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Vol. 3, No. 25, Dec.11 - 24, 2013 / ErieReader.com

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How Erie's only Fortune
500 Company Invests
in and Revitalizes the
Neighborhood and
City It Calls Home

Erie's Vinyl on Fire

Scott Enterprises' Harbor Place and What It Means for Erie's Bayfront

Making Sense of the Democratic Primaries for PA Governor

A Christmas Cartoon, by B. Toy!

Shotgun Jubilee Goes Out with a Blast

2189 Crew and Benchers Union present: Copywrite

"Blue is the Warmest Color" Closes FILM Season

Music and Tech

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It's on Fire

From the Editors

First, on behalf of all of us at the Reader, we'd like to wish you Happy Holidays!

Furthermore, we don't think that we should have to apologize for or explain that. But it seems that we do. So we will. Explain, that is.

We find ourselves in trying times. *The holidays are so stressful!* we hear, along with: *Don't say 'holidays', you might offend someone!* and *When you say 'Xmas', you're taking 'Christ' out of Christmas!*

First, the term 'Xmas' dates back to the 16th century. Second, the 'X' is being used as a placeholder for the word 'Christ' since that 'X' comes from the Greek letter 'Chi', which is the first letter of the Greek word Χριστός, which translates into English as 'Christ', meaning that 'Christ' isn't literally being removed from Christmas.

Second, and perhaps more important, we should ask ourselves: Why are we making the holidays so stressful? And why now, more than other times of the year, are we worried about offending each other?

Perhaps a long hard look at B. Toy's cartoon in this issue might answer that. While words don't quite do it justice, he illustrates a picture of people running, rushing from store to store in quest of sales and deals — all while Saint

Nicholas clears room to kneel before the Christ child and his mother in a beautiful moment of serenity and peace that anyone could enjoy and understand.

The slowing of a moment. The attention to detail. The care. The love. The joy. All of the things that *should be ever-present*.

Rather than taking time to enjoy the company of friends and family, we're more concerned with buying gifts. Don't get us wrong: Buying gifts for loved ones is great, because it is the physical manifestation of inward feelings. But doing so at the expense of spending time with loved ones and jeopardizing our own sanity means we're doing it wrong.

And when it comes to worrying about whether we're offending each other, perhaps the holidays can teach us an important lesson: Tolerance.

Is religion your thing? Great. Is religion not your thing? Great. Is persecuting others your thing? That's the exact opposite of great.

But that's what it's becoming when the words "Happy Holidays" become dirty words and cause for claims of persecution.

Writer Rachel Held Evans posted a flow chart to her blog to help us understand persecution. Again, words don't quite do it justice, but it

goes something like this:

"Did someone threaten your life, safety, civil liberties, or right to worship?"

If you answer "yes," you are being persecuted. If you answer "no," you're presented with a follow-up question: "Did someone wish you a happy holidays?" If you answer "no," you're not being persecuted. If you answer "yes," it turns out you're still not being persecuted.

"Happy Holidays" is no more offensive than someone wishing you to have a good day, since in all actuality, it's about as generic of a well-wishing statement one can offer given a specific instance in time.

As journalists, we appreciate the First Amendment for the freedoms it provides us, particularly that of speech and press. But we also appreciate it because it affords us all the chance to practice our beliefs and implores us to grant that same freedom to those whose creeds differ from ours.

So again, we want to wish everyone — regardless of beliefs and non-beliefs — Happy Holidays, not because we intend to offend anyone, but because we want your holidays — whatever you and your loved ones choose to celebrate — to be filled with joy, happiness, and glad tidings — themes universal to us all.

Street Corner Soapbox

Hotel Wars

By: Jay Stevens

Scott Enterprises recently released its \$150-million master plan for development on its harbor front property – and it's a doozy.

Town houses, apartments, two hotels, event space on the waterfront, office space, an acre of public park, retail space, a 1000-space parking garage, a sky bridge across the Bayfront Parkway, a traffic circle with a *water fountain* at the State Street-Parkway intersection, the Penelec smokestack transformed into a light-house...

I could go on. I will go on.

The plan proposes a public drawbridge across the entrance of the East Inner Harbor – which leads to the Flagship Niagara's berth at the Maritime Museum. Can you imagine the sight of the Niagara passing under a drawbridge to head out into the lake? In fact, the Scott Enterprises proposed development wraps around the Niagara and the museum and the Maritime Center, in a sense making it the focal point of the development.

Erie City Councilman Dave Brennan on his Facebook account called the Scott Enterprises

plan, "dynamic, dense, and forward thinking," praising the plan's focus on "public access and year round activity."

It's hard to disagree with that assessment.

The Scott Enterprises proposal links public walkways to public parks and plazas, through shop spaces – an outdoor café? – keeps the edge of the waterfront in public hands, integrates all of the existing space into a cohesive whole, would provide the city with tax-revenue office and living space while keeping a public and maritime feel to the development.

Did I forget to mention there's a public skating rink and floating entertainment barge?

It's obvious this plan conceived of the land not as a private gated community, but as a public space for Erie. It's also nice to see Scott Enterprises refocus its business on the downtown area. Up until now, Scott Enterprises' biggest "accomplishment" was developing the scathingly ugly big-box empire of upper Peach, which drew people *away* from downtown.

Regardless, the Scott Enterprises plan is everything the GAF plan was not.

That plan, you may recall, simply filled in the existing GAF site with a hotel, parking garage,

and a row of town houses without any visible connection to the rest of the city – no skywalk, no realistic pedestrian access – without integrating into the existing Bayfront, not even reimagining the adjacent Convention Center space. Basically, the plan proposed a parking garage and hotel looking out onto the Convention Center's parking lot.

Yes, that proposal was designed to allow reclamation of the site to begin, to get state approval for the environmental cleanup process based on the intended use of the site. Convention Center Authority Casey Wells did call that plan "a road map," not a "blueprint."

But it hardly inspired confidence. Neither has the Authority's recent announcement of its own plan for building a "mid-price" hotel next to the Convention Center. That hotel plan was slammed in September by our own Rebecca Styn, who questioned the necessity of the \$25-million state grant to build it and disliked the idea of county government getting into the

Erie City Councilman Dave Brennan on his Facebook account called the Scott Enterprises plan, "dynamic, dense, and forward thinking," praising the plan's focus on "public access and year round activity." It's hard to disagree with that assessment.

hotel business.

"It makes little sense," she wrote then, and it makes less sense now, after Scott Enterprises unveiled their proposal. Why waste valuable waterfront property on a discount hotel? Why use taxpayer money to build something private capital is willing to do?

(And don't get me started on Gov. Tom Corbett's \$25 million grant for the hotel. Wouldn't that money be better spent on, say, education, which the Governor has consistently slashed during his tenure? Or maybe invest it in the Niagara, which is going to need a refit soon, right?)

Wells denied that the Scott Enterprises plan would interfere with either the GAF development or the new hotel. "We encourage more development," said Wells in an Erie Times-News interview. "We believe that the additional development can help develop critical mass that is good for everybody."

Well, maybe. But I'm sitting here scratching my head wondering why we need so many hotels in that area off of State Street. What the hell is everybody going to come to see?

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News of the Weird

By: Chuck Shepherd

LEAD STORY — SOME-THING IN THE AIR

Is the signature smell of Texas A&M University more "Italian lemon, bergamot and iced pineapple" (that open into "a body of vivid florals, raw nutmeg and cinnamon") or more "bat feces" and "chilifest stink"? The two commentaries were contrasted in a November Wall Street Journal report on the introduction of Masik Collegiate Fragrances' Texas A&M cologne (one of 17 Masik college clients) at around \$40 for a 1.7-ounce bottle. Louisiana State University's scent conjures up, insisted one grad, the campus's oak trees, but so far has pulled in only \$5,500 for the school. (To a football rival of LSU, the school's classic smell is less oak tree than "corn dog.") The apparent gold standard of fan fragrance is New York Yankees cologne, which earned the team nearly \$10 million in 2012. [Wall Street Journal, 11-9-2013]

RECURRING THEMES

Among America's most prolific "fathers" (in this case, perhaps better considered "egg-fertilizers") are Nathaniel Smith, age 39, who claimed on TV's "Divorce Court" in September that he is the father of 27, and the late Samuel Whitney, whose grown stepdaughter Lexie Woods learned that he claimed 54 before he died in July at age 87. Smith (known in Dayton, Ohio, as "Hustle Simmons") insisted that he is a fine father (doesn't smoke or drink, keeps contact with most of the kids, has "only" 21 child-support orders out), and besides, he told WHIO-TV, "I know of people who have even more than me." (Among Whitney's belongings, said Woods, were a "pile" of birth certificates and a stash of maximum-strength Viagra. "He was a likable man, a ladies' man.") [WHIO-TV, 9-10-2013] [Arizona Republic, 8-24-2013; New York Daily News, 8-27-2013]

Latest Collateral Damage: (1) In October, a 28-year-old man, reeling from a domestic argument in Port Richey, Fla., put a gun to his head and, against his girlfriend's pleas, fired. As a neighbor across the street stood on her porch, the suicide bullet left the victim's head and made three wounds on the neighbor's leg, sending her to the hospital. (2) About a week later, on the Norwegian island of Vesteroy, a moose hunter missed his target but hit an obscured cottage in the distance, wounding a man in his 70s as he answered nature's call. He was airlifted to Ullevaal University Hospital in Oslo. [Tampa Bay Times, 10-17-2013] [NewsInEnglish.no (Oslo), 10-25-2013]

In November, barely two weeks after a small plane carrying 10 skydivers left no survivors

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when it crashed on the way to an exhibition near Brussels, Belgium, nine skydivers were able to dive for safety when two planes headed for a tandem jump collided near Superior, Wis. News stories did not address how experienced skydivers escaped one plane but not the other. [WCCO-TV (Minneapolis), 11-2-2013; CNN, 10-19-2013]

Animal Sacrifice — in America: In September, Orthodox Jewish communities once again staged traditional kaparot, in which chickens are killed in a prescribed way for the purpose of "transferring" a believer's latest sins over to the chicken (whose death banishes the sins). (In many such ceremonies, the chickens are donated for food, but protesters in Los Angeles criticized rogue practitioners who simply tossed carcasses into the trash.) In November, Miami-Dade County animal services found a severely injured chicken with a family's 4-by-6 photograph protruding from its chest, having been haphazardly "implanted," along with a note containing several hand-written names, apparently a casualty of local Santeria services. [Los Angeles Times, 9-11-2013] [WSVN-TV (Miami), 11-18-2013]

