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Aug. 21 - Sep. 3 Vol. 3, No. 17 / ErieReader.com

ERIE READER

LIVING OFF THE LAND IN ERIE COUNTY

**Two Families Find an
Alternative Way
to Subsist**

Dr. Dan Walker

**Another Brilliant Idea
from the Desk of Upfront**

Say "Yes" to Term Limits

**What the American Airlines
and U.S. Airways Merger
Means for Erie**

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From the Editors

Few things in life translate across cultures quite like food. Think about the first time someone introduced you to kimchi and the spices tingled on your lips as the burst of cabbage offered a clean, fresh experience. Or the first time you bit into an edamame pod to gently remove the beads with your teeth and tongue, tasting the sea salt on the shell. Or when you learned it was pronounced "ed-eh-ma-me." Or when you struggled with saying "quinoa" for the first time.

Food is fun. Food is an experience, a universal language. From the joy of gathering around a table with family and friends to the hunger pangs deep in our bellies, food comforts us, unites us, and drives us. But from the seeds to the harvests to our tables, how much do we think about the ingredients we use to nourish our bodies?

Think about a red delicious apple for instance. It's both, well, red and delicious. But if that apple was trucked across the country in a refrigerated tractor trailer, odds are, it wasn't red when it was picked, and

instead, it ripened without seeing the light of day before hitting the shelf.

But what about something more complex, something processed for our consumption, say, a hamburger. From a fast food joint.

Google "how many cows are contained in one McDonald's hamburger" and you'll find results with answers ranging from 55 to more than 1,000. You'll also find that some of the sources carry clear agendas, either supporting the world's largest food chain or denouncing it for its unethical practices.

Extreme polarities exist, and the lines in between are blurred. But people *do* seem to be thinking about what they're putting in their bodies, and for Matthew Flowers, that all began with a hamburger.

In this issue's feature story, Flowers allows that question – *what am I eating and where did it come from* – to drive him to find alternative ways of living. He visited two families, both of whom are homesteading, living a life of self-sufficiency.

Rather than relying on box-stores for their goods – those apples shipped across the country – or dollar-menu

dinner deals that tempt us with low cost and convenience, these families are getting their hands dirty, raising animals, cultivating produce, and plain and simple: living off the land.

And for Pennsylvanians, eating locally-sourced foods, otherwise known as being a locavore, seems to be a budding trend.

According to Strolling of the Heifers, a Vermont-based local food advocacy group that recently released its second annual Locavore Index, which ranks all 50 states and the District of Columbia in terms of commitment to local foods, Pennsylvania moved up six spots from last year's list. The organization compiles its list with data from various sources, which incorporates farmers markets, consumer-supported agriculture operations, and consumer interest in eating locally-sourced foods.

Coming in at No. 32, the Keystone State still has a long way to go to catch up with the top tier – Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, North Dakota, and Iowa – but it's climbing the ladder and is now farther removed from Nevada, Arizona, Louisiana, Florida, and Texas at the bottom of the list, as more Pennsylvanians – Erieties included – are taking an active interest in knowing how their food is sourced.

But what about the people that don't have the time or energy or desire to raise chickens, to pull weeds from the raised bed of green beans? CSAs are on the rise, and have a great place in this feature, too. And this conversation's been had in these pages before with local grocers, like Frankie & May Fresh Grocers and the Whole Foods Co-op, doing their part to provide our community locally-sourced options, along with the various Farmers' Markets through the city and county.

And perhaps best yet, food has the ability to bring a community together. Which is why you'll also find a compelling story by Ryan Smith about the Bayfront East Side Taskforce and the work the nonprofit is doing – like raising a community garden – to combat various threats facing that part of the Erie community. And while it's just a small part of B.E.S.T.'s initiatives, it's working.

Food is fundamental to our existence in ways beyond mere nutrients. So the next time you're hungry or are making dinner plans, think about what you're eating, because an awareness of what we eat can lead to the awareness of who we are and what type of community we want to become.

By: Cory Vaillancourt

I couldn't help but notice that we are nearing an anniversary – the anniversary of a fierce, frenzied, savage event that made Erie famous from London to New London, if only for a fleeting fifteen.

Is it the 200th anniversary of The Battle of Lake Erie on Sept. 10, 1813, you ask?

Nope.

The anniversary we're nearing – the anniversary of a ferocious, frantic, shocking event that made Erie the center of global awareness from Hamburg to Hollywood and lasted a lot longer than a Warhol minute is the 10th anniversary of the collarbomb. That's right, on August 28, 2003, the sorry story of the totally idiotic collarbomb plot unfolded before a shocked Gem City, and blew up on Peach Street, taking pizza deliveryman Brian Mills with it.

But these two anniversaries – the Battle of Lake Erie and the collarbomb – have a lot more in common than you might think. As the two-year Perry 200 Commemoration winds down this September, another of Erie's Brigadoon moments will fade right back into the ether; the commemoration has been a tremendous success, stimulating our minds and our economy at the same time. But it's almost over, and we won't achieve such stimulation again until 2062.

"But Upfront, how ever shall we stimulate ourselves until then?" you inquire. I'm glad you asked, you.

It's time to give up the ship, just like Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry did – that's right, during the Battle of Lake Erie, Perry *gave up* on the Flagship Lawrence, because he had the good sense to realize he was in command of a pile of pointy splinters. He made his way from the leaky husk of the Lawrence to the stout-sided Niagara and immortality, because he knew when to give up and start anew.

So, in the grand Upfront tradition of making brilliant suggestions that go completely unheeded (see: open container, spaceport, pave the bay, let me run CelebrateErie, flood the Erie Insurance Arena and hold mock naval battles), I hereby propose the following:

Let's take advantage of this anniversary to become a hollow plastic tourist trinket by embracing collarbomb couture.

We are no longer a steely-stout manufacturing town; we are the rusting hulk thereof, so let's give up on that ship. And since both Roar on the Shore and CelebrateErie continue to demonstrate that we, as a community, simply do not care what we're known for or what kind of culture or reputation we export, the least we can do is get filthy stinking rich by selling gullible tourists cheap Chinese crap at criminally inflated prices.

Therefore, every August 28 from now on into perpetuity, Erie will be henceforth known as the



Is it time to cash in and capitalize on our tourism destination to every extent possible?

epicenter of Collarbombmania (Official slogan: "The second 'b' is silent.").

Obviously, the inevitable result of such a brilliant scheme as this will be the locust-like hordes of tourists flocking to devour our finest regional cuisine and locally-made beers before passing out in the comfort of their locally-owned hotel rooms. Just think of all the new minimum-wage jobs with no healthcare we'll create in those industries by fleecing tourists!

And with those tourists, well, with them come tour busses. Yes, that's right, noble Canadians, with your inferior Canadian Dollar, or loonie, or whatever the hell you call your currency – for just 40 of those things, you too, will be able to experience the magical mystery of the Brian Mills Collarbomb Bus Tour.

It begins with a phone call – only, you don't call them; a mysterious stranger calls you. They ask you to deliver a pizza to WSEE-TV's transmission tower on upper Peach Street, which will be converted to a huge tour bus depot, complete with gift shop. I can already see the "I had a blast in Erie, Pa.!" T-shirts by Jon Box; I can also see Todd Scalise creating a plain white tee that has a drawing of a collarbomb around the neck, Shepard Fairey producing a Brian Mills poster that says "PATSY," and bumper stickers from the Chamber that say "Erie: It's blowin' up!"

Once you arrive at said location, a group of roguish white trash holds you at gunpoint, scans your debit card, and then directs you to a waiting bus.

Before boarding, you'll be issued a device that straps around your neck and emits an audible ticking sound. Then, stepping on to the bus, you'll be greeted by one of those "new minimum-wage jobs with no healthcare" I was talking about; henceforth, "Brian Mills impersonator" will be a career choice for both Erieites and theater majors across the globe! We can scrape up the rejects from Disney, "Yo Gabba Gabba," and

dinner theater and dress them in light blue jeans, nerdy white shoes, oversized clear coke-bottle eyeglasses, and, ironically, a white T-shirt that says "America" on it.

Anyhow, the Brian Mills impersonator/tour guide will tell you the story* as the bus whisks you through the seedy underbelly of Erie – crack dens, prostitutes, and PNC Bank, where the robbery occurred. As the telltale ticking becomes louder, and the bus drives faster, and the pace becomes more frantic, and your heart threatens to jump out of your chest, you'll wonder, like Brian Mills did, "Is this a real bomb? Will it punch a hole the size of a fist through my chest? When?" When? Now! BAM!

Talk about an experience! We'll send these Canadians back to Hamilton as emissaries of Erie, with their "I survived Collarbombmania!" T-shirts, yo-yo's, and shoehorns. Our economy will flourish (for a lucky few) and our underclass will...well, they'll still be the underclass. But hey, it's either embrace this tourism thing, or work to develop high-paying jobs in the technology sector. But that's new and scary, and most of Erie's still waiting for this "Internet" thing to catch on before making any long-term commitments. ■

**For more information on the collarbomb, read the brilliantly written, exhaustively researched "Pizza Bomber: The Untold Story of America's Most Shocking Bank Robbery" by former Lead FBI Special Agent Jerry Clark and Erie Times-News writer Ed Palattella.*

Cory Vaillancourt is a brilliant writer/complete hack and can be complimented/beckled at cVaillancourt@ErieReader.com. Find him on Twitter @VLNCRT. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://erindr.com/lnnq2>



By: Chuck Shepherd

ROACH MOTEL

At age 20, Kyle Kandilian of Dearborn, Mich., has created a start-up business to fund his college expenses, but it involves a roomful (in the family home) of nearly 200,000 cockroaches. The environmental science major at University of Michigan-Dearborn breeds species ranging from the familiar household pests, which he sells on the cheap as food for other people's pets, to the more interesting, exotic Madagascar hissing roaches and rhino roaches, which can live for 10 to 15 years. (Kandilian told the Detroit Free Press in July that of the 4,000 cockroach species, only about a dozen are pests.) Why not choose a more conventional "pet"? Because "(m)ammals smell," he said. (Missing from the Free Press story: details on the likely interesting initial conversation between Kyle and his mother when he asked if he could have 200,000 cockroaches in the house.) [Detroit Free Press, 7-28-2013]

