like you. I remember the petition to name you U.S. Poet Laureate that came out earlier this year. I actually created a whitehouse.gov account to sign that petition.

JD: Well, I appreciate your support. [Laughs]

AB: A lot of people ended up signing that.

JD: I am actually now the Poet Laureate, we won. [Laughs] I didn't sign it myself because I think signing off on something like that for yourself is sort of gratuitous self-promotion. On the one hand, you do have to promote your art, but on the other hand, you try to resist going, "Hey, sign the thing about me." But I was really honored.

Alex Bieler can be contacted at aBieler@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Catch20Q. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://eriereader.com/jcykt>



MUSIC REVIEWS

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Optimistic Apocalypse, Amber Alley, and Life(Liss)

BT Sessions Vol. 1
Wondersound Industries

★★★★



Conceptualized with a longing to share the "truth of the moment," Basement Transmissions' first round of "Sessions," captures the raw essence of each female musician's style in this 11 song LP.

Amber Alley's tone is reminiscent of The Moldy Peaches with the addition of a banjo. Her storytelling comes through strings of rapid-fire lyrics over off-tempo rhythms. While some of the music feels disjointed, there is a definite comfort in that dissonance. Some of the album returns to the '90s – Fiona Apple, Hole, and Alanis Morissette vocal patterns paired with a single grungy-clean electric guitar. Life(Liss) takes "Sessions" in a darker corner while Optimistic Apocalypse lightens them. Optimistic Apocalypse's sweet melodies, simple guitar, and smooth "Ooos" between verses will lead songs like "Careless Fearless" and "Find Your Soul" onto many Indie lovers' playlists. With her Regina Spektor-Hayley Williams voice, she adds a charming pop-based warmth to the album. - Matt Flowers

Daft Punk

Random Access Memories
Columbia

★★★★



Displeased with the current Electronic Dance Music scene, Daft Punk decided to make a stand against the laptop-wielding youths that rely solely on technology for their music. For a pair

of guys dressed as space-age robots, it may seem a bit hypocritical, but on "Random Access Memories," Thomas Bangalter and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo return to a less computerized time for inspiration, channeling '70s disco, prog, and soft rock. By now, you've likely heard the insanely catchy hit "Get Lucky," featuring Pharrell Williams on vocals, which grooves along, the guitar riff leading the fairly simple song through to its end. Songs like "Giorgio by Moroder" and "Touch" display influences of guests Giorgio Moroder and Paul Williams over shifting eight-minute-plus tracks. Some songs like "Game of Love" tend to drag, but "Random Access Memories" serves as a fun throwback that, while never reaching the heights of previous Daft Punk albums, is a welcomed return. - Alex Bieler

The National

Trouble Will Find Me
4AD

★★★★



An album title like "Trouble Will Find Me" should come as no surprise to anyone that's heard The National. After gaining more and more fans with releases like "Alligator," "Boxer," and "High

Violet," the Cincinnati-bred band sounds quite at home when they seem down in the dumps, crafting gorgeously detailed songs about expectations and existential dread. "Trouble Will Find Me" continues along this same path, with the quintet's notorious attention to detail evident throughout. At first, the new release seems quieter, almost simpler than of those before, but on return listens, different parts shine that you may not have noticed before. Matt Berninger's baritone, at times pleading and at others resigned, hits you first, but then Bryan Devendorf's imaginative drumming or the Dessner twins' layered guitar work add an impressive depth to these wonderfully sad songs. They may not be the happiest bunch of guys, but they sure sound good. - Alex Bieler

She & Him

Volume 3
Merge Records

★★★★



When news hit that Zoey Deschanel and Ben Gibbard [of Death Cab for Cutie and the Postal Service] had split, listeners first wondered what a post-divorce Gibbard would sound like,

as much of his pre-marriage work centered in angst and relationship struggles. With Gibbard's time come and gone, we now see a post-marriage Deschanel – still clever and witty but perhaps a bit more insightful. On "Never Wanted Your Love," she croons, "All I know is that I'm tired of being clever. Everybody's clever these days," offering more introspection than before. Obviously she's clever and she knows it – we all know it based on past She & Him efforts – and M. Ward is a remarkably clever songwriting companion, crafting catchy hooks and beautifully simple melodies. "Vol. 3" retains She & Him's effervescent sound – recalling that of the Beach Boys and others perfect summer listening – but adds a welcomed new lyrical profundity. - Ben Spегgen

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Street Fashionista

Nate Gillies

By: Leslie McAllister

The city is aflutter with the buzz of guitars and walking bass lines. Good time rock 'n' roll is upon us, helping Erie to kick off the summer in punk-rock style.