Some Americans still believe that stock market sales are typically made human-to-human, but the vast majority of buys and sells now are made automatically by computers, running pattern-detecting programs designed to execute millions of trades, in some cases, less than one second before rival computer programs attempt the same trades. In September, a Federal Reserve Board crisis involved, at most, seven milliseconds' time. The Fed releases market-crucial news typically at exactly 2 p.m. Washington, D.C., time, tightly controlled, transmitted by designated news agents via fiber optic cable. On Sept. 18, somehow, traders in Chicago reportedly beat traders elsewhere to deal an estimated \$600 million worth of assets — when theoretically, access to the Fed's news should have been random. (In other words, the drive to shave milliseconds off the "speed of light" has become quite profitable.) [CNBC, 9-24-2013; Mother Jones, 9-24-2013]

Toilets are always a favorite protest symbol, most recently employed by David Labbe, disputing a zoning decision by officials in Augusta, Maine, preventing the sale of his house to Dunkin' Donuts (for, he said, three times what he paid), and he has begun lining his property with discarded toilets. Augusta-native Labbe says he has given up on his city and his neighbors (who fear traffic problems if a Dunkin' Donuts opens). (On the same day, coincidentally, toilets made news in Los Angeles, where YoYo Li was about to open the city's first toilet-themed restaurant, patterned after several in Taiwan in which diners squat at tables and eat off commode-shaped serving vessels.) [Portland Press Herald, 10-14-2013] [Los Angeles Times, 10-14-2013]

In November, Michael Brown, 19, became the most recent person with poor decision-making skills forced to report to a police station (this, in College Station, Texas) in the middle of the night to ask that officers please remove the handcuffs he had been playing around with. (Following the officers' mandatory records check, it was learned that Brown had an arrest warrant for criminal mischief, and following a mandatory search, that he also had two ounces of marijuana in his pocket.) [The Eagle (Bryan-College Station), 11-14-2013]

The Way I See It

Making Sense of the Democratic Primaries for Pennsylvania Governor

By: Rebecca Styn

It's a Democratic free-for-all when it comes to the gubernatorial line-up of challengers who may replace incumbent Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett. And I use the word "may" sparingly, because as of right now, his popularity is at an all-time low. In fact, a Republican polling firm found 58 percent of respondents disapprove Corbett's job performance — including 45 percent who strongly disapprove.

An interesting thing to note here is that since Pennsylvania started allowing governors to run for a second term in 1968, no incumbent governor has lost a reelection battle.

Until probably now.

The slate of no less than eight incumbents — we'll call them the Super 8 — currently have no publicly-clear frontrunner, meaning that this has the potential to become a very competitive, costly, and contentious Democratic primary.

Since Pennsylvania started allowing governors to run for a second term in 1968, no incumbent governor has lost a reelection battle. Until probably now.

The current list of Dems vying for Corbett's job includes: former state environmental protection secretary John Hanger, Lebanon County Commissioner Jo Ellen Litz, another former state environmental protection secretary Katie McGinty, State Treasurer Rob McCord, businessman Max Myers, Allentown Mayor Ed Pawlowski, Rep. Allyson Schwartz, and businessman Tom Wolf.

However, while this is a wide-open field right now, I personally believe there are a few candidates that are becoming front-runners. My top three choices are: State Treasurer Rob McCord, environmental attorney Katie McGinty, and Tom Wolf, a York businessman and former state revenue secretary.

So here's a little background on each of them:

Rob McCord has definitely lived a charmed life. If you've ever heard him talk, his presence is pretty magnanimous. He was born into an academic family, and schooled at Harvard and Wharton. He was mentored in politics by two-time U.S. Cabinet Secretary Norman Mineta and in business by legendary former Safeguard Scientifics CEO Pete Musser. He was a venture capitalist and made millions investing in tech start-ups, then waltzed into statewide elected office four years ago as a first-time candidate and then easily won a second term. Overall, he's a smart guy and fiscally savvy.

Katie McGinty actually has no direct political

experience, having never held elected office before. She holds a law degree from Columbia and is a former state environmental protection secretary and has previously worked in the Clinton Administration and still has ties to former President Bill Clinton and former Vice President Al Gore. And she did serve on Ed Rendell's cabinet.

As for Tom Wolf, well, he's taking a few pages out of Tom Smith's playbook (little known figure to high profile candidate). Wolf, unlike the rest of the crew, when asked why he was running, instead of bashing Corbett, he instead remarks that he's lived a life of doing things. And that he has. He dropped out of Dartmouth College when he was nineteen to serve a two-year stint as a Peace Corps member in India — although he eventually returned to earn a bachelor's degree.

He also has a master's degree from the University of London and a doctorate in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He started by working at the family hardware store and driving a truck for the business. He later took over the company. The company was started by his great, great-grandfather Adam Wolf in 1843 as a lumber, hardware, and

building materials business, and Wolf and two of his cousins purchased the company in a leveraged buyout in 1986. In 2006 however, they sold the majority of the company's shares to key employees and a private equity firm in a publicized sale. And a few years later he actually was making plans to run for Governor.

In 2009, however, he learned that the company was in danger of failing because of the recession. He immediately assumed control of the company as chairman and CEO. He also abandoned his run for governor. He then used his own money to shift his company's focus away from being a supplier to other firms and transformed it into a company that competes with Chinese products. And today, WOLF is now the largest wholesale distributor of kitchen cabinets in the United States.

While currently eight candidates are on this slate, a few other names out there are still buzzing around and can still jump in. And no matter which candidate you choose moving forward, a good thing to note is this race could get ugly. The fact is that there are not too many ideological differences amongst the candidates, meaning it could get personal rather quickly.

But no matter how personal and ugly it may get, it probably can't get any worse than Corbett's popularity right now.

Love? Hate? Agree? Disagree? I want to hear from you. Email me at rStyn@ErieReader.com, and follow my on Twitter @ [rStyn](https://twitter.com/rStyn). To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erivdr.com/lxnao>



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Outside Voices:

By: Matthew Flowers

What would you like to see most at the Scott Enterprises-proposed Harbor Place?

Erie's "Bayfront Parkway" sounds beautiful, the words work together to conjure up an image of lush greenery, lakeside views, fresh summery smells, vintage boutiques, independent coffee shops, and cool people. But in reality, this long stretch of blacktop has empty lots full of rubble; the dust, brick, and bone of factories no longer producing, a water treatment facility that on a hot day could rot fresh fruit in what seems like only seconds from its putrid smell, hospitals full of sadness, a scrap yard full of twisted cars waiting to be butchered. There are always exceptions, for instance the highway's bookends are serene, green, and clean. Frontier Park [1501 W. 6th Street] and Wintergreen Gorge serve as grand gateways for a road that's journey can only be enjoyed at its ends.

While it is a dreadful thought that one day the Bayfront could look like anything similar to upper Peach Street, Scott Enterprises – the Hospitality Company that could turn city blocks into chain-restaurant troughs – is planning on turning the 12 acres of the Bayfront west of the Maritime Museum, which it purchased back in 1999, into a development titled Harbor Place. Once the project is complete, Erie's parkway would showcase two more hotels totaling 220 rooms, restaurants, retail shops, office space, condos, two parking garages, a public promenade with fountains for the summer time and an ice rink during the winter months, a "floating entertainment" barge, and two skywalks crossing over the Bayfront Parkway.

If done right, Harbor Place could revitalize Erie and make real that image of beauty on the Bayfront. But if done wrong, it'll be more litter along the freeway. So perhaps it's best we get some Outside Voices on this new development and see what the city is longing for.



Karen Grey: I'm completely against the condo idea. We already have a big Bayfront hotel put up that obstructed the beautiful, natural view. I do like the whole idea of the skywalk if it doesn't obstruct the natural beauty that's already there. And I'm completely in favor of a beautiful park with fountains and an aquarium.

Amanda Leberman: I don't think we need tall condos or parking garages or hotels. I think it should be like a mini-Station Square in Pittsburgh, where there'd be a lot of little shops and restaurants. I like the park idea a lot, and the ice skating rink, that sounds fun.



John McChasmev: Something to make people have a lot of fun. There is already the Convention Center down there where you can have events and all kinds of things from Pro-Wrestling to concerts, but after you get out of that Convention Center, there's nothing to do... So, have a couple restaurants, make a couple bars, and make some retail avenues for people... Make it fun, make it entertaining, and make it lively. Make somebody want to come to Erie, Pa.



TJ Samol: I think it'd be cool if they put a big aquarium in with dolphins you could swim with. Because I've always wanted to swim with dolphins — on a daily basis. We can make salt water; we got plenty of street salt. Maybe a whisky distillery. You go drink whisky and swim with dolphins. That's my lifelong dream.



Bob Bensen: I'd like to see a Cabelas or a sports store with kayaks you could take out on the bay. That way you can literally buy it and take it right out... I think an ice rink is a really good idea; that'd bring a lot of people downtown. Retail, I'm 50/50 on... We have enough of that at the mall, but at the same time, having it downtown might bring more people to local shops.

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JUST TOYIN' WITCHA By: B. Toy



Guest Opinion

By - John E. Morgan

Monday Morning Politicking

Much like the day after your favorite football team suffers a heartbreaking loss, the day after an election leads to a lot of Monday morning quarterbacking. And just like NFL fans, politicians lament everything from the ground game to the officiating to explain why their team lost. Last time local elections came around, some blamed entrenched incumbency for the reason their team couldn't get ahead. This year, Kathy Dahlkemper, Andre Horton, Jay Brenemen, John Groh, and Lisa Austin (Honorable Mention) fought to win over the voters and showed that hard work can, in fact, trump incumbency.

Now the claim is that the opposition is rigging the game with the 'Straight Ticket Option'. Essentially, this rather arrogant argument goes, "If only those people were as informed as me, they would have voted for my candidate." This is no different than President Barack Obama blaming "Bibles" and "guns" for his problems in the 2008 PA Primary, or Mitt Romney's "47 percent" comment in the 2012 Presidential Election. Both learned that the people won't tolerate condescending politicians.