CAN'T POSSIBLY BE TRUE

A 55-year-old woman in the Netherlands seemed to be experiencing orgasms emanating from her foot, she said, and Dr. Marcel Waldinger of Utrecht University (writing in the Journal of Sexual Medicine, online in June) produced a possible explanation. The applicable left foot nerve enters the spinal cord at about the same level as the vaginal nerve, Waldinger wrote, and the woman's recent foot injury might have caused the nerves to cross. The woman reported "five or six" orgasms per day that felt exactly like "regular" orgasms and, she said, were making her feel terribly guilty and embarrassed. After treatment with a nerve anesthetic, she reported being orgasm-free (in the foot, at least) for eight months. [CBS News via KHOU-TV (Houston), 7-1-2013]

The intersection of West Gateway Boulevard and North Congress Avenue in Boynton Beach, Fla. (pop. 60,000), is nine lanes wide, busy even at 11 p.m. on Sunday night, as it was at that time in July when a 2-year-old girl darted across, a combination of good fortune and sometimes-rare Florida driver alertness allowing her safe arrival on the other side without a scratch. "It's a miracle," said Harry Scott, who witnessed it. "I'm telling you the truth." Mom Kayla Campbell, 26, was charged with felony neglect, as she appeared "oblivious," said police, to the child's absence from home. [South Florida Sun-Sentinel, 7-9-2013]

An unnamed restaurateur from Nagoya, Japan, has filed a lawsuit against an affiliate of the country's largest organized crime syndicate, Yamaguchi-gumi, demanding a refund

Street Corner SOAPBOX

Vote Yes on Term Limits

By: Jay Stevens

No legal challenge was filed to a ballot initiative that seeks to implement term limits on the county council and county executive offices, so we'll all be able to vote on it this November.

And you should vote *yes!* Term limits in county government is a great idea.

County Councilman Fiore Leone doesn't think so. In an interview with JET 24, he said he didn't think there should be limits on how long a public official should serve in office. After all, if they're doing a good job, shouldn't we keep them in?

Incumbents have a huge advantage in any election, and especially in local government elections. After all, in local politics, name recognition is the key to electoral victory.

"What you do by putting in term limits is disenfranchise voters," he said.

Fiore Leone has served on the Erie County Council since 1978.

What Councilman Leone doesn't tell you is that incumbents have a huge advantage in any election, and especially in local government elections. After all, in local politics, name recognition is the key to electoral victory. And local government isn't covered well in local media, so an officeholder's actual record or performance doesn't come into play as much as it does in, say, a presidential election. So, the key to winning elections is merely by making public appearances, and occasionally showing up on television. And incumbents get to do both.

"Wait!" you're saying. What about this year's primary? *Three* incumbent county officeholders lost elections. Whitey Cleaver – an eight-year veteran of County Council – and Joe Giles – who

sat on the council for over 20 years – lost their re-election bids, as did current County Executive Barry Grossman.


Yes, but, this was an unusual election. You could argue that Grossman's opponent, Kathy Dahlkemper, easily matched Grossman's name recognition: after all, she ran a successful bid for U.S. Congress. And you could guess that Dahlkemper's supporters, already in an anti-incumbent frame of mind, simply pulled the lever for every challenger. Which could explain why Cleaver lost.

You could also argue that, say, Giles' name recognition actually hurt his candidacy. You can appear in only so many reports showering in women's locker rooms and taking late-night drives with felony-prone boys before voters grow uneasy with you.

Still, neither scenario applies to the incumbents' actual *records*. Were Erie county voters unhappy with Barry Grossman's performance as county executive? It didn't seem so. Maybe some Erie voters were dissatisfied with Giles'

disappearance for, and eventual "no" vote, on the community college, but that issue never surfaced in the recent primary. No challenger mentioned the community college, or mentioned Giles' role in its defeat.

That's a long way of saying that it's hard to defeat an incumbent, and only extraordinary circumstances conspire to remove them from office. But local government shouldn't be a lifetime appointment – or a *lifestyle* choice. We need constant renewal of ideas and talents in the office. We need to ensure that officeholders change with the times.

No one should serve on the county council for 35 years. 

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://erindr.com/u9kmk>



of "protection" money she had been paying for more than 12 years (in total, the equivalent of about \$170,000). The affiliate, Kodo-kai, burned down a bar in 2010, killing people, in a similar protection arrangement that went bad, and the plaintiff said she, too, was threatened with arson when she decided to stop paying. According to an expert on Japanese "yakuza," a relative of one of the victims of the 2010 fire may also sue Kodo-kai. [Japan Today via Quartz, 7-18-2013]

UNCLEAR ON THE CONCEPT

In June, following his guilty plea in Corpus Christi, Texas, to possession of child pornography, Jose Salazar, 70, offered to perform public service to reduce the 12-year sentence a federal judge had handed him. Salazar said he "had a lot to offer society," according to an Associated Press story, and could be "useful" in mentoring children. [Associated Press via Beaumont Enterprise, 6-21-2013]

At Atherstone, England's, Twycross Zoo, a program is underway to try to teach quarter-ton giant tortoises to speed up. An extended outdoor pen had been built for Speedy (age 70), Tim, 40, and Shelly, 30, but that meant it took a longer time to round them up for bed at the end of the day. The Leicester Mercury reported in June that zoo officials were trying to use the lure of food to get the tortoises to significantly improve their way-under-1-mile-per-hour gait. [Leicester Mercury, 6-21-2013]

Actually, It Might Enhance the Experience: The British sex toy manufacturer Ann Summers issued a recall in June of a certain model of its popular Ultimate O Vibrator because of a problem with the electrical charger. The company said it was being cautious but that the risk of danger is low. [Daily Telegraph, 6-14-2013]

INEXPLICABLE

Tina Marie Garrison, 37, and her son Junior Lee Dillon, 18, of Preston, Minn., were charged in June with stealing almost \$5,000 worth of gopher feet from the freezer of a gopher trapper in Granger, Minn., and selling them for the local offered bounty of \$3 per pair. Garrison, Dillon, and the victimized trapper were friends, and it was not clear why the thinly populated gopher-foot market would not have deterred Garrison and Dillon. [Post-Bulletin (Rochester, Minn.), 6-18-2013]

Louann Giambattista, 55, a 33-year-veteran American Airlines flight attendant, filed a lawsuit against the company in July alleging that it had subjected her to baseless hassles because of co-workers' accusations that, argued her attorney, were wrongly "making her out to be a nut." One of the accusations was that she was "hiding rats in her underwear (and pantyhose) and sneaking them onto planes" based apparently on Giambattista's hobby of raising pets at home. The airline has allegedly subjected her to enhanced security measures for more than a year, allegedly causing her post-traumatic stress disorder and "debilitating anxiety." [New York Post, 7-7-2013]



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THE WAY I SEE IT

What Airline Mergers Mean to Erie

By: Rebecca Styn

Back in January of 2012, American Airlines and US Airways started talks about a possible merger between the two groups. And just a little over a year later, the two officially announced these plans in February 2013 – creating what would be the largest airline in the world.

This merger would see more than 6,700 daily flights to 336 locations in 56 countries worldwide. Ultimately, the new American Airlines would provide the most service across the East Coast and Central regions of the U.S. (Read: Hopeful connections for Erie).

I don't know about you, but when it comes to flying, I focus on two major elements: convenience and cost.

However, this past week, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a suit to block this merger. While over the last decade, the government has given carte blanche to a series of airline mergers: Because the industry has fallen into a cyclical pattern of damaging competition, they chose this time to block it, arguing that this pattern has ended – alongside the public's tolerance for industry consolidation.

I don't know about you, but when it comes to flying, I focus on two major elements: convenience and cost. Personally, convenience is probably the top of my list, because as all of us know in Erie, there's still only a handful of connecting hubs from our fair Erie International Airport/Tom Ridge Field – Cleveland, Detroit, and Philadelphia. Even with that entire runway expansion.

And as it stands, the only airline flying into Detroit from here is Delta. So, as a passenger in our small corner of the world, I'm thinking there's a

possible benefit to this merger. While the exact plans for the routes haven't been laid out, sometimes I go with the "build it, and they will come" mentality. Again, even with that runway expansion.

If the airlines don't merge, they could offer lower prices, but also may ultimately be forced to cut routes or go out of business as they try to compete with the much larger United and Delta. And take note, business travelers: you are more likely to lose out even more than us fair-weather flyers, since there would be no third alternative to the large domestic and international route networks offered by United and Delta.

I understand the Justice Departments fear: a monopoly. By all means, if this merger went through, the four biggest airlines would control more than 80 percent of the domestic air-travel market and would have a monopoly over several U.S. routes. But consider this: Whirlpool alone currently dominates the major household appliance department with 43 percent of the market share – and I don't see the government up in arms about this one. Why is there no protest over the dishwasher monopoly, I ask?! Well, probably because it's a dishwasher.

But I digress... it's probably true the costs may go up, but if we can get a direct flight into New York, Washington, D.C., or Orlando, I think some of us would be okay with this idea. Yes, costs are probably going to rise; however, in recent decades the inflation-adjusted price of an average round trip has been nearly cut in half. These price drops may have been too ambitious, leaving airlines with little profit, leading to all the other mergers. Their challenge now is to convince a federal judge in D.C. that, without the merger, the industry as a whole – and these two in particular – will be in trouble the next time fuel prices go up – or the economy goes down.

The way I see it, it comes down to this: pay more and get more, or pay less and get less.

And it's now in the hands of one man to decide.

Love? Hate? Agree? Disagree? I want to hear from you. Contact 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/96duc>



TECH WATCH

Tech Life in the Here and Now

By: Dakota Hoffman, Epic WebStudios

The other day, some coworkers and I were sitting in the office talking about the new updates to Google Maps. We were looking in our open office door with street view when I noticed one coworker was keeping quiet, so I asked her for her opinion.

"I use Mapquest," she squeaked to the horror of the entire room.

Which made me realize how much I rely on Google. No other company has embedded itself this deeply into my life. People, myself included, identify themselves as Mac or Windows users, but if we zoom out a bit, there's another Venn diagram where Google almost entirely encompasses all of these users.

I'm a Mac user, but the list of Apple products I use daily essentially amounts to OS X on my MacbookPro. The number of Google products I use daily boggles my mind. Today, I counted 15: Gmail, Calendar, Android, Search, Maps, Image Search, Google+, Chrome, Voice, Play Store, Wallet, Drive, Now, YouTube, and Adwords.