With the entree of Black Flag at the crooked i June 11, I thought it best to look back on thrasher / skateboard style. God knows I spent enough time sitting curbside smoking a cigarette watching my favorite guys do kick flips and ollies.

It's all about movement. No restrictions on the street and as well as in life. These boys don't like to be held back.

So jeans are key here; they protect and are durable – for the most part. There is much military inspiration – camo pants, army jackets – you could say they are regulars at the local Army Surplus store.

Often times there will be a concert tee or a skateboard company worn across their chests proudly. My guy (who still skates around town – now nursing a bad ankle from said sport) just sold all of his old skateboard tees on eBay to some lucky devils in Thailand; these garments are still highly sought after.

There's also lots of flannel, loose khakis, the perfect ball cap, and a comfortable pair of skate shoes.

I think many of us may recall the Powell Peralta Bones Brigade tour that came through in '89 and set up in the McDonald's on Peninsula. I was there, and there were tons of thrasher style and bounties of bangs in the eyes. Those boys had the asymmetrical side bang that would give Bieber a run for his infamous hair flip.

What a mega cool event for our tiny town back then reverberated off the lips of many, even to this day. What a monumental moment that was for us kids. Kind of reminds me of when All played at the Continental Ballroom. I went with my brother. I felt like a pretty tough turd.

Ladies, here's your uniform: cut-off denim shorts with tights underneath, a pair of floral Doc Martens, a baggy T-shirt, and a super cute knit cap. Big huge smile and a wicked personality not

included – supply your own.

Who? Nate Gillies

Where? In front of the beloved crooked i

Why Nate? Nate embodies the thrasher style. Totally rocking the Canadian tuxedo and being coy with his pop of color: bright red suede sneaks. Awesomeness abounds.

What We Want to Know:

Describe your style.

Poor slob chic.

What is your philosophy on fashion?

If it covers your privates, it's okay.

You were around during the Continental Ballroom days. What was your take on the zeitgeist of the time, the vibe of it all?

I was at the Continental Ballroom every Sunday for two years. It changed my life and showed me what local scene could be. CB was an old hall (think Forward Hall but punk-rock) at 20th and Plum existing between the '80s and '90s where kids of all ages could go listen to live music. It started out punk-rock and then all of a sudden turned straight edge. As an impressionable 14-year old, I went through that phase. I saw some great shows there: Thin White Line, NOFX, All, MDC, Supernova, Urge Overkill, and so many others. It was awesome.

Fill in the blank, punk is to me _____.

Rock 'n' Roll and not really caring what people think of your riffs.

What is your favorite outfit, or if you could wear one thing or item forever, what would it be?

I just got these cool striped jeans, and I really like my "Ghostbusters" shirt.

When he came to Erie recently and performed his "This Filthy World" at the campus of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, you asked John Waters if he still parties. Do you?

Not as much as I used to, but yeah, I party.

Are you attending the Black Flag show? What did the band mean to you as a kid?

I am going to the Black Flag show. I was a BMX/Skater kid, so we listened to BF a lot back in the day.

Why do you love Erie?

I love Erie because of the people, sled riding, and good pizza.

What pisses you off socially?

The amounts of people that love cover bands in this town. There's so much good talent here – what's with all the cover bands?

Tell me about your band.

My band is The Couchriders. We are an instrumental, surfish, spooky rock band. All originals and we improv pretty well. Basically, we sound like your favorite band.

What music is playing in your head right now?

Right now the song "Hard Times in this Crazy Town" is constantly playing in my head. I don't know the artist though (could this be sung by Baby Huey?). I have it on a mix tape that my buddy gave me. I always remember Nate having some super cool boy style, rocking the sweatbands and wristbands. Tune into Fazed Cookies on Wednesday June 5 to hear Nate and the gang, and catch The Couchriders at the crooked i opening for Blowfly June 7. Find them and like them on at Facebook.com/TheCouchriders.