Folks across the political spectrum would do well to realize that everyone votes for their own reasons and none of those decisions are any less intelligent or rational than the others. I don't begrudge anyone for how they vote whether it's based on faith, gender, ethnicity, orientation, friendship, family, neighborhood, economic status, or even (gasp!) party. These reasons are just as important as a candidate's qualifications, because what really matters to people is: "Does this person relate to me? Does he or she share my values? Do they really care?"

No amount of degrees or professional experience can trump these three basic questions – and they shouldn't. If you don't relate to your constituents' life experiences, if you don't share their values, and if you can't prove to them that you care about their circumstances, then you don't deserve to represent them.

Party identification is more than just a let-

ter in front of your name. It's an expression of your experiences, values, and perspective. While a candidate's resume may inform you of his or her skills and education, it's their party affiliation that can give you a glimpse into the philosophy that will guide how they put those skills to use in office. Straight-ticket voters may be partisan, but they're not uninformed. They just prioritize principles over CVs. I wouldn't presume to know how someone would vote if I arbitrarily outlawed the method they choose to use. I would, however, argue that in a non-presidential year with only 30 percent turnout, the un-informed voters likely stayed home, and the partisans would likely stay partisan whether there was an 'easy-button' or not.

But so what? So what if 11 percent of the electorate only votes Democratic and 7 percent only votes Republican? That leaves 82 percent of the vote up for grabs to whoever wants it more. Are you (or your candidate) more than a letter? Then stop being an armchair expert whining at the TV. Get in the game and inform the voters yourself, because just like incumbency, your 'brand' can be overcome with hard work.

You don't need to look any further than the top of the countywide ticket this year. Democrat Kathy Dahlkemper defeated her Republican opponent for County Executive with 57 percent of the vote. Considering the democratic registration advantage, one could assume a similar outcome to the countywide race for Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. However, even without the 'home field advantage' of being a Democrat in a democratic county, a Republican, attorney Bob Sambroak, won against a very accomplished and well-known Democratic nominee, 57 percent to 43 percent. This polar opposite result should give the Anti-Straight Ticket Party pause, and hopefully cause them to give the public more credit.

In the end, local elections aren't determined by incumbency or registration numbers. Like in the NFL, victory comes down to which team played harder and left it all out there on the field for the crowd. But sometimes, even if you play the best game of your life, you can fall short on the final drive. When that happens, the real competitors look in the mirror and the war weary hang it up, but nobody blames the fans.

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Dec 11 | After the Wedding (2006)
Jacob, a manager of an orphanage in India, is sent to Denmark, where he discovers a life-altering family secret. As he finds himself revisiting a past he would prefer to forget, he discovers there is an ulterior motive for bringing him to Denmark. The cast brings After the Wedding's script to life, creating a movie that is emotionally raw and satisfying. Directed and Co-written by Susanne Bier.

Dec 18 | Blue Is the Warmest Color (2013)
Raw, honest, powerfully acted, and deliciously intense, Blue Is the Warmest Color offers some of modern cinema's most elegantly composed, emotionally absorbing drama. Widely acclaimed as the "first 21st century love story," the film centers on a 15-year-old girl named Adèle, who is climbing to adulthood and dreams of experiencing her first love. Directed by Abdel Kechiche.

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A view of the EIG campus from East Perry Square.

Erie Insurance

How Erie's Only Fortune 500 Company Invests in and Revitalizes the Neighborhood and City it Calls Home

By: Ben Speggen

At the eastern edge of Perry Square in downtown Erie, a bronze statue of The Commodore gazes out over the city. In his navy uniform, jacket unbuttoned, his messy brown curls frozen in time, Oliver Hazard Perry stands, his right arm lifted, his fist closed, save for his index finger which is pointing up and to the southeast.

That iconic pose – the one, so the stories of the War of 1812 go, he struck when he boarded the Niagara from the Lawrence after rowing through waves of enemy fire – captures Perry raising his right arm, as if commanding the future to become the present, while his left arm is tucked close to his chest, cradling the flag of the battered Lawrence, the past, too, now frozen mid-moment. The patina Perry stands at a crossroads of history, somewhere between a sinking past and an uncertain future.

Stand along side of Perry, staring eastward, and follow that pointed finger. A modest brick building, one surrounded by a chain-link fence, signaling the beginning of construction underway, sits at the corner of Sixth and French streets. The words “Erie Insurance Exchange” are centered above a red, double-door entryway on the building’s north side and just below the number “1925” encircled in a stone wreath.

Follow that pointed finger just a bit farther south a few blocks to see the words “Erie Insurance,” the phrase completed with the word “Arena” wrapping across the rounded entryway. The much needed renovations – over \$40 million in total – to the former Tullio Arena on display for the entire city and region to see: An updated facility, modern in design and fresh in appeal, awaiting world-class performers to populate the stages and rising star athletes to take to the center.

Perry’s statue stands, his pose locked in time, at a crossroads exemplary of Erie’s past and future, at an intersection where the two find themselves in the presence of rebirth, restoration, and revitalization of The Gem City’s oldest neighborhood. Perry’s eyes remain affixed on the city’s only home-bred and based Fortune 500 company, with roots firmly planted in Erie’s lower eastside. That company is investing in and revitalizing the neighborhood it calls home and the city from which it draws its name one brick at a time, paving a solid future built on the foundations of the city’s past.

Although it may be more recognizable to Erieites as the place where everything started for Erie Insurance Group, the

small brick building on the corner of Sixth and French streets wasn’t home to the company until 1938. When H.O. Hirt and O.G. Crawford first planned their company on a 10-cent notepad in 1925 and received a license from the Pennsylvania Insurance Department to begin operations, they set up shop in the Scott Block Building at the corner of 10th and State streets and worked there thirteen years before relocating to the former C.F. Adams Company headquarters.

While the business, now a multi-line insurance company that offers auto, home, commercial, and life insurance that extends through Pennsylvania and branches out to ten other states including Wisconsin, Tennessee, and New York, has grown and evolved with the times, its founding principles remain firmly rooted in one

motto: Above All In sERvICE.

So the stories go, when Hirt and Crawford scribbled out their plan on that notepad, they weren’t setting out on some get-rich-quick scheme; instead, they were more genuine during their humble beginnings, more thorough and thoughtful in their vision, basing the company on what Hirt called “simple common sense, mixed with just plain decency.” And for that, they turned to the Golden Rule: *Do unto others as you’d have other done unto you.*

That understanding birthed the motto Erie Insurance still uses today, with the letters E-R-I-E raised from ‘service’, acting as a reminder of where their foundation lay both physically and philosophically, and in 1930, Hirt introduced a pin bearing the phrase and cemented the com-

pany’s commitment to that notion for decades to come.

But before the phrase, the commitment, the vision, and the future, times weren’t easy. Sure, it was the Roaring ‘20s, sure America was basking in prosperity that followed the end of World War I, and sure Erie was a city on the rise with other companies, like General Electric and Hammermill Paper tethering their roots in the northwest corner of Pennsylvania; but starting any business, especially one with just two men running the operations day-to-day, is never easy. Much of the success of companies and organizations on the rise during that time relied on more than just ideas, they relied on follow-through and hard work. From the fabled world record that Crawford set, writing 243 policies in thirty days just a year into the business, to Sam P. Black, Erie’s first full-time adjuster and claims manager, living up to the pledge of 24-hour service by keeping an office phone extension in his room at the YMCA in 1927, Erie Insurance operated and then thrived under a roll-up-your-sleeves-and-get-to-work mentality.

By 1953, Erie Insurance’s footprint extended beyond Erie, reaching into Silver Spring, MD. Even though things in the insurance world in Erie were booming, Crawford decided to retire in 1933, leaving the then-45-year-old Hirt to his own. And as Erie Insurance grew outside of the city, things were growing within, too. Because of the burgeoning staff, the company erected a new home office in 1956, the H.O. Hirt Building situated on the north side of East Sixth Street. With a penchant for history and architecture, the former history teacher turned insurer wanted a timeless building, one that would never seem outdated, one that would never simply be lost in the concrete panorama of downtown Erie, leading the architects to construct a Georgian-style edifice, one paying homage to

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the cradle of American Insurance – Philadelphia – and an image that would become the logo of Erie Insurance.

Later, Hirt had a replica of the Liberty Bell installed in the office, amongst various other artifacts to service as reminders of history and inspiration for the future. "Success in business," Hirt once said, "is not a matter of tricks and gimmicks," and his appreciation of history and attention to detail became something that pushed the company forward, guiding it for years to come.

Fast-forward through the decades – past the introduction of Erie Family Life Insurance, past the expansion of the home office into an old Volkswagen dealership and beyond, past the first appearance on the NASDAQ as "ERIE", past the debut on the Fortune 500 list – and Erie Insurance in its eighty-eighth year of existence is still growing. That growth all happened through the business of one thing: Selling insurance.

But selling insurance isn't sexy. Then again, neither is buying it. Unlike the groceries we buy and then eat, unlike the cars we purchase to drive us to the store, and unlike the domiciles for which we pay to reside and store our groceries, insurance is the one thing we buy and hope to never use. Because if we do need to cash in on our insurance, it means something's gone wrong, the unexpected's become reality.

Yet we all pay for it – the protection from what we assume to be the worst. We insure the things

perfect protection and as near perfect service as humanly possible and to do so at the lowest possible cost."

Terry Cavanaugh, who's been in his current position as president and CEO since 2008, says he sees building up other leaders as vital to his role, something that speaks to Erie Insurance's commitment to its employees.

"I'm spending time to make sure this business grows leaders, so that as it grows, there won't be a void of that talent and we can continue to have success for the next ninety years," he says during a phone call.

In a lot of ways, Cavanaugh seems similar to Hirt. He speaks at length about history and what one could learn from it. He's forward-thinking, recognizing the importance of trends like social media and how to adapt with the times. But like Hirt, who for decades continued to interview potential employees himself and would write a weekly newsletter to the company, Cavanaugh knows the importance face-to-face interaction plays at Erie Insurance – just like other CEOs before him.

"We've been able to find a good, solid committed workforce here," says Hagen. Hagen, who served as CEO in the early '90s, adds that hiring and developing good people has led to the company being able to give back to the community in which it got its start.

"This is the community that got us going and

"I'm spending time to make sure this business grows leaders, so that as it grows, there won't be a void of that talent and we can continue to have success for the next ninety years."

that matter to us because we fear losing them, and we emplace our trust in others to do the right thing when we need them most. And Hirt understood that.

"Insurance is the most important thing a person buys," he quipped in 1954, "because it protects him against the loss of everything he has in the world."