When we think about the vast number of services Google offers for free to users, it's no wonder that so many find a use for their applications. Remember life before Google? It was difficult. We had to use paper maps, learn languages, and even own a dictionary. The horror!

Google Now is among the latest of search-based offerings from the world's biggest newmedia firm. It scours your calendar, your work, and personal patterns, and then meshes them with publicly available information, such as traffic, weather, and events, to assist you throughout the day. Alerts warn you of a traffic jam on your regular route to work or the blustery weather in the city you are flying to.

Just this afternoon before I left work, Google Now felt inclined to let me know how

windy it was outside. I left my coat at home, but that was my fault. Sadly, Google has no app to correct my own bad decisions. Yet.

Just as the possibilities with a product such as Google Now are enormous, imagine its potential when overlaid with social networks – its Internet search is exploding on multiple tangents. Driving that change almost singly is Google. And at a time when some believe the golden era of the Internet is just beginning.

Now, take it one step further. Enter stage left the always-talked-about Google Glass.

Google Glass, of course, is the optical computer fitted on a pair of eyeglass frames. If you're a select developer with \$1,500 to spare, you can walk around computing hands-free wherever and whenever you want and run the risk of becoming a "Glasshole."

Google Now functions relatively well as is. It pulls information from all my devices that run Chrome and tailors to my life, but what if I was providing live data "from the ground" with the use of Glass? I once reviewed 1201 Kitchen (State St.) on Google+, so if I were to walk by Sushi & Asian Cuisine on State Street, what if Glass interjected and recommended the restaurant? Is Google capable of that degree of oversight? More importantly: Is society ready to be told what to do like that?

Glass coupled with Now could be the next way Google becomes a necessity in life and is posed, nay threatening, to radically define how we communicate with one another and with our environments.

While I am excited technology can make such a leap toward effortless convenience, my fascination admittedly is a morbid one. As every movie about robots ever warns: relying too heavily on technology to live our daily lives can become a handicap. Just go watch "iRobot" or any of the "Terminator" movies.

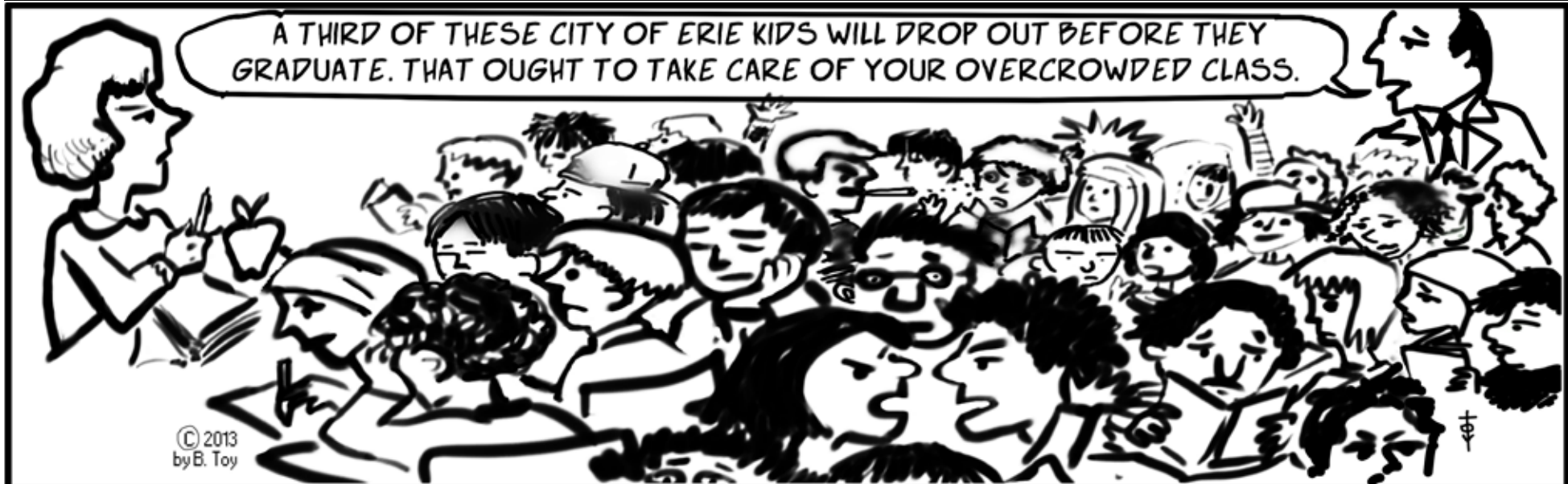
Now that I think about it, didn't the villains in both of those titles have Google Glass-like vision? ■

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/hne11>



JUST TOYIN' WITCHA

By: B. Toy



Revitalizing Erie in the B.E.S.T. Way

Bayfront East Side Taskforce is the city's first nonprofit organization hyper-focused on reviving Erie's East Bayfront neighborhood.

By Ryan Smith

A garden is growing just down the street from Jeremy Bloeser's office on Parade Street's 400 block. He talks about it while he walks down to it, picking up little scraps of litter along the way.

Not too long ago, he said, a crumbling, uninhabitable house – then, nothing but unused space – was all that occupied that corner lot, one of many like it on the bay-fronting face of Erie's oldest neighborhood.

The lot's a space starting to come into new bloom: Rare and not-so-rare herbs and spices, varieties of blueberries, raspberries, and other fruits and more, all artfully assorted in hand-painted garden boxes and flanked by white fencing.

Now, though, the lot's a space starting to come into new bloom: Rare and not-so-rare herbs and spices, varieties of blueberries, raspberries, and other fruits and more, all artfully assorted in hand-painted garden boxes and flanked by white fencing.

But the fencing isn't there to keep anyone out.

"Everything here is edible," Bloeser, executive director of the Bayfront East Side Taskforce, said as he looked over the garden's bounty recently. And with the exception of a few marked boxes that are privately gardened by neighborhood residents, it's all there for the

picking. The community garden was first established and has been growing since April at the corner of Parade and East Fourth streets. It's just one of multiple initiatives and efforts currently under way through B.E.S.T., the city's first nonprofit organization hyper-focused on revitalizing Erie's East Bayfront neighborhood, situated directly east of the city's downtown improvement district and encompassing 25 blocks between Holland and Wayne streets from East Sixth to East Front streets.

Out of all that B.E.S.T. does – from major projects to remove blighted properties and provide new, affordable housing to smaller-scale endeavors to boost neighborhood pride and participation, Bloeser said the garden is "small" and just "one of many [undertakings]."

"Nobody really realizes how comprehensive [the effort] is," he added. B.E.S.T. is primarily funded through community donations and ongoing partnerships, the largest of which are with Erie Insurance Group and, now, UPMC Hamot. Working with the state Department of Community and Economic Development, EIG recently renewed a six-year commitment to provide \$900,000 — \$150,000 each year — toward B.E.S.T.'s revitalization efforts. In the same vein, UPMC Hamot is now supporting B.E.S.T. with a six-year, \$175,000-per-year funding commitment.

Over the last 12 years, according to B.E.S.T., the nonprofit has used such major funding partnerships to accomplish goals including the demolition of over 40 blighted properties; the creation of 21 new single-family, owner-occupied homes as well as eight new rental properties; coordination of an array of community events and initiatives; and



Executive Director of B.E.S.T. Jeremy Bloeser shows off the community garden on Parade Street.

more. The partnerships mark what is "obviously a huge financial contribution. But it needs that," said Bloeser. "We use [that] funding for pretty much everything we do ... [and] there's plenty of work to be done."

Michele Gannon – a 29-year-old who works most days at her parents' Orsini's Market at 231 Parade St., and lives right upstairs – agrees.

"I grew up in this neighborhood," she said while working at the market one recent afternoon, "and I see everything."

Gannon said by all means, she appreciates the work B.E.S.T. is doing, and she's all for the kind of changes it's facilitating. "I like the fact they've taken down a lot of the [blighted] houses," she said. "They were problem houses, and it makes the neighborhood look a

lot better." But on any given night, she said, she still sees the same problems on the neighborhood's streets: People fighting, often violently. Young children, entirely unsupervised, outside in the middle of night, with nowhere to go and nothing to do.

And worse. A couple of months back, Gannon said, she had to pull a gun on two local teens who were attempting to rob the store. They were both apprehended by police about an hour after fleeing.

"And the other night, I heard a gunshot," she said, "and I never saw a police car."

Gannon said in her opinion, B.E.S.T. should continue what it's doing, only more of it, and should be supported in its efforts.

Along with that, though, the city needs to do more, too – like, for instance, "putting more patrol cars in the area," she said.

When it comes down to it, even as very-much worthwhile work continues to make way for change for the better, Gannon has also seen a big change over the course of recent years. "It's not like when I was growing up," she said. "It's worse." ■

Ryan Smith can be contacted at rSmith@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Ryan-SmithPlens. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://eridr.com/k9dqq>



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Living Off the Land in Erie County

Two Families Find an Alternative Way to Subsist



Homesteading – a lifestyle of self-sustained living – provides a refreshing alternative to commercial farming.

By: Matthew Flowers:

I've had a lot of time to reflect this summer while reintroducing myself to Mother Nature. I kayaked on the lake, took long walks through lush woods, camped out beneath an awning of stars, and even planted a small garden. Taking in the fresh scenery, I notice a simple commonality between all the sights around me: Everything started from a seed.

It can be that small, wet grain of an idea cemented in one of the crevices of your brain that fosters an invention, or that first drop of concrete laying the foundation for a sturdy home, or of course, the small pod that stems up to become a canopy of leaves, perhaps bearing fresh flowers, fruit, or vegetables.

During one of my summer outings, I visited a small farm. In the middle of what seemed like nowhere, the horizon line was so defined – crisp green and yellow rows running across the pasture, and an Erie sun starting to sweep colors across

the sky.

On my drive back into the city, I kept gazing at the colors in the sky. The red mixed in with white wisps of clouds like a punch-stained tablecloth.

After picking up a friend, I stopped to get some food before my night began. I ordered a classic cheeseburger – what I believe America would taste like if it was sandwiched between a sesame seed bun – from my go-to burger joint. It was nestled in a paper tray alongside a pile of fries, the oil still sizzling when it was handed to me.