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HEADLINES SORT BY: MOST RECENT **BLOGGERY**

You Ought to Know: Frank Garland

By: Alex Bieler

Despite all of the classes, quizzes, tests, and textbooks, I would venture to guess that for many people, it wasn't the grades that helped shape who they were in college; it's the people.

From fellow students to teachers – both super cool and sinister – the influx of new human influences help shape personality in ways both unnoticeable and as obvious as the new bursting-feather tattoo embedded in one's side.

While I managed to make it through four years at Gannon University without having someone affix an ornithologically-themed tattoo to my sensitive German skin, there were a few Golden Knights that altered my path. In fact, if it weren't for one special man, Erie may never have seen a *Ben Spегgen* or *Alex Bieler* byline in this fine collection of pressed ink and wood flakes we call the Erie Reader.

Meet Frank Garland.

He's on the quiet side, but once you get to know the eighth-year English department instructor, you become privy to the treasure trove of stories hidden within the slender scribe's cranium. As the adviser for *The Gannon Knight*, the university's newspaper, and the director of journalism communications program at Gannon, Frank used decades worth of experience as a journalist to help strengthen not only my writing ability, but that of countless other adults, deftly dissecting various newspaper pieces and in-class copy with his trusty red pen, marking missing commas and adding his input when necessary.

While Frank and his red pen have become a fixture for Gannon's journalism communications program, he didn't come to Erie until he was hired by the school. Originally from Robinson Township, Pa. near Pittsburgh, Frank left the Keystone State for the west coast to attend his junior year of college at San Francisco State University, a decision partly made after a frightening sliding incident on a snowy Pittsburgh hill had him longing for a less wintry locale. Although the mystic of the west had charmed him to California, he did return to West Virginia University for his master's before heading back to the Golden State.

"I stayed in California for 30 years," Frank says to me in a corner booth at The Brewerie at Union Station. "I was working for a couple of different papers out there and got married and had children. I liked where I was. I worked at a couple of good papers and people didn't leave those papers because you made pretty decent money, and I married a woman who was from there, so she wasn't too anxious to leave."

However, plans change. Eventually Frank and the mother of his children separated. It wasn't until his son graduated from high school that he considered moving back to Pennsylvania where his brother and two sisters still lived.

Despite his introverted nature, Frank was a

natural fit for journalism, oftentimes turning conversations into a series of questions, keeping the focus on the other person's story as opposed to his own. After decades as a sportswriter, he moved to Erie and made the transition to teaching, a career path he was interested in pursuing, leaving behind plenty of stories, including covering events like the 1987 National League Championship Series between the San Francisco Giants and the St. Louis Cardinals.

"My son was born August 25 and the playoffs started the first week of October," Frank explains after sipping some Apparition Amber. "My wife came back to St. Louis with me and brought our son with us, and he was about a month old and all he did was scream for two straight nights in the hotel room while I was trying to get my rest to go cover a game the next day."

Even though his California reporting days are behind him, Frank's inner sportswriter never left him as he still keeps in touch with the newsroom, working part-time in the sports department at the Erie Times-News and having his first book published this year.

What was that? He wrote a book, you ask? Why yes, yes he did. You see, right around the time Frank came to Erie, he took his son up to the Baseball Hall of Fame. While there, he noticed that Willie Stargell, a Hall of Fame slugger for a Pittsburgh Pirates squad that Frank became enamored with during his teen years, didn't have his own biography in the Hall's bookstore. It was there that the idea for "Willie Stargell: A Life in Baseball" started to grow.

"I thought he was an important enough character that he warranted a biography, not only because he was a great player, but he had this reputation of being a great leader and had this 'Pops' persona as being this elder statesman of the '79 Pirates," Frank says. Stargell had written an autobiography a few years after his playing career ended, but Frank wanted to provide an account of the slugger's life from outside perspectives, giving a true account of the man both on and off the field.

"That's what I really wanted to do – to look at him as the whole person and not just the ball-player," he says. "When I started, I was thinking that I might even end up doing more about him as the person than as the player, but once I got into it, it was pretty hard not to devote a large part of the book to his playing career. He played for 20 years, and he had a very productive career – it's not like he had 10 good years and then just hung on the rest of his career. But he was human. He made mistakes. He was married three times, and that's not a bad thing, but he had two children with two other women that he wasn't married to, so he wasn't an angel. He had fun, maybe did some things he shouldn't have done, but by and large, he was a human being."