That serious approach to insurance separated Erie Insurance from other companies then and continues to distinguish it now among the talking pigs, the grunting cavemen, the human manifestations of chaos and disorder, the poorly animated military commanders, and the odd ex-Weekend Update anchors that flash across our glowing rectangles, luring us with a laugh, later leaving us scratching our heads.

Erie Insurance embraces that difference, a more austere and simple approach to a complex product. "Funny ads are great," an Erie Insurance billboard once proclaimed. "Until you have a claim."

One might even say: Above All In sERvIcE. "It really captures [our mission] in a short phrase," former CEO and current chairman of the board Thomas Hagen says over the phone. "Some people might think it's kind of cute, but it really says what we are. Our founding purpose was to provide policyholders with as near

kept us going," he says of ERIE's place in Erie. "It's been a good community to us, and we in turn try to be a good to the community as we grow and prosper."

That growth is evident, especially through their ranking as a Fortune 500 company for the last decade. But Hagen says obtaining such a status wasn't really "a big deal," because it was a "consequence of continually growing." The bigger deal came, he says, "with the loss of other Fortune 500 companies in Erie."

That may place Erie Insurance on an economic island in Erie, or create the picture of an ostentatious oasis in a crumbling community coming from an association with big business, big banks, and big corporations – especially as Erie's business landscape continues to change, leaving its citizens to stare down an uncertain future while clinging to the past just out of reach. Hagen says, however, the history Erie Insurance has of treating its people – both customers and employees – with integrity and respect, the values rooted in the history of the company, set the company apart from that image of a monolithic corporation hailing solely to the almighty dollar. "As long as I'm around," says the 78-year old, laughing, "I'll ensure we do – and that, that will be our success."

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Erie Insurance.
 "Our company has always had a long history of community involvement," says Ann Scott, vice president of community outreach. "It's very important to us that the community where we work and live is vibrant and successful."

As Scott sees it, a thriving and growing community makes for a successful organization situated in the heart of it. From employees donating time to the Pfeiffer-Burleigh School – a twenty-six-year-old relationship – to contributing to Erie's arts and culture scene by way of organizations like ArtsErie, Erie Insurance is investing in the city it calls home.

There's one big way for the community to see that investment, growth, and expansion: The Erie Insurance Arena.

From a marketing standpoint, it makes total sense: a large display of the company's name broadcast boldly across the venue that houses some of the community's largest events. But from Cavanaugh's perspective, the brand awareness and recognition were secondary in the company's decision to purchase the naming rights for \$3 million for the next 10 years.



Contributed Photo

Built in 1956, the H.O. Hirt Building (bottom) began serving as the company's new home office to accommodate its expansion. (Above) A replica of the Liberty Bell located inside the Hirt Building.

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If We Were You...

WEDNESDAY 12.11

FILM at the Erie Art Museum presents *After the Wedding*

An Indian orphanage is facing bankruptcy, forcing Jacob Petersen, its Danish owner, to accept \$4 million offered by a businessman under the stipulation that he returns to Denmark and meets the man face-to-face. Once there, Petersen must revisit his past and the life he left behind.

When: 6 p.m.
Where: 20 E. Fifth St.
Contact: facebook.com/FILMErieArtMuseum

THURSDAY 12.12

Crooked Coast

Just because you may be trying to get on the “nice list” for this holiday season doesn’t mean you can’t be a little crooked. In fact, you can get a double dose of crooked when Crooked Coast comes to the crooked i to infuse our town with some sunny, reggae-infused indie rock tunes that will help distract you from all of the snow we should be getting.

When: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Where: 1013 State St.
Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

Penn State Behrend’s Concert Band presents “Turning Points”

Let PSB’s concert band take you on a musical tour through some good ol’ fashioned American history, from the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg and the 50th anniversary of MLK Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech to JFK’s assassination and the bicentennial of the Battle of Lake Erie. Admission is free and open to the public.

When: 8 p.m.
Where: 4701 College Drive
Contact: 898.6289

Strong-Town’s Chuck Marohn Presents “Curbside Chats”

Looking for insightful dialogue on how to better position our community for the future? The team at Strong Towns can deliver. The group has prepared an upcoming Curbside Chat for local officials and key community leaders. This will be a five-part presentation that focuses on the current financial crisis, the triggers that force change in the way we inhabit our landscape, the “dead ideas” we need to overcome to renew prosperity, what the coming economy will look like, and what local leaders can do to position our community for greater success.

When: 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Where: Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St.
Contact: donelson@jeserie.org or 459.8000

FRIDAY 12.13

Tim Warfield’s Jazzy Christmas

You can search the radio dial all you want to get your fix of Christmas music in your car, but you

won’t find anything quite like Tim Warfield’s Jazzy Christmas coming out of the dashboard speakers. For that experience, head down to the Mary D’Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst as MIAC hosts all-star saxophonist Tim Warfield and his talented ensemble in a jazzy night of Christmas classics.

When: 8 p.m.
Where: 501 E. 38th St.
Contact: miac.mercyhurst.edu/events

Wasted Blood, Nyodene D, Spud Dog, Starve, and Counterfeit

It can be hard to find anything for a dollar nowadays, but Basement Transmissions is sure trying to give you your money’s worth. For \$7, you can check out Ashtabula hardcore group Wasted Blood and Erie hard rockers Nyodene D, Spud Dog, Starve, and Counterfeit in one night, all for what amounts to \$1.40 per band, a steal for plenty of guitar squeals.

When: 5:30 to 11:30 p.m.
Where: 1501 State St.
Contact: basementtrans@gmail.com

PACA presents *Christmas II: The Sequel to the Nativity*

The Performing Arts Collective Alliance presents the debut of Jeff Goode’s original comedy about Jesus Christ, a child star whose fame quickly faded. Those who were a part of his Nativity — from the Orient King to the Talking Sheep — watched as their lives tumbled down around them. Thirty years after JC’s birth, Ghosts of Nativities Past unite to show Jesus the true meaning of Christmas.

When: 7 p.m.
Where: 1505 State St.
Contact: pacai505.com

Holiday Show & Sale at Center City Arts

Looking for that one-of-a-kind gift for that special someone this year? Like supporting local artisans? If you answered yes to either of those questions — and we hope you did, because that makes you cool — then look no further. Original works of art, including fused glass, jewelry, painting, and decorative gourds, will all be on display and available for purchase in the stunning historic Rose Koehler Curtze estate. So ‘tis the season for shopping and supporting your local art scene!

When: 5 to 8 p.m.
Where: 138 E. 26th St.
Contact: CenterCityArtsErie.org

SATURDAY 12.14

Leader of Men w/ Kevlar

Never pick scissors against the members of Leader of Men and Kevlar, because they’ll always play rock! ...But seriously, Leader of Men make sure to rock hard every show while young quartet Kevlar is making Erie forget about their age and remember just how hard they can play.

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

Laugh/Riot presents *Jet of Blood* at Edinboro University

Antonin Artaud’s *Jet of Blood*, written in Paris 1925, is a fantastical play representing our most inner fears and desires. Artaud presents a bizarre gamut of creation and devastation, correlating sex, lust and purity with greed and brutality. Tickets are \$10 for the general public.

When: 7:30 p.m.
Where: 217 Meadville Street, Edinboro
Contact: 732.2518

SUNDAY 12.15

Winter Wonderland at Asbury Woods

Enjoy walking in a winter wonderland? Well, there’s no better place in Erie than at Asbury Woods. And this year it’s bigger, brighter, and better than ever! Winter Wonderland features thousands of lights at the Nature Center and along our boardwalk trail with unique displays throughout the Woods. Visit us and enjoy new light displays, an expanded model train display, holiday music, children’s crafts and much more. This event offers a wonderful change of pace from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Bring your family and friends and celebrate the season at Asbury Woods. Admission is \$6 per person.

When: December 13-15, 6 p.m.
Where: Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Road
Contact: 835.5356

WEDNESDAY 12.18

Celtic Christmas

Christmas is still a week away, but that won’t keep the Brewererie at Union Station from celebrating their annual Celtic Christmas. Head and down for some craft brews and good chews while Broken Straw performs traditional Irish holiday music for the kilt-wearing Irishperson in all of us.

When: 6 to 8 p.m.
Where: 123 W. 14th St.
Contact: 454.2200

THURSDAY 12.19

Erie Ad Club’s Holiday “Ugly Sweater” Party

Come enjoy an evening of networking with Erie Ad Club members and friends. Listen to holiday music and mingle in the beautifully decorated Rotunda at The Brewererie At Union Station. Don’t forget to wear your ugliest holiday sweater... and get creative, as the ugliest sweater will win an AdClub membership. There will be an assortment of hot hors d’oeuvres and desserts provided, as well as drink specials of \$3 drafts, mixed drinks, or wine. There will also be a variety of raffle baskets. Admission will get you a free drink ticket, a raffle ticket, and food. Tickets

are \$10 for members and \$13 for non-members
When: 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Where: 123 W. 14th St.
Contact: lindsay@moore-research.com

FRIDAY 12.20

Eric Brewer & Friends and the Tony Grey Trio

When a night is dubbed “A Showcase of Erie’s Finest Musicians,” there are a lot of expectations to live up to. It’s a good thing that Eric Brewer & Friends and the Tony Grey Trio can surpass said expectations. The two groups are teaming up for one big show at the crooked i, giving you a chance for some healthy doses of rock and jazz for a proper musical showcase.

When: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Where: 1013 State St.
Contact: facebook.com/thecrookedierie

Jingle & Mingle Dance for Diabetes

The greeting cards have been mailed, tree is decorated, and (hopefully) your gifts are wrapped — so now it’s time to let your hair down and enjoy some festivities while giving back to your local community at the Dance for Diabetes. Be sure to wear your dancing shoes — Street Level Band will keep you on your feet that night. Scrumptious hors d’oeuvres, auction and cash bar. Every dollar contributed to this event will remain LOCAL to support those affected by diabetes right here in our Community.

When: 6:30 p.m.
Where: Bel-Aire Clarion Hotel, 3200 W. Eighth St.
Contact: nwolf@diabeteserie.org

SATURDAY 12.21

Sleigh Rides at Burch Farms

It’s not very often that someone can say they have actually dashed through the snow on a one-horse open sleigh, but if you take a drive to Burch Farms in North East, you can be on that short list. Bundle up with some friends for a sleigh ride, followed by hot chocolate, cider drinks, baked goods and more to warm you up for just \$10 a person.