We sat for a moment while I noshed down on my patriotic patty. The sun's gone down, but the colors were still radiant in the open sky.

My friend took sip of Coke and looked towards me. "Did you ever wonder what's in that?" he said, pointing to the remnants of my meat-pulp burger.

That is when the seed was planted.

When I was younger, I was told pollution made the most stunning sunsets. When I was a kid, I was also told that a burger was simply beef.

While we know that beautiful sunsets aren't

merely made from pollution, there may be more to finding out that a burger is more than simply beef. And in amidst that quest to find those answers, people can be found along the way who are abandoning the mainstream way of living, of eating, and find that homesteading – living off the land – is not just an alternative but the future of food for them.

This is where that seed begins to grow.

"It's a game of roulette that we really don't want to play," local homesteader, small-business owner, and family man Andrew Pastor says about the dangers of genetically modified foods. Homesteading promotes self-sufficiency and sustainability by way of farming for sustenance and reduces the need for trade. Erie, as set in its ways as it can seem at times, is home to multiple families living this alternative lifestyle. Generally, you won't find boxed, processed, or genetically modified foods on their shelves.

"My wife and I have a policy: If you can't pro-


nounce what is in the ingredients you don't buy it," Andrew explains.

The list of chemicals on the back of some processed foods can make a shopper want to revisit the periodic table for some reference; single ingredients seem to have more syllables than the word count of most children's books.

Let's start with a classic that almost everyone has tasted: monosodium glutamate. This adds to that tasty salt blast you get when eating Chinese food, Ramen Noodles, and a wide variety of dipping sauces. Its short-term side effects include numbness, headache, rapid heart rate, instantly being hungry again, wanting to fall asleep watching reruns of "Seinfeld," and unbuttoning the top button of a once well-fitting pair of pants.

The long-term effects of this salty additive have been linked to Alzheimer's disease, Lou Gehrig's Disease, Epilepsy, and a whole slew of other disorders.

Another classic chemical commercial farms use is glyphosate, the active chemical ingredient in Roundup – one of the most widely used herbi-



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Arnold, a pot-bellied pig, calls A Little Bit of Heaven farm home.

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cides that kills anything from weeds and grass to wooded plants. In almost every non-organic food using ingredients derived from corn or soy, a side of weed killer is served up with it.


According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, farmers dumped 57 million pounds of glyphosate on food crops in 2009. A crop's resistance to glyphosate is one of the main reasons for genetically modified produce.

But difficult to pronounce – and understand – chemicals, including herbicides, aren't the only interesting ingredients in our food. While it seems natural to squeeze a lemon or lime to freshen up some ice water or a cocktail, have you considered squeezing the cloying juices from

beaver anal-glands to add that little extra kick of flavor? Food companies have. Castoreum is the exudate from a North American Beaver's castor (anal) sac. Many processed foods and beverages use this beaver anal gland juice to add vanilla or raspberry flavoring to a variety of soft drinks and dishes.

Disgusting? Yes. Delicious? Yes. Dangerous? No.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considers this additive as GRAS, or “generally recognized as safe.” Before taking a bite of pudding, yogurt, or candy or taking a sip of iced tea or soda, you may want to check out the ingredient list, even for these GRAS ingredients. But



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here's a kicker: even if used, some additives, like castoreum, won't be featured on the label since it falls under the FDA's definition of "natural flavoring."

While some consumers may commend farmers who have decided to milk beaver ass for a living to get that extra kick to our soda pop, others may think twice before taking that next gulp of questionable carbonated refreshment.

Yet the featured list of controversial ingredients is as long as a whale is wide: carbon monoxide is used to keep meat "fresh," ammonia keeps meat clean, propylene glycol is a bonding agent in salad dressing but is also used to make condoms, and if you take a bite of wheat bread, you could also be eating L-cysteine, in other words, dissolved human hair or duck feathers.

Taste what I'm cookin'?

"We became very aware of the foods that are available commercially. We educated ourselves on commercial farming especially with the onslaught of genetically modified food," Andrew says. Whether it is due to an increase in population or genetically modified food that has led to an equally positive correlation in the number of food allergies, obesity, and the vast array of diseases coming to light, he and his wife Jodie have dedicated themselves to raising their three daughters Hanna, Jordan, and Lilly May on farm-fresh food.

A Little Bit of Heaven Farm is another homestead run by the wife-and-husband team of Melanie and Luka Krneta out in Springboro, Pa. From a young age, Melanie was drawn to the farm life. She was inspired by her parents living through the trying times of the '30s, an age when a family's welfare depended on



Chickens thrive in open spaces.

being independent. She felt admiration for the families who could weave their own safety net. "The people from the Depression era who were trying to be more self-sufficient really impressed me," says Melanie.

Not only were families trying to provide for

themselves, but the hard work this sustainability took to achieve kept the family stable in a vulnerable time. "My mom always talked about how it was so simple back then and how families pulled together," she says. After that time was through, and money was more plentiful, families

drifted a little further apart.

Even after her parents passed away, Melanie's thought process remained the same: "Why would people go and buy something if they can make it on their own?"

With the combination of organic groceries being pricier and commercial farming being, in their opinion, reprehensible, the Pastor family felt there was no choice but to farm their own food. "I don't see an option, I really don't. I see the way that commercial farming is now," Andrew says.

Commercial farming techniques don't really include weeding out the garden or planting marigolds to steer away pests. It's more about making the fruits sweeter, the vegetables juicier, and the beef beefier by genetically modifying the organism.

Genetically modified organisms – as defined by Charu Verma in her article from *The Open Nutraceuticals Journal*, titled: "A Review on Impacts of Genetically Modified Food on Human Health" – are defined as organisms (except for human beings) in which the genetic material has been altered in a way that does not occur naturally by mating and/or natural recombination.

In essence, a bigger, better, stronger gene gets inserted into another microorganism. And these Dr. Frankenstein-creations do have their advantages. Much of the commercial produce is pest resistant, herbicide tolerant, cold tolerant, drought tolerant, salinity tolerant, disease resistant, and scientists can even add extra nutrients for under-nourished communities.

Modern agriculture, despite meeting astonishing yields to match our world's growing population, has received a reputation [*Cont. on 20*]

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If We Were You...

WEDNESDAY 8.21

GEAE Happy Hour

On the third Wednesday of each month (hey, that's today!) the greater Erie Alliance for Equality hosts a combined happy hour/service event. This one, at Craze nightclub, aims to collect school supplies, so be sure to bring along pens, pencils, notebooks, backpacks, or anything else you can!

When: 5 to 9 p.m.
Where: 1607 Raspberry St.
Contact: greatereriealliance.com

Married and Counting

Huffington Post called this documentary on marriage equality "relevant, heartfelt, and timely," while Time called it "equal parts love story and political protest," so you should probably head on over to PACA and see it. Donations are accepted but not required, and half of the proceeds will be donated to ME4PA, a marriage equality group.

When: 7 p.m.
Where: 1505 State St.
Contact: Paca1505.com

THURSDAY 8.22

Erie Downtown Partnership Block Party

Jerry Uht Park is the site of this week's block party. There will be food, drinks, and great live entertainment from and Taylor Maid and Key West Express. If this recent weather has been any indication, summer is winding down! Enjoy these Thursday nights outdoors while you still can!

When: 6 to 10:30 p.m.
Where: 110 E. 10th St.
Contact: 455.3743

Bail Easy and Via the Sun

For those who would like to rock, let us introduce you to Bail Easy and Via the Sun. One's a little metal, and the other's more melodic hard rock, but they get along just fine, which is great for anyone out there looking to head down to Sherlock's for a good guitar thrashing all night long.

When: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Where: 508 State St.
Contact: 453.7760

FRIDAY 8.23

North East National Rib Fest

Get your last taste of fresh barbecue before the summer ends! Not only are there great ribs, but also a car/motorcycle show, petting zoo, crafters and live entertainment. Admission is free and will be running through the weekend until Sunday.

When: All Day
Where: Gibson & Gravel Pit Parks, 10300 West Main Road North East
Contact: 725.3308

Disney Junior Live on Tour! Pirate and Princess Adventure

Nothing says "family-friendly" quite like Disney, and you can be sure the kids will enjoy seeing the likes of Cinderella and Peter Pan in this unique performance at the Warner Theater. Tickets range from \$51, \$31, and \$21 and can be purchased at the Warner Theater box office.

When: 7 p.m.
Where: 811 State St.
Contact: 452.4857

The Family Resource Fair

The United Way of Erie County wants you to know that If you or someone you know may benefit from involvement with a social service agency, Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary School will host more than 30 of them in the school gym. This helpful new event is being held in conjunction with Back to School Free Hair Cut Day (see below), and both are graciously supported by Michael Hooks, owner/operator of Michael's Hair Salon.

When: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Where: 235 E. 11th St.
Contact: del@unitedwayerie.org

Electro/Acoustic Collision

Electronic and acoustic musicians will battle for supremacy at Basement Transmissions over the course of one night. Actually, there won't be any fighting, really – just two stages, nine artists, and a whole bunch of good music brought to you by the likes of Cleveland's 9 Volt Haunted House and some unplugged tunes from Erie's own onewayness, resulting in a sound victory for those attending.

When: 6 to 11 p.m.
Where: 1501 State St.
Contact: basement-transmissions.webs.com

SATURDAY 8.24

Back-to-School Free Haircut Day

It's back-to-school season, but in Erie, need truly knows no season. For the eighth consecutive year, the Pfeiffer-Burleigh School playground will host Michael Hooks and his team of volunteer hairstylists, who will provide free haircuts and backpacks to an expected 1,000 children who need both to start the school year on a positive note.

When: 8 a.m.
Where: 235 E. 11th St.
Contact: del@unitedwayerie.org

Adrienne Hindmarsh and Pete Mills

At some point in time, somebody decided to say "all good things must come to an end," unfortunately setting the precedent for good things being expected to, well, end. Still, that just means we can kick off the final show of the Romolo Chocolates 2013 Summer Music Series in full force, with B-3 organist Adrienne Hindmarsh and saxophonist Pete Mills playing for free on a late summer night.

When: 6 to 9 p.m.
Where: 1525 W. Eighth St.
Contact: 452.1933

Instead of Sleeping and guests

There are so many things you could do instead of sleeping. You could read a good book, binge watch a new show, or finally paint that masterpiece of General Patton on a unicorn. While those are all nice, we suggest doing something like heading down to Basement Transmissions and check out Pittsburgh-based melodic indie rockers Instead of Sleeping, as well as some other special guests that will make you happy that you got off the couch.