One of the themes in "A Life in Baseball," which can be purchased online through barne-sandnoble.com, revolves around the importance of family in Stargell's life, whether it was at home



Frank Garland, a journalism instructor at Gannon University, just had his first book, "Willie Stargell: A Life in Baseball" published.

or his playing partners in the clubhouse. Like many sports fans, Frank attributes part of his passion for baseball, football, and other forms of professional ball to his family.

"I'm 100 percent Italian, and we used to go to Grandma Garland's every Sunday for spaghetti and the whole family would be there," Frank says, his mind drifting back to those childhood weekends, as uncles, aunts, and all sorts of relatives gathered for feast and family. "I had three uncles who were sports fanatics, so they would always be watching games on TV. This was before the AFL and the NFL merged, so there would always be two football games on at 1 o'clock and 4 o'clock, and they would have two TVs in my grandma's living room and they would be watching really intently. I was really young, like 6, 7, 8 years old, and I always thought they were just huge sports fans, but I really think they had probably a deeper interest in the games, i.e. they had money on the games. When I was a kid, I didn't realize that – I just thought they loved sports."

Despite the financial impact on his uncles' viewing tendencies, a pint-sized Frank grew to love sports, even if he didn't have money riding on anything. The spirit of football caught the attention of both young Frank and his brother James, to whom he dedicated the 200-plus page "A Life in Baseball," along with his sisters Tina and Mary, his daughter Gina, and the St. Louis screamer, his son Frankie.

Like Stargell, Frank also started a pseudo-family outside of his blood relatives while he wrote his first book during the summers between school years at Gannon.

"It's been very rewarding teaching and seeing young people grow into adulthood," Frank says, recalling the classes full of students he's seen come and go. "It's kind of fun, it's almost like seeing your own kids grow up."

They're appropriate words from a man that has been called a father figure by some of his pupils, including me. Frank's a quiet man – he himself admits that he's a boring lecturer, and I won't go out of my way to disagree – but all except for the most stubborn of students can sense something in him that they won't see in all of their teachers – that he cares. You can tell it in the way he constantly asks questions, always making eye contact as he listens to every word. You can see it in the edits he sends back for an assignment, the red ink not to show a young writer where he went wrong, but how he can improve. And you can hear it in his voice when he recalls students both past and present, openly wondering how they're doing in their lives outside of his class.

There are people you meet at college that you'll always remember, but then there are those like Frank that help you blossom into something better than before. People are what make the college experience great, but the impact of those like Frank last a lifetime.

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[Cont. from 11] nor was climate change solely responsible. “We need to recognize the complexity of these systems,” said Michalak. “The key is to look at the system from multiple different angles.”

In some ways, that complexity offers some hope for the future. By, say, working with farmers to come up with better application of fertilizer, we might be able to cut down on the severity of algae blooms. Michalak emphasized that better short-term weather prediction would greatly aid farmers, who could avoid applying fertilizer right before severe storms.

“It’s a very complex problem,” said Michalak. “The only reason we were able to do these analyses was because we looked at all these factors together. We need to get used to thinking about these events as a variety of causes. Wind and precipitation and agricultural practices and so on worked together to create a really unusual event.”

If you perform a Google search on “Asian carp,” the YouTube videos that return have names like “Silent Invaders,” “Asian Carp Attack!,” and “Weird, True, and Freaky.”

The images from the videos match the names; nearly all of them are shot from a motorboat and feature dozens – sometimes hundreds – of enormous fish leaping out of the water. In one, boaters duck as fish fly into their boat. Another shows a couple sitting at the back of a boat hunting the fish with bows – but one carp flies out of the water, collides with the woman, and breaks her jaw. Another shows a university rowing team caught in a frenzy of leaping fish. And then there’s the “Peoria Carp Hunters,” who don spiked football helmets and armor and wield machetes as they water ski through carp-infested waters, hacking at fish that leap into their path.

The scenes from these videos may look bizarre, but the fish’s jumping habit is also deadly. Some fish weigh as much as 40 pounds, and can seriously injure boaters motoring at 20 or 30 miles per hour.