When: all day
Where: 9210 Sidehill Road, North East
Contact: 725.0747

SUNDAY 12.22

Bah Humbug!

Come share the magic of everyone’s favorite Christmas classic performed by the Academy’s Youth Theatre! Watch as Ebenezer dooms himself to visits from three Christmas spirits. His revelation that “life was meant to be lived” brings a heart-warming conclusion to Dicken’s beloved tale. Runs December 20-22. Tickets are \$10.50 and \$8.50.

When: 2 p.m.
Where: Academy Theatre, 275 Chestnut St., Meadville
Contact: 833.8000.

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To-do List

By: Alex Bieler



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BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOR

While FILM at the Erie Art Museum's Women in Film series may be coming to an end Wednesday, Dec. 18, it's a good thing that fans will be feeling a little blue.

French film sensation *Blue is the Warmest Color* will close out the current FILM season that final Wednesday, an award-winning end to a series full of critically-acclaimed movies. "Blue" gained notoriety after it premiered at this year's Cannes Film Festival, wowing audiences so much that it earned the Palm d'Or, Cannes' top prize.

The award isn't the only reason that *Blue* has gained so much buzz in the film industry. The movie earned an NC-17 rating for some lengthy and graphic love scenes depicting the romance between two young French women. Despite the controversial material, the film's poignant portrayal of love and loss has plenty of supporters, including FILM curator John C. Lyons.

"Story-wise, it's an epic, raw, emotional love story between these two young women," he says. "Us Americanos, we love our violence, but we're scared to death about sex."

Only 100 theaters across the country will be showing *Blue*, but Erie will be able to get a chance to see a film that's earning plenty of Oscar buzz despite the controversy, providing a colorful end to FILM's latest series.

SHOTGUN JUBILEE FAREWELL SHOW

When Geoffrey Chaucer, the man regarded as the father of English literature, first wrote down the phrase "all good things must come to an end," it's hard to determine if he knew just how much of a buzzkill that proverb would turn out to be in the centuries after his death. Well, the saying



(Above) Controversial film "Blue Is The Warmest Color" comes to FILM Dec. 18. Shotgun Jubilee (below) says 'farewell' at the crooked i Dec. 14.

is weighing heavily on fans of the Erie music scene after news that the members of Shotgun Jubilee are putting the kibosh on a band locals have adored in the past half-decade.

"I think it was just time to finish it," says guitarist Paul Schillenger. "We've been a band for five years. Everyone has side projects, and it just felt like time to finish Shotgun."

The folksy jam quartet may not have much more time together, but that doesn't mean that they can't celebrate, however. In fact, it's just too appropriate that the end of the band calls for a jubilee, with a farewell show being held Saturday, Dec. 14 at the crooked i.

The night will be more than just a typical show, as current members Schillinger, Dominick DeCecco, Steve Powell, and Jason Shaner will dip back into the Shotgun catalog with the help of former members like bassist Ryan Bartosek and

vocalist Tonya Byham, invoking memories of the band's five years together in both fans and members alike.

"We'll never forget Shotgun," Schillinger says. "I played with Ryan and Steve for years before this and meeting Dom and all of these groups of people was great. We've always had a supportive fan base. Hopefully every one of them has heard the word [about the show] and they'll be there. We just really want to have one good last show for everybody."

Shotgun Jubilee may be ending, but Paul and the boys still have one more night together. The end may be a buzzkill, but you can be sure that Shotgun will go out with a blast.

2189 CREW AND BENCHERS UNION PRESENT: COPYWRITE

Live music is more than just an auditory exercise; it's an experience. Seeing a performance play out in front of you provides not only a treat for the ears, but also the eyes. And a live act is malleable, giving a musician a chance to change the sights and sounds for every audience that comes to enjoy one of their shows.

However, not every artist provides a certain presence during a set, instead giving the audience a sonic blast without any on-stage visual excitement. Some people may be fine with that, but Columbus-based rapper Copywrite is not one of those people, thinking that performers should, well, perform fully.

"I think a live show should be more than a rapper walking back and forth on stage waving his hands around," says the 34-year old MC. "Rapping is a stripped-down enough art form that if you're just up there rapping, no matter how good you are, it can get boring. You have to do a lot of things and keep it moving."

Appropriately, Copywrite is out to prove that he's more than just talk, as he's set to headline a night of hip-hop at the crooked i Thursday, Dec. 19, joined by Pittsburgh's MC Jon Quest, Buffalo-based duo The Ren and Stimp Show, and Erie team Ill Noyz.

Copywrite prides himself on providing a true experience through his performances, promising an energetic set with some improvisation thrown in for good measure, in order to provide his audience with an experience that's more than him just reciting lyrics on stage. He's also been working on new material, including a solo album to be released sometime next year. That doesn't mean that he won't treat fans to tracks from earlier records, including debut album *T.H.E. High Exhaulted*.

"I never abandon styles - I add on and when I need to go into the Rolodex, I just pull one out," Copywrite says of the variety in his discography. "I'm like a hoarder of styles, if you will."

On Dec. 19, he'll be bringing all of those styles to the crooked i, all part of one big hip-hop experience.

Interested in catching up with Copywrite online? You can follow him on Twitter at @Copywrite or on Instagram at @copywrite78.

Alex Bieler can be contacted at aBieler@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Catch20Q. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/g9i4r>



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MUSIC REVIEWS

Nils Frahm
Spaces
 Erased Tapes
 ★★★★★



To call Nils Frahm a pianist almost seems unfair, although the 31-year-old German musician and composer is a master on the ivory keys, as noted by his beautifully sparse work on *Screws* last year. On *Spaces*, however, Frahm acts more as a world builder, creating layered tracks, melding the classical and the electronic in ways that build upon each other until it becomes an immersive experience, arpeggios propelling the action forward while Frahm adds more and more detail until the music stops, replaced by clapping hands and cheering voices. It can be easy to forget at times that *Spaces* was recorded in front of a live audience, but once again, it would be unfair to call it simply a live album. Frahm instead provides an experience of both set pieces, like the gorgeous "Says" and "Said and Done," as well as interesting improvisations and experiments that all build up to one absolutely stunning album. **Alex Bieler**

Shearwater
Fellow Travelers
 Sub Pop
 ★★★★★



Faithful covers can be nice, but they're most interesting when a band tries to put its own stamp on them. Ornate indie rock band Shearwater has always maintained a certain dramatic, orchestral feel, anchored around leader Jonathan Meiburg's soaring tenor, a golden voice permeating through a wall of golden production. On *Fellow Travellers*, Meiburg and company try out songs by well-known bands and give them a special Shearwater sheen to mixed results. It's not as if any of the songs are bad, but not every track lives up to the original, as "Cheerleader" loses St. Vincent's eerie charm and rocker "I Luv the Valley OH!!" is rather enjoyable but misses out on the feeling of genuine pain imbued by Xiu Xiu's Jamie Stewart. Shearwater's version of "Hurts Like Heaven," however, sounds wonderful, stripping away the Coldplay's cutesy production, and a softly echoing take on David Thomas Broughton's "Ambiguity" is absolutely gorgeous, a standout track in an interesting collection. **Alex Bieler**

Billie Joe + Norah
Foreverly
 Reprise
 ★★★



Back in the days of *Dookie*, you'd be hard-pressed to find a Green Day fan that thought that Billie Joe Armstrong would eventually cover lesser-known albums of harmony-loving artists from the '50s and '60s. Well, times have changed. Armstrong teamed up with Norah Jones for *Foreverly*, their take on *Songs Our Daddy Taught Us*, the sophomore album of The Everly Brothers. It's an odd choice, as *Songs* was, in essence, Don and Phil Everly's tribute to songs that they listened to with their father, but Armstrong and Jones are devoted to the project nonetheless. The two make for a surprisingly good vocal duo, the smokiness of Jones' voice balancing out Armstrong's limited range. The problem with *Foreverly* is that it gets rather boring. Opener "Roving Gambler" is pleasant enough, but by the sixth track, it seems like Armstrong and Jones were too focused on soft-strumming and sweet-singing to provide any new life into the source material. **Alex Bieler**

Glen Hansard
Drive All Night [EP]
 Epitaph
 ★★★



Glen Hansard's new EP *Drive All Night* opens with a cover of the Bruce Springsteen's song by the same name. Featuring backing vocals by Eddie Vedder and saxophone licks by Jake Clemons, the rendition – bright, bold, and full – features less Boss-esque boot stompin' rock, focusing more attention to Clemons' wail, a beautiful tribute to the elder and late Clemons, Clarence. But the three songs that follow fall flat, as Hansard whimsically rehashes similar love-lost and regret tropes he found success with on *Once*. But where he used to tug our heartstrings and tie them into a tightly wound depressing yet invigorating bow of gutpunch heartbreak ("Leave" and "Say It To Me Now"), the singer-songwriter falls prey to worn-out images and busted clichés, crooning: "We laid long in the tall grass... We threw our pennies in the fountain and wished for nothing else," which makes the rest of this drive feel dull, tiresome, and directionless. **Ben Speggen**

TECH WATCH

Living in a *Snow Crash* World with Amazon Drones

By: **Dakota Hoffman, Epic WebStudios**

Snow Crash, Neal Stephenson's seminal cyberpunk novel of the near future published in 1992, opens with what is easily the most memorable pizza delivery scene in world literature.

The pizza in question has a ticking clock built into its box, counting down from 30 minutes. If it isn't delivered in that time, the head of the Mafia – which runs the pizza franchise – will have to personally apologize to the customer. The delivery guy embarks on a series of thrilling, death-defying traffic-surfing stunts to get it there in time.

Stephenson has a pretty good track record when it comes to seeing the future — but not on this score, apparently. In the wake of Amazon Air, which promises to deliver packages within 30 minutes via quadcopter, it seems readers of the future will smile at this quaint scene and ask: Why didn't the Mafia simply deliver pizzas by drone?

Bezos' Amazon Web Services runs a giant portion of online commerce and is building a private cloud for the CIA. In his spare time, he runs a space tourism startup and the *Washington Post*.

Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of Amazon made it clear, when introducing the quadcopter on *60 Minutes*, that the biggest barrier to implementation is convincing the bureaucracy at the FAA that this system is safe. You may remember the FAA as the agency that took years to decide we could look at our Kindles during takeoff.