When: 6 to 11 p.m.
Where: 1501 State St.
Contact: basement-transmissions.webs.com

Zabawa Polish Festival

You know, this wouldn't be a bad weekend to go festival hopping. Portion the ribs wisely on Friday and you'll have room to head over to Holy Trinity Church for Polish food on Saturday! Like the Rib Fest, this event runs through the weekend.

When: All Day
Where: East 23rd and Reed streets
Contact: 456.0671

ArborEATem – A party in the park

Erie is full of great restaurants, and now all the chefs of these eateries will be gathered in one place. From Mi Scuzi to Avanti's and everything in between, come to Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park and meet the people that make some of Erie's best food.

When: 7 to 11 p.m.
Where: West Eighth Street and Bayfront Parkway
Contact: 453.5324

SUNDAY 8.25

Aviation Gala & Open House

Join the Erie Regional Airport Authority at the Erie International Airport-Tom Ridge Field for their Aviation Gala Open House and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony celebrating the opening of the runway 6-24 extension. Vintage aircraft – including a B-17 bomber – and privately-owned aircraft will also be on display; if aircraft aren't your thang, classic cars will also be present.

When: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Where: 4411 W. 12th St.
Contact: Erieairshow.com



Thu. Aug. 22 **Bail Easy & Via the Sun**

Fri. Aug. 23 **Drunk in Memphis**

Sat. Aug. 24 **Refuge**

Thu. Aug. 29 **Charisma**

Fri. Aug. 30 **New Wave Nation**

Sat. Aug. 31 **Old School**

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TUESDAY 8.27

Last of the 8 Great Tuesdays

We've all heard it: All good things must come to an end. But in the case of this Tuesday, it's all great things, as this marks the last performance in the 8 Great Tuesdays concert series. So head to Liberty Park for one last outdoor show on Erie's beautiful bayfront and enjoy the tunes of American Ride Band, who open for The Stickers.

When: 6 to 10 p.m.

Where: 726 W. Bayfront Parkway

Contact: 455.7557

WEDNESDAY 8.28

FILM presents: "Frances Ha"

The final movie of the summer series is a critically-acclaimed comedy about a young New York City woman who keeps joyfully chasing her dreams, even as they slip out of reach.

When: 7 p.m.

Where: 726 20 E. Fifth St.

Contact: facebook.com/FILMErieArtMuseum

THURSDAY 8.29

Profound Produce CD Release

Local rapper Profound Produce put in a lot of hard work to present Erie with a brand new batch of tracks, and now it's time to enjoy "Fruits of Our Labor" with a proper party. The first 200 people in the door will receive a free gift, all while Blue Soul, HoneyBee, and DJ Salt provide

some additional entertainment for Profound Produce's special night.

When: 9 p.m.

Where: 1013 State St.

Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

FRIDAY 8.30

Homemade Fusion

Dramashop's having a party to kick off their 2013-2014 season and to open their new performance space, and in true Dramashop fashion, they're making this something more than just an ordinary party. For a special one-night event, the crew of Erie's contemporary theater is performing the concert-style "Homemade Fusion" that's been called "brash, witty, and tongue-in-cheek." With a complimentary pre-show reception, Renaissance Theatre is the place to be this Friday.

When: 7 p.m. reception; 8 p.m. performance

Where: 1001 State St.

Contact: dramashop.org

SATURDAY 8.31

Zach Deputy at the crooked i

When an artist is described as island-infused drum n' bass gospel ninja soul, that sounds like a potential blast, unless you happen to hate ninjas for some reason. The Southern multi-instrumentalist puts on funky, yet soulful, rhythm and blues show, complete with live looping and all sorts of fun on a Saturday night.

When: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Where: 1013 State St.

Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

SUNDAY 9.01

Greenhouse at the crooked i

Do you know what's better than having two indie hip-hop artists from Columbus? Three of them, but that's starting to get a little greedy, so we're perfectly fine with rappers Blueprint and Illogic team up to become Greenhouse for this killer Sunday show.

When: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Where: 1013 State St.

Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

German Heritage Festival

Achtung! Another ethnic festival! Get yo' lederhosen on and head on over to St. Nick's Grove on Route 97 for a full day of Frankfurters and

fun.

When: 11 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Where: 5131 Old French Rd

Contact: 456.9599

MONDAY 9.02

Last SeaWolves Game of the Regular Season

Another true sign that eight months of winter are rapidly approaching – baseball's over. So close out another wonderful regular season of home-team minor league fun at the Uht with your friends by attending the SeaWolves last game of the season, because in two months, you know you'll already be yearning for their season opener.

When: 1:35 p.m.

Where: 110 E. 10th St.

Contact: Seawolves.com

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UPCOMING EVENTS



DRIPS & BEATS

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AUGUST 22 // THURSDAY @ 10:00



DRUNK IN MEMPHIS

BIKE NIGHT

AUGUST 30 // FRIDAY @ 10:00



WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS HUMAN ANIMAL, MALA SANGRE, AND ONEWAYNESS

AUGUST 30 // FRIDAY @ 10:00



ZACH DEPUTY

AUGUST 31 // SATURDAY @ 10:00



BLUEPRINT

SEPTEMBER 1 // SUNDAY @ 10:00



STONED AND BEAUTIFUL

AUGUST 18 // SUNDAY @ 10:00

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

To-do List

By: Alex Bieler

Drips & Beats: The Revelation Party

The power of addition is a wonderful trick to take something pretty cool and help make it even better. Found some ice cream? Add in your favorite toppings for a killer sundae. Got a cool-looking stick? Add a spiked ball and chain and you got yourself a sweet flail. Have a coming-of-age musical in mind? Add Gary Coleman and a bunch of singing puppets and now you have a Tony-winning Broadway musical.

The same principle can work for musicians as well. Take local rapper C. Brown's "Delirium" for example. The release from last year showcased the MC's lyrical abilities, as he recapped a turbulent year; but after looking back on his third project, C. Brown felt as though he needed to add to the story. This musical addendum results in "Delirium:Revelation," an extended release that he says will help "close out the story."

"The theme with the original 'Delirium' was based on things that I was going through, my confusion and trying to figure out things with my life," C. Brown explains. "The extra songs, the 'Revelation' part, are me seeing the light, starting to see things clear. It's like I'm seeing the light at the end of the tunnel."

However, this tale can't come to a proper end without a celebration, so Drips & Beats will play host to the "Delirium:Revelation" CD Release Party Thursday, Aug. 22 at the crooked i, helping the Erie Reader 40 Under 40-alum C. Brown close out this chapter with a hip-hop hoopla. For just \$3, you'll get to see your monthly dosage of Drips & Beats goodness as Juicebox, Calikko, and Devious all take the stage before C. Brown finishes off the night.

"I'm going to try and take [the audience] through a journey, performing songs from older material – the first two projects I did, the original 'Delirium,' things like that," C. Brown says, while working in the studio on some new material, looking to add the final strokes to his sonic canvas. Last winter, we got another taste of what C. Brown offers, and this Release Party provides the cherry to his "Delirium" sundae.

Lost Orchards

Seven years ago, Ron Freeman left Erie. After several years and multiple bands, the singer/songwriter moved on to Columbus, Ohio, where he started playing in more bands with fellow Erieite Chris Vogt. There he met his wife Savannah at an open mic, eventually leading to the birth of his current band Lost Orchards. Now, all these years later, Freeman is poised to make his musical return to The Flagship City.




C. Brown releases "Delirium:Revelation" Thursday, Aug. 22.

"I'm very excited. It's been six years since I played anything back home," Ron says in regards to his Saturday, Aug. 24 show at Urraro Gallery. Before leaving Northwest Pennsylvania, Ron was a notable player in the local scene, heading Ron Freeman & the Deaf Kids. Now he and Savannah will be able to showcase what they've been working on over the past few years in an acoustic duo set.

Inspired by the indie-folk sound that Ron's been rather keen on since he was younger, Lost Orchards intertwines lyrically-driven tunes, arresting arrangements, and lovely harmonies.

"When I started writing, it was generally a little more country," Ron says. "I developed past the country songwriting into indie the more indie songwriting while keeping that sort of instrumental feel as well. It's very indie folk. I look at song structure ideas from more indie artists like R.E.M., that sort of thing and then instrumentalize with this guitar, piano, banjo, and mandolin sort of set up, so it comes off way folkier than the indie-rock songwriting influence."

With a few EPs to the band's name, including a concept release with a series of love songs from the perspective of a presidential assassin and more electric bunch of tracks dating back to Ron's Erie days, Lost Orchards has plenty of tunes to whip out at Urraro. You'll never hear us at the Reader complaining about new songs however, which is great since Ron and Savannah will be performing some fresh tracks from a full-length they hope to start recording later this year.

It may have taken over half a decade for Ron to come back and play in his hometown, but it's better late than never when it comes to welcoming back one of our own. 

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"Mayor of Hell" Comes to Erie

John Fetterman, "controversial" mayor of Braddock, recently lectured at the Jefferson Educational Society.

By: Ryan Smith

Braddock Mayor John Fetterman was introduced in Erie last week as a figure who's controversial in more ways than one.

Organizers of his Destination Erie-hosted talk at the Jefferson Educational Society prefaced that further by suggesting Fetterman, as the forward-thinking (and demonstrably forward-acting) mayor of the Pittsburgh region's by-far poorest town, is, in some of those ways, a renegade politician whose approaches and actions sometimes even run counter to the very spirit of American democracy.

But Fetterman doesn't seem to see it that way – and, in his unpolished but plenty clear manner (the kind that suggests he's not much of a politician at all), he said so.

"I never saw myself or felt myself as [being] controversial," Fetterman said. "And I don't think what we're doing [in Braddock] is particularly controversial, or esoteric."

Rather, Fetterman said, what's being done to rethink, revitalize, and repurpose Braddock out of its ruins of industrial collapse is a reasoned response to the town's situation – and the only hope for its future.

Here's Braddock's past in brief: The site of Andrew Carnegie's first steel mill (along with Carnegie's first library), the 20,000-plus-population borough was a bustling, brimming-with-business, 20th Century model of affluence born of industry. But between the middle and end of the last century, it became an extreme model of the effects of industrial abandonment, losing 90 percent of its businesses – and 90 percent of its population.