But the ecological threat these carp pose to Lake Erie dwarfs the danger they pose to boaters.

The Asian carp actually comprises two species: silver carp and bighead carp. Originally introduced by fish farmers to clean algae from their holding tanks, Asian carp escaped into the Mississippi River Basin when the tanks overflowed from floods, and, being fast-growing and aggressive, they outcompeted native fish. Their population and range has since exploded, and they now infest the Illinois, Ohio, and Missouri Rivers, along with dozens of smaller tributaries and lesser rivers.

And they’re knocking on the doors of the Great Lakes.

The fish, for example, that inhabit the Illinois River are separated from Lake Michigan by a solitary canal – the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal – which connects the Illinois to the Chicago River and the lake. That canal is protected by electric fish barrier, but many critics – environmentalists, local officials, anglers – say the canal needs to be sealed off in order to keep the fish out of the Great Lakes.

Asian carp DNA has been found in Lake Erie, but it’s not known whether that represents a reproducing population, or just a straggler or kill remnants from anglers or natural predators.

“If those species establish reproducing populations in Lake Erie,” warned John Stark, the Ohio Freshwater Conservation Director of the Nature

Conservancy, “the most damaging thing from an ecosystem standpoint is that they’ll consume large quantities of the ‘good’ algae, the base of the entire food web of Lake Erie.

“If they take out this basic building block, it’ll have a ripple effect, and will likely knock down the native fish, walleye, yellow perch.”

In some ways, though, the concern and attention paid to Asian carp ignores the impact invasive species already in Lake Erie have on the native ecosystem.

Zebra mussels, for example, were introduced from the ballast water of the international shipping visiting the Great Lakes. When those ships emptied their ballast water, they also emptied mussels and their larvae into the lake water. “They’re a real challenge,” said Stark of the mussels. “They’re so easily spread.”

Zebra mussels are a nuisance to humans. “They clog the water mains of municipalities,” said vice president of the Save Our Native Species (SONS) of Lake Erie, Ed Kissel. “They clog the boat intakes of motors.”

While zebra mussels have been accredited with “cleaning” Lake Erie’s water by many laypeople, that “cleansing” ability is actually representative of the damage the pose to the lake’s ecosystem. Amy Jo Smith, executive director of Environment Erie explained: “They don’t clean the water – they clear the water of plankton and other small organisms that are major food sources for native fish.”

And while Stark noted that zebra mussels are experiencing a kind of “dieback” – a shrinking of the population, usually from natural causes – especially in places like the Ohio River, another exotic mussel, the quagga mussel, is stepping in to replace the retreating zebra mussel population.

There’s also the round goby, a small fish that eats the eggs of native fish, and the spiny water flea, a crustacean the size of zooplankton whose spiny tail, when ingested by larval fish, kills the fish. In short, there are over 150 established invasive species that have been introduced to Lake Erie since the early 1800s, all of which to a greater or lesser degree have impacted the lake habitat.

“Invasive species have the ability to completely change an ecosystem,” said Smith, “from the types of fish, invertebrates, and plant species, to



A massive bighead Asian carp.

species. With its shallow depth, it’s the warmest and most hospitable to new flora and fauna. Combined with human activity – international shipping, the building of canals, or simply taking your boat from lake to another – this means that further spread of invasive species to Lake Erie seems almost inevitable.

And then there’s climate change, likely the most influential and devastating environmental effect that will shape the future of Lake Erie. And yet we can’t be certain what kind of changes warming temperatures will bring. After all, the climate is

ice cover and warmer surface-water temperatures might have on lake-effect snow.

“We used computer modeling to understand controlling factors, and to understand lake ice,” said Steiner, “and how removing it would affect lake-effect snow.”

In short, they found that the pattern of ice, or the lack of it, determines where, and how much, lake-effect snow takes place. Removing the ice, they found, increases the reach, severity, and amount of lake-effect snow. That’s because ice traps lake water. Remove the ice, and the wind and weather scoops up more water to dump on the banks of Lake Erie in the form of snow.

But increased lake-effect snow is not the only suspected change to the region’s weather patterns as a result of climate change. Steiner is part of a group of scientists funded by the National Science Federation to study the effects of climate-change-induced extreme events on the Great Lakes water quality – that same grant also includes Professor Michalak’s algae-bloom study – and their research has shown that precipitation patterns for the lakes are changing.