Amazon unveiled the 'copter as a surprise for Charlie Rose, an expert interviewer but hardly a veteran technology journalist. Rose didn't even get a live demonstration of the drone in action, just the same minute-long YouTube video the rest of us have been watching, so maybe you can just easily discount the whole thing as a brilliant piece of Cyber Monday PR.

You could do that, but you'd be missing the point. First of all, this is a Jeff Bezos joint. Bezos' Amazon Web Services runs a giant portion of online commerce and is building a private cloud for the CIA. In his spare time, he runs a space tourism startup and the *Washington Post*. No, Amazon will not be making every delivery



Dikroetsch

Whether you're ready for them or not, drones are coming to a city near you.

by drone. Not only is it limited by proximity to distribution centers, there are also a limited number of things that weigh under five pounds which you'd *actually* want to receive within 30 minutes of ordering. The service makes little sense in dense urban settings due to high buildings, inopportune landing sites, and the high density of humans living in the area. It makes more sense in remote, rural locations, and it'll be pretty good at finding you in the suburbs, too.

Many of the oft-cited problems with drone delivery vanish the closer you examine them. Worried about the neighborhood kids shooting your package down and running off with it? It would be child's play for Amazon to include a GPS chip in the box and track it down wherever it is. Not to mention the fact that shooting down an aircraft that operates under the auspices of the FAA would fall under the category of federal crime, if not something more serious.

The fact is that the concept of drone delivery has the aura of historical inevitability. Low-cost, easy-to-operate drones are everywhere. They're already keeping an eye on illegal hunting, tracking hurricanes, and delivering textbooks; and, you can even find them patrolling the skies at Burning Man.

And yes, drones have already been used to deliver pizza — in the UK, at least.

The only question left to ponder may soon be: If your Amazon package doesn't arrive within 30 minutes, will Bezos call to apologize personally? Then we really will be living in a *Snow Crash* world.

Dakota Hoffman can be contacted at Epic@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @DakotaScottErie. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or go to <http://erindr.com/chzdr>



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Brad Triana

Erie Vinyl on Fire

By: Matthew Flowers

No matter how drenched in this circuitry culture we become, there is always a place in our hearts for something warmer than the glow of a computer monitor, something we can listen to without typing in a web address, and something that brings us together without a “like” button and a comment section. This is not to say technology doesn’t foster community, culture, or the creative process – it definitely does – however, sometimes it’s good to return to an old-fashioned approach to catch some warmth and ditch the web.

While we may be submersed in endless streams of music, tangles of headphones, and piles of pirated tuneage, a major movement towards the retro format of music is underway. There is no argument that vinyl sales still only make up a marginal fraction of overall music sales, but these cumbersome musical wheels are rolling their way back onto our lives.

For a while, you couldn’t pay someone to take your vinyl collection. Digital music is a cleaner, space-saving approach to all the same songs. In the palm of your hand, you could carry the innards of an entire record store and then some. With the emergence of the digital word, vinyl sales dwindled down to almost nothing, reaching all time lows in ’93 around 300,000 records. For over a decade these grooved, dust collectors stayed on the shelves, until a strong, sudden gust of retro-living blew these black slates of song clean again.

In 2008, 1.8 million vinyl records were purchased and the numbers keep climbing, as 2012 hit record highs with 4.6 million sold. So not to sound like a broken record, but there is something major happening here.

“I don’t know why it’s coming back – maybe nostalgia, maybe people are tired of not having a physical copy, and the artwork is big,” says local musician and vinyl connoisseur Matt Texter. “There is such a difference when you’re listening to records,” he adds. “It’s way more communal.”

Last April, Jack White was appointed as the Ambassador of the sixth annual Record Store Day where he shared the same sentiment. “Out there, people are still talking to each other face-

to-face, exchanging ideas and turning each other on,” White says in his 2013 interview on Recordstoreday.com. “There is beauty and romance in the act of visiting a record shop and getting turned on to something new that could change the way [we] look at the world, other people, art, and ultimately, [our]selves.”

Matt and Jack have never met, although they do share the same sentiments about this nearly obsolete form of song. “A few people I knew were into records and I thought – because they started a vinyl night at the crooked i – I should start a group that can talk about collecting locally.”

Not only did he start a Facebook group for this communal passion dubbed “Erie Vinyl” – a place to share and swap stories, hot spots, and the latest finds – but he also started a podcast, VinylMiners.com with friend Wayne Anderson, whom he met at one of these crooked i vinyl nights. Between Erie Vinyl and VinylMiners.com, Matt is hoping to foster a community based on this passion for music and its retro forms.

Not only is your neighborhood record store, such as Graham’s Records [613 W. 26th St.] or The Exchange [7100 Peach St.], a great place to visit to get a new look at these old-fashioned slabs, but Erie has plenty of thrift stores to go digging through.

“I do a lot of ‘thrifting,’” Matt says, but anyone who is in the market for a good deal on great music is tired of sifting through the same dusty Christmas albums. “The real secret,” he smiles, as if a treasure map hides behind his big black

beard, “is going all the time.” Because of this resurgence of records, digging and thrifting has become extremely competitive, especially when there is a chance to find a diamond in a rough; a first issue or a full collection.

“There is a lot of digging to do in Erie, but there are a lot more people on the field.” It’s gotten to the point where Matt actually recognizes his “competition” when they’re at the store getting the first shot at the rare issues or have already picked through the selection. “When you go enough you start seeing and can tell what’s different because once you dig through it five times, you’re like ‘someone has already been here, or there’s nothing new.’”

In his treasure hunting, Matt came across one of these diamonds in the rough, a first issue – one of only 25 printed of an obscure band from Sharon, Pa. named Drywater. His initial investment was 49 cents, but after a whole lot of research he realized it was worth a whole lot more. Matt reached out to Drywater’s label RPC to get the low down on this strange record titled “Backbone of the Nation,” its ocean view, sad sky blue, cover adding to its mystery. He ended up selling the record to a collector for \$900 and got over \$100 in trade from RPC because this vinyl carried a lyric insert that was missing from the other 24 copies that existed in the world.

After he slips his re-issue Drywater’s vinyl back onto his shelf, next to the other 2000 LP’s - organized with red dividers by genre – he pulls out Jack White’s album “Blunderbuss,” a vinyl that meets modern times by providing a digital download.

“I’m not a purist, I have all these records, but I still have probably 25,000 MP3s on an external hard drive and a few hundred CDs... It’s really about the music to me,” Matt says.

“When you’re by yourself, [putting on a record] is sort of ceremonial, but when you’re with people it’s weird because the records becomes a focal point, the music becomes a focal point.



Brad Triana

Both Erie Vinyl and VinylMiners.com, started by Matt Texter (below), give Erie collectors space to talk discs.

Whereas MP3s can play in the background and you can have all this wonderful, endless, 50 days of music lined up, but when records are on, it’s like a fire or something.

It is these embers from the past that this community can congregate around. Vinyl collectors not only have love for their music but the willingness to give it their full attention. It is that warmth in the middle of the room, emitting soft waves of sound to their ears. Records play their way inward as if to present their soul to the listener in contrast with their future counterparts, which seem to stream endlessly in no particular direction, forever. But no matter what the music’s vehicle, it’s important to remember why we’re even taking the ride.

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/tbxx2>



[Cont. from 11] “It was clear that there was going to be a shortfall, as good of a job as the [Erie County Convention Center] Authority was doing,” he says. “We talked to some of the people involved, and it was clear to us that we were going to have a world-class facility... What I didn’t want was them to do this and then have to cut corners to the point that you wouldn’t have that world-class experience.”

A Chicago-native, Cavanaugh argues that a region can only be as successful as its urban center. And to him, this would help ensure in part the success of Erie’s urban center.

“I want the city of Erie to be vibrant and a place that people can take pride in and utilize,” he continues. “The arena was important, not necessarily for the brand, but for the community. Having a strong arena like that creates a vibrancy and attractiveness to this region. We have a big commitment financially and emotionally to downtown Erie and that building was our neighbor.”

Hagen reaffirms Erie Insurance’s motives: “We try to focus our community engagement and investments into the social service needs of the community – obviously you don’t look for your name to be prominently listed – that’s really more of our focus and emphasis. We just keep a little lower profile in our community outreach and philanthropy.”

While the company may desire to keep a low profile when it comes to investing in the company, it’s hard to keep a low profile when more space is needed for a growing organization, because with growth, comes expansion. For one, that means jobs, which are coming by way of a 52,000-square-foot training center to be located next to the company’s new garage. Also included will be a two-story house with hands-on displays and fourteen vehicle bays and equipment stations.

Prior to the expansion, the company had had to outsource its training to third-party vendors. Now, the company will no longer need to do that once the project is completed in 2014.

But what about physical space – new bricks, new mortar?

“Our work to simultaneously preserve and further develop the neighborhood around our home office shows that companies can provide for the needs of a modern business while respecting and honoring the history of a community,” Hagen said in a press release.