It was "a massive implosion," unequaled in American history, Fetterman said, and it put Braddock "literally at the bottom of the food chain," both economically and socially. "It's a community incredibly starved for resources."

If "you genuinely care about the community," moving forward from that reality demands that "you do what you can do," said Fetterman.

Not just talk in circles, not just plan on paper, but do. Take the empathy out of the realm of the abstract, and do.

Since taking office in 2005, Fetterman has devoted his work as mayor – a technically part-time position that pays about \$150 a month – to practical, hands-on actions to make Braddock's streets safer; establish youth employment programs; attract artists to its cheap and available working and living spaces; and pursue urban renewal and redevelopment projects.

Of course, there's little room in that new space for old ways of thinking, for the business-as-usual model of municipal leadership. It seems for more process-oriented, politics-prone leaders and planners, that's what's sort of scary about Fetterman; what puts him on their fringe even as he's brought the town, its plight, and the work toward its renewal into the national discussion and international spotlight.

He's been dubbed by The Guardian as "America's coolest mayor," by the New York Times as "The Mayor of Rust," and featured in Rolling Stone as "The Mayor of Hell." He's done numerous TEDx talks, appeared on The Colbert Report, and brought Braddock into the headlines (and not the 'if it bleeds, it leads,' kind) of major news publications and programs across the

country.

On my way to Fetterman's talk last week, news hosts on National Public Radio were giving details on one of the latest developments out of the borough: The mayor's recent officiating, despite a state ban, of the first same-sex marriage in Allegheny County.

"I happen to believe in marriage equality... I'm sure there are some people in this crowd" who don't feel at all at the same, said Fetterman. "We can agree to disagree, I guess."

Looking at the full, emerging picture, however, no one can disagree that his and other like minds' approaches are affecting very real changes for the better in Braddock.

It's been over five years since Braddock last had a homicide. Between 2006 and 2011, Fetterman said, 911 calls to the borough's police department dropped by about 50 percent. And last month, he said, there wasn't a single shots-fired call – the first non-statistic of its kind in approximately 30 years.

"I don't consider that controversial," said Fetterman. "The thing I care about most," he added, is that – by whatever means work – "things continue getting



Ryan Smith

Harvard University graduate "Mayor John" has been dubbed "America's Coolest Mayor" by The Guardian.

better. The direction is more important than the plan."

In Erie, and throughout the Rust-belt, those in power positions need to recognize that and adapt – and the sooner, the better. 📱

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MUSIC REVIEWS

The Civil Wars

The Civil Wars
Sensibility/Columbia

★★★★



With a darker, more brooding tone and a fuller sound than 2011's "Barton Hollow," it's easier now to draw the comparison of this folk-country-pop-rock duo to country-pop-rock powerhouse Lady Antebellum. But The Civil Wars manages to retain a more grounded, Earthy-indie feel. The folk-rock elements ("The One That Got Away") carry the album, still satisfying listeners captivated by the more subdued 2011 Grammy-winning debut, with Joy Williams' powerful vocals again stealing the spotlight. John Paul White proves he can go as damn near close to note-for-note with Williams on album standout "I Had Me A Girl." But the following song, appropriately titled "Same Old, Same Old," while sweet and melancholy, offers exactly that: the same old sound, and after those initial two rip-open-your-chest-and-bear-your-heart-while-the-thunder-roars songs – the album's first two, actually – everything else seems to blend together in an easily forgettable pang of heartache-frustration-revelation-angst that fails to show any more growth. - Ben Spегgen

Washed Out

Paracosm
Sub Pop

★★★★



After listening through Washed Out's catalog, one could presume that Ernest Greene is more of a lover than a rocker. The silky-smooth musician prefers a more relaxing style of music, one part chillwave with a dash of dream-pop, a mix that continues on his latest album "Paracosm." Now, if his last effort "Within and Without" could have acted as the soundtrack for some amorous nighttime activities, "Paracosm" seems much more suited to a warm, post-coital morning embrace, even down to the chirping of birds at the beginning and end of the nine-song set. Greene has a knack for creating some rather pretty sonic landscapes, with second track "It All Feels Right" helping to get "Paracosm" off to a good start. At times, the album's dreamy sounds feel a bit tired after the sixth serving of echoing textures, but if you're looking for some good cuddle music, you've found it. - Alex Bieler

Buddy Guy

Rhythm and Blues
RCA

★★★★



Buddy Guy just keeps on going; on the heels of 2010's Grammy-award winning "Living Proof," this living legend's 68th album, "Rhythm and Blues" is actually a double album and his sixth release since he's turned 70. Buddy uses the opening song "Best in Town" to prove he's still, umm, the best in town, despite the downright sacrilegious molestation of "Messin' with the Kid" – his and frequent collaborator the late great Junior Wells' theme song, forever soiled by the addition of Kid Rock – but he almost makes up for it with a tender number featuring Keith Urban and a barn-burner featuring new guitar-heavy Gary Clark, Jr. You may think his best work is behind him – and you may be right – but as soon as Buddy opens up on one of his always-searing Stratocaster solos, chances are, you won't even care. - Cory Vaillancourt

Superchunk

I Hate Music
Merge

★★★★



For a band that's been active for nearly 25 years, "I Hate Music" seems a rather odd choice for the name of their newest album. Still, for the veteran Chapel Hill, N.C. rockers, the title is not so much a damnation of the sonic arts as much as a resignation that despite the music that can change your life (Thanks, "Garden State"), it can't always save it. As Mac McCaughan sings "I hate music, what is it worth?/ Can't bring anyone back to this earth" on "Me & You & Jackie Mittoo," a sadness permeates the album, which was dedicated Dave Doernberg, a longtime friend of the band who died from cancer in 2012. "I Hate Music" grapples with death and the inevitability of growing older, but, as Superchunk records tend to do, manages to sound vibrant and alive, with ripping guitar solos and pristine punk-pop jams shining through the darkness. - Alex Bieler

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Street Fashionista

George Hammill

By: Leslie McAllister



Leslie McAllister and Shannon Leszek

I think we need to discuss the alter ego. Cicero, a Roman philosopher, called it the second self or trusted friend; he was the one to coin the phrase.

Originally, I believed he meant it to be like a diary of some kind, something you tell you secrets to; we have come to know it as that which we are not but aspire to, or even what Clark Kent is to Superman. I have a Pinterest board titled, "My Alter Ego Style," where I pin things I wish I could wear to work; like leather pants, a marabou vest with leopard print boots, and a sequin bustier. Alas, sigh and moving on, to work I wear a pencil skirt, clogs, and a blouse.

Here's my point – there is liberation in fantasy. There is freedom in donning a cape and leggings. There is bliss in being that person that frees you. I read a Marianne Williamson quote recently: "There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do."

I think she means wear the sequin bustier and let your freak flag fly. Let your little ones wear the "Iron Man" costume all day and the tutu and cowboy boots and the princess tiara with the camo pants. We all need to connect to that inner ego. Wear what makes you, you... just like George Hammill does.

How did this extravaganza all start? "The Once a Year Semi Annual Sabado Gigante Extravaganza Festival" (sabado gigante is Spanish

for 'giant Saturday') just celebrated its sixth year. The idea started 15 years ago. I always wanted to throw on a pair of big headphones, some mini shorts, a few red, white, and blue sweat bands and roller skate around the peninsula – completely lost in some great tune and jamming with some sweet moves.

Six years ago, everyone kept asking me where I wanted to go drinking for my birthday. I was fed up with that scene, and decided I was pulling the trigger on my dream. Had to give it a name that made no sense – accomplished that – and invite a bunch of friends to join in. Of course, I had 20 or more people saying they would come but only one showed, my great friend Stan. Dressed to the hilt, we scared the hell out of everybody that day and had a blast. After people saw some pictures and heard the tales of greatness, I was encouraged to do it again. The rest is history, as they say.

Where have you sought inspiration for your costume, and what is the name of your alter ego? In the beginning, inspiration came from the Venice Beach scene. Nowadays, it's about how little can I wear and how far can I push the envelope. Funkatronic is my alter ego name, or Funkatronic and The All-Star. Forged on a night of debauchery in my youth, myself and another great friend – The All-Star – had an idea to become the tag-team wrestling champions of the world in the WWF. We had a whole act worked out and how we would cheat our way to the top.

Most memorable year to date? I suppose the third year. It was the largest gathering. I think 10 friends showed all dressed up in some great costumes. The beach was very busy that day and I think a lot of families went home with a story. Probably a lot of kids were unable to sleep alone that night, too.

Describe your personal style. Guess I have three styles I roll with. When I go out, it's a Satin Funk look, which consists of '70s collars and tight pants to show off my attributes – a lot of animal print polyester shirts. My go-to style is the classic jeans and T-shirt; mostly, because it's simple and I don't have to think too much, but mostly, because I have the worst old man Polish legs in the world – I know, 'what about the Speedo?' – we all have to take one for the team sometime. Last, is my at home mash up of Tribal-Zen-Buddhism – trying to go for a Samurai-Smoking-Jacket look. Which reminds me, I really want a collection of silk robes.

If you could dine with a celebrity dead or alive who would it be and why? Easy. Elvis...Why? He's the King.

Burgers or hot dogs? Hot dogs and no ketchup. You don't put ketchup on a hot dog. Anything else is fine but not ketchup.

Your most loved man-cessory or man jewel. Nunchucks.

What does Erie need to shine brighter? A cleaner lake. Global climate change and pollu-

tion aren't a political statement. It's about looking after our own backyards. People who think this is a hoax are like car bumper stickers; they let me know exactly whom I will not be friends with.

Favorite place to buy ice cream. Still a big fan of the DQ Blizzard (Snickers).

Favorite place in Erie to people watch. CelebrateErie is the most frightening place, but my favorite is the Erie Fan Fare. All of those band nerds are spectacular. Funny how nerds are the new jocks, which sucks for us nerds; we're now the popular ones everyone wants to be around.

A little about George. I am the guy who's been annoying all of you on the radio. I work for Rocket 101 doing sales and radio commercials. I do not have any projects going on right now, but if anyone wants to check out my awesomeness, you can find me on Beach 6

when the surf breaks four-feet, shredding waves on my flat deck kayak. 📻

Find me out on the town and challenge yourself to get noticed by the Erie Reader!