“Our research is showing more precipitation happening early in the spring,” said Steiner. “Precipitation then drops down in the summer and increases again in the fall.” In short, the total amount of precipitation doesn’t seem to be changing, but when and how it precipitates has.

And timing is everything. As already seen, early storms combined with warmer temperatures contributes to the spread and virulence of algae blooms. But those early storms also have other adverse effects on the Great Lakes ecosystem. As the Nature Conservancy’s John Stark noted, several native fish species spawn upriver in Great Lakes tributaries; early severe storms are known to push fish eggs off reeds.

“A year ago, we had extremely low water,” added

Asian carp DNA has been found in Lake Erie, but it's not known whether that represents a reproducing population, or just a straggler or kill remnants from anglers or natural predators.

the flow rates of streams and creation of barriers within the ecosystem.”

As example, Smith cited phragmites, a kind of common reed and nonnative to Lake Erie, which can create “massive barriers and completely close off a lagoon or pond from other systems to wildlife that needs the water for drinking or spawning.”

Lake Erie is especially vulnerable to invasive

a complex system, and global warming might affect our regional weather patterns in unusual and unexpected ways.

For one, global warming will likely mean we’ll see an increase in lake-effect snow.

At least, that’s the finding of University of Michigan Professor of Atmospheric Science Alison Steiner and her team, who used computer modeling to determine what effect a diminished

Stark, "which is another manifestation of climate change. There was an early dry part of the year last year in western Ohio and fish had trouble getting up the Maumee because it was low. You can have that in any of the tributaries."

Climate change also contributes to drought and low lake water levels. Drought is another kind of extreme natural event – the kind of event that will become more frequent and intense as a result of climate change. The early torrential rains of 2011 were mirrored a year later by an extremely dry spring, and the water level of Lake Erie dropped to historically low levels.

And, to come full circle, diminished ice cover in the winter contributes to low lake water levels. That water sucked up by winter winds that fuels lake-effect snow is largely lost to the lake. Lake evaporation increases without its ice cover.

The climate of the Great Lakes region is a complex system interdependent on a number of factors. Increasing temperatures are upsetting the balance, increasing the frequency of extreme weather events and severely stressing an ecosystem that evolved around a more stable environment. Tributaries might dry to trickles, or be flooded by unusual spring floods, endangering the fish that spawn there. Lake water temperatures might fluctuate more rapidly than normal, leading to large fish kills – like what happened this spring. And warming lake temperatures combined with dead zones might deprive native fish of the cooler zones they need to survive the summer. And that's not even considering the effects that these changing weather patterns will have on the fishing industry and regional agriculture.

What the long-term effects of climate change are, few can say. There are dire predictions – the drying up of Lake Erie, say, or the extinction of the human species – but even what we can currently experience and see is cause for alarm.

It all sounds catastrophic – microplastic, algae blooms, invasive species, climate change – and it is. That list doesn't include the very real problem of industrial pollution, the heavy metals and other chemicals still present in the lake from the region's industrial legacy.

But there's hope. For starters, the lake water and ecosystem is better off now than it was 50 years ago. In the 1960s the lake was filthy and nearly barren. But when the United States and Canada signed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and Congress passed the Clean Water Act in the early 1970s, effective regulation cut down on industrial pollution.

There's also government infrastructure that exists to help protect the lakes' natural ecosystems. The U.S.-Canada International Joint Commission (IJC), for one, oversees bodies of water on the border – including the Great Lakes – and one of its missions is to preserve water quality. The IJC's Lake Erie Ecosystem Priority (LEEP) program is working to understand and curb harmful algae blooms, for example. The federal government, too, is working to improve Lake Erie environmental health. A number of agencies are working together on the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to clean up toxics, protect and restore wetlands, and combat invasive species. And there's also the Ohio and Pennsylvania Sea Grant programs that work to fund research and education and promote stewardship of the Great Lakes.

And then there are the myriad of citizens' groups and nonprofit organizations working on preservation. Nationally, one group working on lake ecology is the Nature Conservancy through its Great Lakes Project. Here in Erie, for example, two such groups are the SONS of Lake Erie, a group of anglers looking to protect the lake's fisheries, and Environment Erie, a nonprofit working on restoration and revitalization of the regional environment. And these are just three of hundreds of organizations working to make the Great Lakes healthier. That is, there are whole numbers of real *people* concerned about Lake Erie and who are working to make it better.