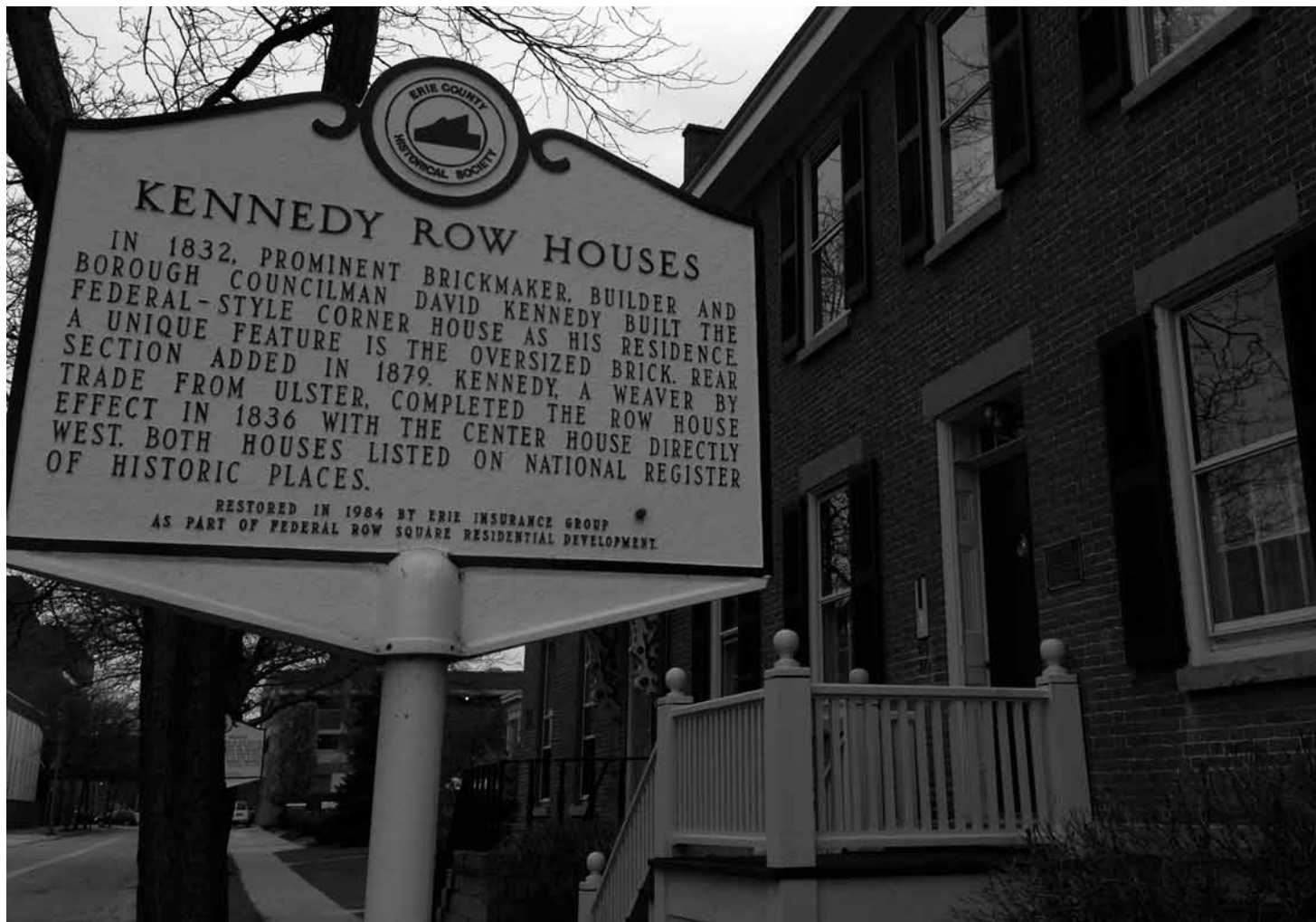
Keeping that delicate balance between growing a company while respecting historical structures isn’t something new to Erie Insurance, it’s just something not often talked about.

Jeremy Bloeser sits at a long table in a small kitchen space in a one-story white house on Parade Street. Pictures of properties in the area – Erie’s Historic Bayfront neighborhood – populate a corkboard behind the table. A map of Erie, color-coded by sections, hangs adjacent to the photos.

Those photos, featuring homes with broken porches and litter strewn about the front yards, serve as reminders of what B.E.S.T. has done and is doing for the twenty-five-block part of Erie Bloeser calls home.

“I can’t say enough good about Erie Insurance,” Bloeser says, pausing to smile. “Their continued financial support, but even bigger is their ongoing personal support...”

The executive director of the Bayfront East Side Taskforce pauses to smile again.



He has reason to smile. B.E.S.T., first started in 1978 to improve the neighborhood ranging from Sixth Street to the Bay and from Holland to Wayne streets, is a nonprofit organization designed with a hyper-focus on revitalizing the region – converting those houses in the photos with languished lawns to things of residential beauty. Erie Insurance is continuing to invest in the organization and the region, helping to make the dreams of B.E.S.T. and people like Bloeser a reality.

“We can’t thank them enough for everything they do,” he adds. “They really are changing the way this neighborhood looks in a positive way. And we want to be a neighborhood that attracts people so that people desire to live in the Erie Bayfront neighborhood – that’s our biggest goal, and we think we’re moving in the right direction.”

Erie Insurance recently committed \$900,000 total (\$150,000 per year) over the course of six years to B.E.S.T., and since 2006, Erie Insurance has contributed over \$1 million total to the nonprofit.

The recent commitment, which runs through 2018, is helped in part by the PA Neighborhood Partnership Program tax credits by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development – in short, making it a win-win for Erie Insurance and B.E.S.T.

“I like to give them credit for everything, because we wouldn’t exist if it wasn’t for those funds,” Bloeser says.

Under the direction of Bloeser and B.E.S.T.’s board – which features three Erie Insurance employees – the nonprofit buys blighted properties and then decides whether to raze them or renovate them. Since the area is Erie’s oldest neighborhood, many of the properties weren’t



constructed up to today’s codes, so demolishing makes more sense when restoring is no longer an option.

Razing buildings isn’t specific to Erie. *The New York Times* recently reported that “for many cities, urban planning has often become a form of creative destruction.”

In the same article published last month, Sandra Pianalto, the president and chief executive of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland argued that “It’s not the house itself that has value, it is the land the house stands on. This led us to the counterintuitive concept that the best policy to stabilize neighborhoods may not always be rehabilitation. It may be demolition.”

But this isn’t a one-size-fits-all solution thereby advocating for the destructions of all things old. When history can be preserved, argues both

The historic Kennedy Row Houses (above) were restored in 1984 by EIG. Jeremy Bloeser (below) serves as the executive director of the Bayfront East Side Taskforce.

Bloeser and Hagen, it should be. And fortunately for Erie, people like Bloeser are on the case and have the support and backing of organizations like Erie Insurance.

“We’ve built twenty-two new homes on empty lots created by the removal of blighted properties,” Bloeser explains, and the organization has removed over forty-five blighted properties in the last twelve years.

Of those necessary removals in Erie, twenty-seven empty green space lots exist now, and the funding Erie Insurance provides goes toward the upkeep of that space. From community

gardens to proposed public art pieces, the area is ensured revitalization through investments like those of Erie Insurance, which helps fight against the perception that the area is violent, crime-ridden, and somewhere people in Erie don't want to be.

"There is a negative perception, and we're constantly battling that," Bloeser admits. "There are a lot of exciting things happening... [but] the job will never be done," Bloeser says of the restoration, the revitalization, and the constant rebuilding of his neighborhood. "We have made great strides by removing those forty-plus properties. We have improved this neighborhood."

And to Bloeser, that we includes Erie Insurance.

"They're strong partners [in this community] in many ways," he says. "They give financial contributions - I can never discount that - but we also get financial contributions from some of their employees who donate to us directly."

"Oh, and this building," he says, pausing to look around the room and out to his desk. "This is their building."

When B.E.S.T. lacked the funds to secure a headquarters, an office situated in the heart of the area, Erie Insurance stepped in and purchased what Bloeser now calls his workspace. In the back, there are two offices and a bathroom. From a room filled with filing cabinets, a desk, and a computer, Bloeser peers out the window.

"That building there," he points to a red house on East Fifth Street, "Erie Insurance just invested \$85,000 to renovate it."

"Who does that?" he questions, almost still in awe and disbelief.

The donations of Erie Insurance go beyond brick and mortar and drywall and windows. Bloeser is using funds to install cameras throughout the neighborhood to further deter crime. To date, he has five cameras on Parade Street, and is looking to install twenty more in the coming five years in an effort to further deter crime.

So when preserving is possible and protection is added, a neighborhood can continue to flourish, and residents, both current and former, notice the good that is happening.

"I was very happy to hear that Erie Insurance made the decision to purchase this property and restore it," says City Councilman Dave Brennan, upon learning that the company purchased a home he had owned for three years on East Sixth Street. "Personally, it really feels good that a part of our family's past and Erie's past will now be saved for our future generations to enjoy."

An architect and someone with all eye for detail and a heart for preservation, Brennan added that he and his wife had the intention to restore the home - removing the aluminum siding, restoring the windows and original wood trim, and repointing the brick and stonework in the early to mid '90s. Erie Insurance, he added, had offered to purchase the building then, but due to zoning regulations, couldn't.

"Since architecture and our built environment are a physical record of our past, it is important that we do everything we can as a community to keep that history intact," he added. "So much of our past built environment has been destroyed in Erie and every building we can save and repurpose is a victory for our neighborhoods, our city, and our region."

Saving buildings at the same time companies

are looking to expand can be a juggling act. The question becomes: Do we save the character of our city and retrofit older buildings so that they retain their outward character, or do we level them in search of entirely new structures?

"It is very important to me to retain the current character of the neighborhood. Although many houses have been purchased and demolished in this area of the city, retaining the density is very important to the residential character of the neighborhood," Brennan explained. "To me that character has value and I am a proponent to do everything we can to advocate to make the needed investments in these homes to avoid any more demolitions in the future."

As Bloeser recognized, though, Brennan too knows that sometimes demolitions can't be avoided for various reasons. But with investments like this, along with the purchase of the ninety-plus-year-old Pennsylvania National Guard Armory and conversion into office space for Erie employees, Erie Insurance is extending its campus footprint without refitting the area for a whole new shoe when only a new sole is needed.

Brennan, who serves on the board of Preservation Erie and will soon join the board of the newly formed Erie Neighborhood Growth Partnership, said he wants to bring Erie's neighborhoods back to their prior glory, and that "partnerships with Erie Insurance, B.E.S.T., Erie Neighborhood Watch, and the City of Erie are crucial" to achieving that goal.

Start back with Perry in his square and stroll down East Sixth Street, past the 101-year-old C.F. Adams building encased with silver fence, and there you'll again find that commitment to the area and the preservation of the neighborhood isn't new to Erie Insurance. On the south side of the street, out of the ground stands a white post and marker with blue lettering. It stands in front of the Gideon Ball House, an Italianate-style mansion built in 1862. The paragraph of description explains the significance of the house, why it was built, and what it was used for, but if you look closer, in smaller font at the bottom reads: Restored 1992 by Erie Insurance Group.

Go just a bit farther east and turn left to head north on Holland. There you'll find the Kennedy Row Houses, erected in 1832 and a similar paragraph on an identical marker detailing their history and importance. You'll also find a similar phrase at the bottom: Restored 1984 by Erie Insurance Group as part of the Federal Row Square Residential Development.

Answer to Sudoku

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

In the vicinity, there's also the Kennedy Double House, the Brewster House, the Tibbals House - all with the same marker, all with concisely worded histories on stamped shields of safeguarding from the Erie Insurance Group, a visual manifestation of an insurance policy on the history of the Flagship City, that we may not forget our past, and a clear sign of continued commitment to that service above all else in the future to come.