Leslie McAllister can be contacted at LMcAllister@ErieReader.com, and you can follow her on Twitter @ShopJujus. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://erivdr.com/v9s0k>



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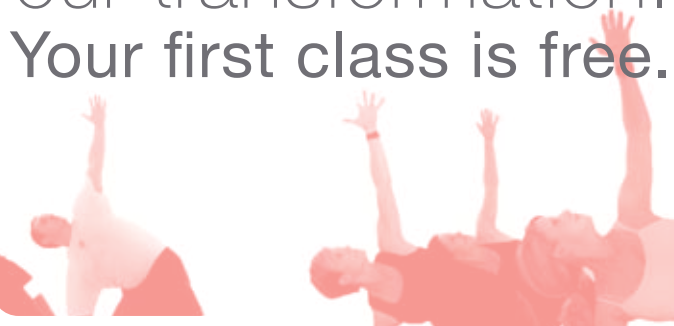
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AUGUST 21 | THE HUNT (2013)

A teacher lives a lonely life, all the while struggling over his son's custody. His life slowly gets better as he finds love and receives good news from his son, but his new luck is about to be brutally shattered by an innocent little lie. 115 minutes, Rated R.

Directed by: Thomas Vinterberg
Starring: Mads Mikkelsen, Thomas Bo Larsen, Anniika Wedderkopp



Dinner from U Pick 6 Taphouse must be purchased by 6pm on Tuesday prior to the film at FilmSocietyNWPA.org. \$8 whole pies/\$2 pizza slices for sale at the door!



AUGUST 28 | FRANCES HA (2013)

A New York woman (who doesn't really have an apartment), apprentices for a dance company (though she's not really a dancer), and throws herself headlong into her dreams, even as their possible reality dwindles. 86 minutes, Rated R.

Director: Noah Baumbach
Starring: Greta Gerwig, Adam Driver

FILM at the Erie Art Museum is presented by the Film Society of Northwestern Pennsylvania, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, with the support of these sponsors: Erie Art Museum, Erie Reader, Edinboro University, Magic Hat Brewing Company and U Pick 6 Taphouse.

You Ought to Know:

Dr. Dan Walker

By: Alex Bieler

Some people prefer to take a hands-off approach in life, allowing things to happen without any intervention. Dr. Dan Walker is not one of those people. In fact, he's about as hands-on as you can get.

You see, Dan runs Erie's Reviving Bodywork Studio, located on the corner of 38th and Washington streets, where he uses his golden mitts as a licensed chiropractor, applied kinesiologist, and massage therapist to ease the pains of patrons. Dan opened up the studio just a few months ago after spending a couple of years at Professional Massage Therapy and Reflexology, deciding it was time to go out on his own in Erie and help show the community what a kinesiologist can do.

"It's a fancy word for someone that works with the bones and the muscles," Dan explains, an older gentleman decked out in his standard work uniform of a black polo and pants, meeting me for lunch between sessions. "I go through and do major muscle testing of the body to find out which muscles are not working, which are not balanced, and then I go and balance them out. I basically talk to the body."

Appropriately, the man's hands are used for

talking to more than just muscles. Phalanges float in front of the doctor, dexterously shifting in air to help emphasize particular points. He exposes his palm while pointing down to a sheet he prepared to help explain muscle testing to newcomers like myself.

Hearing – and watching – Dan speak, it's easy to see that he's been working with his hands his whole life. However, it does come as a bit of a surprise that he didn't get into applied kinesiology until the '90s.

"I didn't graduate [from Parker University Chiropractic College in Dallas] until I was 50 years old," Dan says. "I was the oldest at school."

Decades before deciding to head down to Texas to become a doctor, Dan was still working with his well-practiced paws. Originally a Boston boy, he came to Erie as part of the New Younger Band in the '70s. He ended up staying in The Flagship City and continued to play music while picking up some hands-on trades.

"I was a carpenter around here for a while," Dan says, thinking back to his previous careers. "I was also a hairdresser. I owned a shop in Lawrence Park for 10 years – His and Her Hair Fashions by Dan."



Contributed Photo

Dr. Dan Walker, an applied kinesiologist, returned to Erie in 2010 and now practices out of Erie's Reviving Bodywork Studio on the corner of 38th and Washington streets.

After decades of dealing with two-by-fours and follicles, Dan was inspired by his father-in-law, an applied kinesiologist, to try and pick up the trade. Soon, he uprooted himself to instead work with muscles and bones and became the oldest student in his class at Parker.

"It was the hardest thing I've ever done," Dan says, his hands resting in front of him on the U Pick 6 Tap House table that separates us. "I didn't really think of the age, I was just thanking the good Lord that I was getting done. It was 24/7, just balls-to-the-wall trying to get everything put together and done and get out of your classes and all that. It was a constant struggle, but now I get to help people get well."

After graduating, Dan spent some time practicing in Utah while he waited for his background checks to clear so that he could be allowed to work in California. After he went through the lengthy process, he settled down in Southern California, living in San Diego for close to 15 years. There he joined some of the best doctors in the world, practicing their new, innovative techniques on a Hollywood crowd that strived to stay happy, healthy, and beautiful.

Still, after over a decade on the West Coast, Dan started to become bored of San Diego and its typical 72-degree weather. He knew his time was up in the Golden State after his daughter appealed for him to return.

"She said, 'Dad, I'd really like to have children, and I'd like them to know their grandfather,'" he says, rotating his right wrist, exposing his palm to the ceiling. "It took me about six months to collect everything, so I got here about 2010."

Three years in, it's like he never really left, sans the kinesiology and massage training and new business. He's even performing with a band again, playing bass with The 4 Jays after founding member Dave Dennison invited him to join the

smooth crooners.

While performing for the community is nice, Dan still knows that there's more he can do for Erie with the skills he learned down in Dallas. In fact, he's already planning on reaching out to local high schools and universities to offer up his expertise.

"I would like to help some of the schools and their athletes," Dan says earnestly. "That's where my strong point is. That's what I can do and do it well, and I know I can make a difference. Can I take care of everything? No, but I know I can make a difference."

Dan's been helping athletes out ever since he started practicing kinesiology, working on massive football players with NFL talent and keeping them in peak playing performance and smallish teens that just want to play, despite their injuries. He can see the results after he's worked with them, and other patients, and he plans to keep on doing so for a while.

"The legacy I want to leave is that I helped people, that I helped them get well and made a difference in their lives," Dan says, as he leans forward, thinking of the future aches and pains he plans to alleviate and the faces that accompany them.

Dr. Dan has had many callings throughout his life, but he seems to have settled right in to applied kinesiology and massage. And now that he's back in Erie, he plans on having a hand in the future of this community. **R**

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[Cont. from 11] for being unsustainable, wiping out smaller farms, and being plainly unnatural. These issues are in vogue, as they're easy to argue with only vague research. The subject of sustainability was summed up by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Director and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Chief Scientist, Dr. Roger Beachy:

"We have framed or allowed others to frame sustainability as a practice itself or a set of practices. It's not. Sustainability is a goal, and therefore the focus should be on outcomes rather than specific practices. Certainly both science and field experience are leading to a better understanding about what practices there should be and under what circumstances, and should move us closer to sustainability. But as with any goal, it is important to keep the focus on the goal and be open-minded about ways to achieve the goal."

In fact, as a result of their controversial techniques, large-scale commercial agriculture – sometimes referred to as Agribusiness – which is generally intended for widespread distribution to supermarkets and wholesalers, is able to use farmland more efficiently. Because organic agriculture may have lower yields, more land would be needed to produce the same amount of food as modern techniques general grow. Thus, to produce the same amount of food by conventional standards would result in widespread deforestation and biodiversity loss, undermining the environmental benefits of organic practices. Moreover, commercial farms are more direct and efficient with their use of water, and can even reduce soil erosion by using a no-tilling process.

There may also be distortion in the romantic, Utopian view of natural living. It is convenient and trendy to think the government's investment and commitment to commercial farmers is simply about earning green instead of going green, no matter what the cost. However these new methods of farming are keeping up with the population's demand for nourishment. According to Dr. William C. Mote's article "Modern Agriculture and Its Benefits," from GlobalHarvestInitiative.org, commercial agriculture's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product and U.S. employment is into the trillions of dollars and upwards of 24 million jobs, respectively. However, only 6 percent of those jobs are from farming, the others are related fields such as food processing, textiles, transportation, food service, and other manufacturing that exist because of this booming industry.

The inherent threat of something as unnatural as GM food is precautionary. We feel that threat in our gut, with the image of big government, mad scientists, and factory farms all shaking hands. The consumers are debased to cattle.

But it's not what we know about this bullet-proof produce and mechanically separated meat that's alarming – it's the unknown.

Scientists speculate that there is an increase in the number of children developing life-threatening allergies from this GM food. Other evidence is coming from animal studies and what scientists are serving up isn't an appetizing theory.

Several studies indicate GM food is causing long-term side effects including, but not limited to infertility, immune problems, accelerated aging, insulin regulation, changes in major organs and the gastrointestinal system, liver damage, and higher death rates in infant and adult lab rats.

"Organic gardening is definitely more difficult," Andrew says. Without the use of chemicals,

the yield is smaller, pests are bothersome, weeds are water thieves, and the weather is always a variable.

A healthy lifestyle is challenging no matter how you cut it. Buying organic food is expensive and growing it is difficult. To become self sufficient, it takes long hours. But, Andrew says, "even if you're busy, even if you work full time, you can still produce quite a bit." In other words, you can start small.

Relating to most by thinking back on her days before she had a farm, Melanie suggests even growing a single plant can foster the process of homesteading. "Even trying to grow something on your own, even if it's just a tomato in a pot, is so satisfying," she says.

If your yard is small, you can build a raised garden bed; it's a simple wooden frame that contains the area. If you're living in an apartment, you're still not out of luck. Andrew recommends hanging a planter from your window ledge and growing herbs. It's not just about food; it's about the independence from the industry, the knowledge that comes with growing something from the dirt, and a piece of mind.

"Our kids are really benefiting not just nutritionally, but psychologically and spiritually by being hands on with their food. Our children know where an egg comes from, they know where their food comes from, there is no mystery," she adds. "[I] feel at peace knowing I'm not harming the earth," Melanie says.