Erie itself has experienced the positive effects of government agencies working with citizens' groups to improve Great Lakes ecology. When Presque Isle Bay was identified as an "Area of Concern," it prompted infrastructure investment in our wastewater treatment system, contributing to the cleanup of the bay.

Likewise much of the lake's problems do have solutions. Or, at least, there are ways to mitigate existing problems.

To reduce microplastics in the lake, for example, we could work with beauty product and toothpaste manufacturers to limit or end their use of plastic in their products. To curb algae blooms, it's possible to work with farmers on better timing for applying fertilizer to soils. We could make sure regulations overseeing the discharge of ballast water of international shipping to the Great Lakes have teeth, preventing further importation of exotic species in the bellies of ocean-going freighters. And we could close off Chicago's Sanitary and Ship Canal to create a real barrier between the Illinois River and the Great Lakes, making it difficult for Asian carp to find its way into the lakes basin.

There are even ways to mitigate the effects of climate change.

"We constrain river systems and wetland so they can't take up the effects of extreme events," said the Nature Conservancy's John Stark. "Those systems originated over thousands of years, they were sort of put together to do that. They basically had the ability to handle those extremes." Restoring connectivity to river systems, removing dams, restoring wetlands, said Stark, would give the lake's ecosystem the ability to react to torrential spring storms or periods of drought.

Environment Erie's Jo Ann Smith refers to "climate adaptation." "That includes creating climate-savvy projects," she said, "such as using models and tools available to choose components of our projects that will be able to handle the current environment and one in the future. For example, when designing a planting project, use species that are suited for today's climate and for the increased temperatures over the next decade."

Smith's group will even be hosting a symposium in the fall on "climate adaptation." "We're targeting community organizations and public officials," she said, "to help those officials and grassroots groups learn how to make their projects climate change savvy." The symposium is the result of a partnership between Environment Erie and Pennsylvania Sea grant.

And there's mitigation. Cutting down on the use of fossil fuels. Protecting the rainforest, say, or reforesting lands, to promote carbon sequestration. Massive investment in alternative energy sources and energy efficiency.

These are what's *possible*. None of it is easy. Especially curbing global warming – that has to be

on a global scale, and a significant portion of the nation's politicians and citizens still think it's a hoax, despite the mounting evidence right before their eyes.

And it may even be too late. But the bottom line is this: Lake Erie's health depends on you. Me. On all of us. We can reduce our consumption, stop using plastic, wash our boat bottoms after boating on the lake, and pressure our elected officials into taking action.

After all, it's our lake.

Jay Stevens can be contacted at Jay@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Sneevets_Yaj. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://erirdr.com/f3efm>



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- 38 Loose woman
- 39 Tread softly
- 40 Rimu (2 words)
- 44 Scent
- 46 Goodbye (Ital.)
- 47 Amateur Athletic Assn (abbr.)
- 48 P.I. knife
- 49 Enclosed (abbr.)
- 50 Soldiers
- 51 Earthly paradise
- 52 Turk. title
- 53 Hymn

DOWN

- 1 Eastern bishop's title
- 2 Finely dressed (Scot.)
- 3 Afflict
- 4 Paco
- 5 Hour (Fr.)
- 6 Jackfish
- 7 Three (pref.)
- 8 Marsh
- 9 Ran
- 10 Caliph
- 11 Bachelor of Fine Arts (abbr.)
- 19 Stray child
- 20 Male friend (Fr.)
- 22 Iodine (pref.)
- 23 Nominate
- 24 Consider
- 25 Bait fish
- 26 Girlfriend of Alley Oop
- 27 Mast (2 words)
- 28 "The Jungle Book" python
- 31 Pasture
- 32 Dank
- 34 Standard (abbr.)
- 35 Phantoms
- 37 Brother of Moses
- 38 Shore
- 40 Circle
- 41 False friend
- 42 Freshwater worm
- 43 Repose
- 44 Laconian clan group
- 45 Department of Defense (abbr.)
- 46 Council for Econ. Advisors (abbr.)

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

M	A	R	S		R	O	C		T	A	A	L	
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12 NEWS



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