"Trying to grow something on your own, even if it's just a tomato in a pot, is so satisfying."

Not only can you grow your own food, but you can also forage for wild edibles. "It sounds crazy, but there is just so much food that is out there," Andrew says. From berries, to greens, to nuts, and seeds, there is so much we simply overlook.

More often than not, especially after having the convenience of the supermarket, that one-stop

shopization that puts customer experience and ease before all else, the general public may not be as willing to forage for unfamiliar edibles, break their back pulling weeds, clean the chicken coop, or milk a goat. But fortunately there is another way to get fresh produce without cutting branches from your money tree, or actually having to tend to a literal tree yourself.

Community Supported Agriculture is a great way to support local farmers, eat organically, and be mindful of our environment. Moreover, "It helps people get to know the place and the people that are making their food," says Zeb Bartels, of Clarion River Organics.

Each CSA works differently, but oftentimes at the start of each season a membership or a "share" can be purchased in trade for a weekly delivery of fresh produce. "We pack the bags with a good assortment of whatever is coming out of the field

that week," Zeb says. Clarion River Organics has three different drop-off locations in Erie; Frankie & May Fresh Grocer [1101 Peninsula Drive], Erie Whole Foods Co-op [1341 W. 26th St.] and Cathedral of St. Paul Episcopal [134 W. Seventh St].

In this gamble between organic and non-, it

seems recently the fresher food is stacking up its chips. "There is definitely a growing demand, especially for anything local and natural," Zeb says. In the four years Clarion River Organics has been organically farming, the desire for organic food has only increased. According to the Organic Trade Association's 2011 Organic Industry Survey, sales of organic food and beverages have grown from \$1 billion in 1990 to \$26.7 billion in 2010.

While there are definitely signs of public interest, not everyone is onboard with such a progressive lifestyle so close to their home. Recently, despite the Pastors' admirable efforts to become more self-sufficient, there were neighbors that opposed this lifestyle so close to their home.

"I think they kind of view us as hillbillies, like we should have a piece of straw hanging out of our mouths, running around barefoot," Andrew laughs. When you see the Pastor family, country bumpkins are not what come to mind. They're suburbanites that happen to have a few animals and a garden to pick fresh produce from. "You have a chicken, you have a goat, you're obviously a hillbilly. It's just the culture we live in... It's based on people not understanding, not being educated."

The Pastors are not conspiracy theorists or neo-hippies; however, they do believe genetically modifying food is not a good long-term plan for the future, as this gene-splicing technology is just too new to warrant a claim of sustainability. With this belief in mind, they have created a clean, quiet, and successful family homestead on their modest three acres. Their land contains a small stable, a chicken coop, and about a half dozen raised garden beds creating little islands of sustenance, but nothing that would draw public attention – until one day it seemed Andrew and his family were part of an old, bad joke.

As Andrew put it: "We came under the spotlight because we had one chicken who decided to cross the road."



Cowboy (left) is free to hang out with his donkey friends in his homestead environment.

This past April, Jodie was free-ranging their chickens. Normally they stay close, especially if garden work is in progress as they love to forage for grubs. Of the dozen or so hens the Pastor family owns, one took a 10-second trip into a neighbor's yard. A week later, a local zoning officer came to the Pastor household due to a complaint that was filed. Forty-eight hours after the official had dropped by, they received a certified letter stating they would have two weeks to dispose of all the animals on their property.

"We don't view our animals as just beasts of burden, they're our pets, they're our friends, we want them to be happy, and we take very good care of them," Andrew explains.

Both homesteading families take pride in their animals, be it their chickens, goats, pigs, or donkeys. Neither family serves up their animals for dinner, but rather "everyone has a purpose," Melanie says. For example, her donkeys, Rerun and Arnie, are there to protect the other animals from wild predators, the chickens eat pesky Japanese beetles from the garden, and when she gets her cow this September, the whey left over from cheese production will be used for pig and chicken feed.

In 1976, when Andrew's father bought the land the Pastor household currently sit on, free-ranging just about anything would have been kosher, as farm land sprawled out in every direction. The house they built is zoned as A-1, meaning that the space can be used for agricultural purposes. Unfortunately, it happens to border a residentially zoned area where farm animals are prohibited.

Strangely, even on A-1 zoned property, the zoning regulations in Fairview specifically ban chickens, goats, cows, pigs, hippopotamuses, and large predator cats. "I'm not making this up," Andrew says. "It specifically mentions hippopotamus. And monkeys, oh, monkeys are banned too." Elephants and rhinoceros are also included on this list of prohibited domestic pets according to Fairview's 2005 zoning ordinance.

While my mouth constantly waters for a slab of rough skinned, robust, hoof-footed animals, I have to brace myself for the fact that this region may never raise such delicious hunks of hippo-meat.

"When you look at Fairview Township subdivisions you have little McMansions generating far more tax revenue than our three acre little homestead does," he says regarding our county's support for commercial farms opposed to family homesteads. "Our particular fine would have been \$500 per day, per animal."

As soon as that zoning letter arrived, Andrew and his family began the legal battle to keep their homestead. He immediately started a Facebook group, "End Fairview Township's Ban on Sustainable Living." It was only a matter of days before the group had over 2,000 likes.

"It's kind of funny that we're considered progressive because we're trying to stay away from chemicals and mass-produced, boxed foods... [Farming] is the oldest occupation," he laughs.

After months of worry, appearing at town hall meetings, gathering support from the public, the Pastors - with help from attorney Rob Glance, fighting their case pro-bono - were able to plant the seed for new legislation. While this homestead isn't in the clear yet, the township temporarily dropped the zoning violation and Fairview is now in the process of re-zoning the property.

In addition, the township hired an environmental consultant to propose new legislation for raising chickens, goats, pigs, and other rural farm animals.

It's not only the people that surround us but the industry that continues to grow. Melanie is worried as her property is becoming an island surrounded by Agribusiness. As this development continues, she is worried the run-off will leech into her soil. What's more, this commercial farm asked to run their drainage through A Little Bit of Heaven's Fields.

To this Melanie said, "I don't think so." In genetically modified plants, glyphosate - the Roundup chemical that makes commercial fields so nice and tidy - won't diminish growth or necessarily pollute the soil for these GM organisms, but if it runs through a field of organic veggies, the story is different. Because these organic plants don't have the gene resistance to this potent chemical, it poisons the dirt.

"They are basically raping the land," Melanie says.

Homesteading is a valiant effort, traditionally tending to crops that may not always reach fruition. On the flipside, becoming self-sufficient by farming your way to a full meal is unrealistic for a global population to manage effectively. Then again, technology can be frightening, especially as our meals become longitudinal science projects; consumers are unknowingly becoming fresh statistics as results come to light about the GMO side-effects.

Conversely, to know that what you're eating is natural and the practices you use are tried-and-true is comforting. But the majority find cheap, convenient, labor free food particularly tempting when jobs are scarce, the hourglass is draining, and we can be lazy in our expedition to the supermarket. It is good or evil, day or night, organic or GMO, traditional or modern, the sky or the dirt.

Organic and industrial farming practices are so fundamentally different that at times it seems activists and lobbyists cherry-pick research in order to work against each other. But we are all walking towards the horizon together, and while the journey may be long, it will give us time to discover what is important on both sides of the coin and even discern the elements in between. When the sun finally touches down upon those rolling hills of green, we may be able to say that he blazed a better trail for future generations.

So we must harvest that ashen soil, educate

ourselves on how we can take care of our land, and harness the hard working tradition of homesteading and the advanced research of food sciences, so it doesn't have to be one of the other, the good or the evil, the sky or the dirt, but instead a future in harmony. As far as this city's concern, we're well on our way - we just need to care about all the seeds being planted.

Matthew Flowers can be contacted at mFlowers@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @MFlowersER. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://eridr.com/1gg18>



Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

		1	9		4			
5		3			1		8	2
				8				
8								6
	6	2				4	5	
	9					3		
3								
		4	6				1	
		6			9		4	3

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- ACROSS**
- 1 Air-to-air missile (abbr.)
 - 4 Slugger's stat
 - 7 Fellow
 - 10 African (pref.)
 - 11 Fruiting spike
 - 12 Elbe tributary
 - 14 Trolley
 - 15 Insect
 - 17 Horse
 - 18 Baltic island
 - 19 Air Force Base (abbr.)
 - 20 Black measles
 - 22 Corrode
 - 24 Amass
 - 27 Afr. cattle breed
 - 31 E. Indian tanning tree
 - 32 Sup
 - 34 Basse-Normandie city
 - 35 Nat'l Assn. for the Advancement of Colored People (abbr.)
- DOWN**
- 1 Hairdo
 - 2 Strauss opera
 - 3 Family member
 - 4 Put back
 - 5 Geological

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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

- 6 epoch
- 6 Oily ketone
- 7 Legume
- 8 Irish sweetheart
- 9 Explorer Ericson
- 10 Air traffic control (abbr.)
- 13 Mortar mixer
- 16 Killer of Castor
- 18 First-rate
- 21 Slow
- 23 Musical direction
- 24 Canada (abbr.)
- 25 Tumor (suf.)
- 26 P.I. peasant
- 28 4th incarnation of Vishnu
- 29 Curved letter
- 30 Too
- 33 Molasses
- 36 Gait
- 38 Delirium tremens (abbr.)
- 40 Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation (abbr.)
- 42 Fast jet
- 43 Tree
- 44 Honey-eater bird
- 46 Bundle
- 48 Ecology (abbr.)
- 49 Drug Enforcement Admin. (abbr.)
- 51 John brown's dog
- 52 Sheep's cry

Answer to Sudoku

6	8	1	9	2	4	5	3	7
5	4	3	7	6	1	9	8	2
7	2	9	5	8	3	1	6	4
8	3	5	4	1	2	7	9	6
1	6	2	3	9	7	4	5	8
4	9	7	8	5	6	3	2	1
3	1	8	2	4	5	6	7	9
9	7	4	6	3	8	2	1	5
2	5	6	1	7	9	8	4	3

	1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9		
10					11				12			13	
14					15				16				
17					18					19			
					20	21			22		23		
24	25						26		27		28	29	30
31							32		33		34		
35							36		37		38		
							39		40		41		
42	43	44			45		46				47	48	49
50					51						52		
53							54				55		
							56				57		
											58		

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