Ben Speggen can be contacted at bspeggen@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @ERBenSpeggen. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erivdr.com/7z9xn>



Sudoku

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

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|-----|
| 4 | | | 6 | 9 | | | | 2 |
| | | | 2 | | 1 | | | 6 |
| | | | | 8 | | | | |
| 9 | | 4 | | 2 | | | | 3 |
| | | | 4 | | | | | 8 |
| | | | | 6 | | 7 | | |
| | | | | 7 | | 9 | | 6 |
| | | 3 | | | | 2 | | |
| | | | | | | 9 | | 8 3 |

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DIFFICULTY: ★★★★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- 1 Game fish
- 5 Gr. Mars
- 9 Sheep's cry
- 12 Voucher
- 13 Jaguarundi's color phase
- 14 Compass direction
- 15 Otary (2 words)
- 17 Girl Scouts of America (abbr.)
- 18 Handwriting on the wall
- 19 Broad structural basin
- 21 Old Gr. coin
- 24 Baptism font
- 27 Political action committee (abbr.)
- 30 Dayak people
- 32 Cost-of-living adjustment (abbr.)
- 33 Guido's note (2 words)

- 34 River of Rome
- 36 "___ Abner"
- 37 Needle case
- 39 Irish nobleman
- 40 To (Scot.)
- 41 Cubic decimeter
- 43 Moselle tributary
- 45 "Dies ___"
- 47 Stall
- 50 Chief executive officer (abbr.)
- 52 Ramadan (2 words)
- 56 Pointed (pref.)
- 57 Detonator
- 58 Yemen capital
- 59 Public vehicle
- 60 Executive (abbr.)
- 61 Trolley

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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

DOWN

- 1 Before common era (abbr.)
- 2 King of Israel

- 3 Father
- 4 Office worker's skill
- 5 Bronze Roman money
- 6 Cereal grain or grass
- 7 Part of QED
- 8 Amer. shrub
- 9 Electric unit
- 10 Able-bodied seaman (abbr.)
- 11 Literary collection
- 16 Account entry
- 20 Resin
- 22 Fetish
- 23 Eucharist spoon
- 25 Lamb
- 26 Death rattle
- 27 External covering
- 28 High (pref.)
- 29 Wary
- 31 Tiber tributary
- 35 Arena
- 38 Comparative ending
- 42 Triangular topsail
- 44 Perch
- 46 Water (Fr.)
- 48 Growl
- 49 Old heating apparatus
- 50 Civil Aeronautics Board (abbr.)
- 51 Five-franc piece
- 53 Compass direction
- 54 Detective
- 55 Brother of Shem

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 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 | | | |
| 59 | | | | 60 | | | | | 61 | | | |

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A48

ERIE'S EATS

American Fusion

AVANTI'S If you've only eaten breakfast at Avanti's, you are in for a big surprise. Every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night, this daytime diner changes over to a fine dining establishment. Check back often since the menu changes weekly. BYOB

1662 W. 8th St. // 456.3096

SUMMER HOUSE CAFÉ With an ever-changing menu and lots of fresh baked goodies, this local favorite serves breakfast and lunch daily and stays open for dinner Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. BYOB

2605 Washington Ave. // 452.2500

1201 KITCHEN Featuring Latin/Asian-inspired food, this hip downtown spot is full of great art, and the marble bar is a perfect place to try their fresh sushi. With a menu that changes every four to six weeks, be sure to check in often.

1201 State St. // 464.8989

American

PLYMOUTH TAVERN An Erie institution with great food and drink specials every night of the week.

1109 State St. // 453.6454

PUFFERBELLY Set in a decommissioned firehouse, the Pufferbelly is full of artifacts from Erie's fire fighting past.

414 French St. // 454.1557

CALAMARI'S Extra-long bar, with a large outdoor patio for those warm summer nights.

1317 State St. // 459.4276

Barbecue

THREE-B SALOON Beer, Bacon & Barbeque—the name says it all. Featuring slow-cooked brisket, ribs, and other down-home favorites. If you behave yourself, you may get a free slice of bacon with your beer.

732 W. 4th St. // 451.0007

Breakfast

SUMMER HOUSE CAFÉ Open from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. each day of the week, the Summer House Cafe serves up some of Erie's more unique breakfast and lunch options. Their breakfast burrito is a must-try, but be sure to check in for fresh daily specials.

2605 Washington Ave. // 452.2500

JO'S BROOKLYN BAGELS A walk through the door says it all. Well, at least it's speaking to your nose. Inhale deeply and breathe in those aromas. Fresh bagels and coffee. What's not to love about that combination? A

little piece of Brooklyn right here in Erie.

833 W. 38th St. // 520.6246

PEGGY'S RESTAURANT A landmark in the Liberty Plaza for a few decades now, Peggy's serves up quick, affordable meals and plenty of room for conversation. You can sit at the long counter than spans nearly the entire restaurant, grab a booth up front, or get a table in the back.

3512 Liberty St. // 866.3216

THE BREAKFAST PLACE Low prices and big portions—just the way Erie likes it! The Cajun eggs are a must-try.

2340 E. 38th St. // 825.2727

PANOS Open late night with an attentive wait staff who will never let your coffee mug go empty. Try the famous Greek omelet.

1504 W. 38th St. // 866.0517

SIDEWALK CAFE Tucked away on historic North Park Row, you'll find one of downtown's popular breakfast and lunch places.

26 N. Park Row // 455.0002

GEORGE'S With retro decor trimmed in red and black, George's is known just as much for looking like a retro diner as it is for the friendly safe and great grub. They're famous for their mashed potatoes, but don't get stuck on only that. Try the soups and sandwiches on for size too.

2614 Glenwood Park Avenue // 455.0860

DOMINICK'S Famous among Erie's late-night bar patrons who swear by this place as a sure-fire hangover cure.

123 E. 12th St. // 456.6891

HYATT'S - Serving up breakfast and lunch standards for years and is a staple in the West Erie Plaza.

928 W. Erie Plaza // 456.0102

FLIP CAFE Tired of the chain restaurant dishing out breakfast by the numbers? Then try this sweet little spot tucked away in Edinboro. Flip Cafe serves breakfast and lunch from morning 'til afternoon, so stop in and try any one of the favorites, including "Flip Bread." You won't pay much and you'll go home happy thinking about coming back again.

103 Meadville St. Edinboro // 734.3400

Brewpub

BREWERIE Erie's only brew-on-premise pub and eatery, the Brewerie is on a mission to, "Revitalize Downtown Erie One Pint at a Time."

123 W. 14th St. // 454.2200

Caribbean

PINEAPPLE EDDIE Southern regional cuisine served up with a bit of caribbean

flair. Featuring savory dishes like Creole shrimp and andouille sausage over grits, seared catfish served with rice and beans and fresh sauteed vegetables, and grilled Angus Rib Eye steak. Desserts include grilled pound cake served w/fresh glazed pineapple, ice cream and rum sauce, and luscious lime layer cake. BYOB.

1402 W. 10th St. // 454.0700

Chinese

GOLDEN WOK Quality ingredients, affordable prices, and consistent service make this Chinese restaurant stand out among the rest.

3202 Pitt. Ave. // 836.9657

Delicatessens

TERESA'S ITALIAN DELI

Teresa's Deli has been a staple in Erie for over 60 years, and it's no secret why. Now in its third generation, the Theresa's staff still makes the food fresh every day, following the same scratch recipes used since 1949.

3201 Greengarden Blvd. // 864.5322 and 810 E. 38th St. // 459.1145

PICASSO'S With signature panini-style sandwiches like the Lee Roslyn (Twinkie, ham, and cheese) and the DaVinci (sausage, ravioli, and provolone), Picasso's is a must-try. Great vegetarian options available.

2060 Interchange Rd. (Outside Millcreek Mall) // 866.1183

TICKLE'S DELI - This popular deli features good prices and big, tasty sandwiches including the famous "Big Freddy." Call ahead if you can because this downtown hotspot gets busy at lunchtime.

17 W. 4th St. // 455.5718

GERRY'S 8TH STREET DELI From the world-class deli to the homemade soups, Gerry's offers everything you'd expect from a deli. But with sandwich names like "Cluckmeister," "Chive Turkey," "Tongue Fu," and "Breast of Times" just to name a few, you're going to want to keep going back to check out all of these one-of-a-kind sandwiches. Deli hours run Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

2620 W. 8th St. // 836.8702

French

BERTRAND'S BISTROT A menu featuring local meats and vegetables and organic and Kosher ingredients when possible. The crepes and award-winning wine selection are more than enough to encourage a trip to France via downtown Erie.

18 N. Park Row // 871.6477

Gastropubs

JECKYL & HYDES - Just like the title characters—wait, character—this gastropub seems bent on being two things at once—and that's a good thing. While the seating area is small, which makes for a cozy experience, the tastes are big and bold.

8 E. 10th St. // 456.0072

Indian

RAJ MAHAL - Offering a wide variety of Indian cuisine, both vegetarian and carnivore friendly, with an ever-popular lunch buffet. BYOB

5618 Peach St. // 838.1055

Irish

MOLLY BRANNIGANS - Got a hankering for bangers and mash? Have no idea what the heck bangers and mash is? Head to this authentic Irish gastropub where you can get your fill of Irish-fare and Irish drinks. From Jameson to Guinness, from Shepherd's Pie to Purcell's Fish and Chips, Molly Brannigans brings the Irish pub to downtown Erie.

506 State St. // 453.7800

MCGARREY'S OAKWOOD CAFÉ Known for the award-winning Reuben, McGarrey's believes in big portions of comfort food served up hot and fresh. Although Irish in name, McGarrey's also dishes out American and Italian cuisine so that you're bound to find something satisfying.

1624 W. 38th St. // 866.0552

Italian

ALTO CUCINA Chef Pat Rodgers mixes the old-world with the exotic. Beautiful décor, with an outdoor deck for the summer months.

3531 W. Lake Road // 835.3900

COLAO'S Authentic Italian, fresh seafood, and a cozy, intimate setting.

2826 Plum St. // 866.9621

MI SCUZI Southern Italian cuisine with fresh, homemade pasta.

2641 Myrtle St. // 454.4533

AMICI RISTORANTE With dinner hours from 5 to 9 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and a takeout menu available Monday through Saturday, Amici Ristorante dishes out fresh food at affordable prices. From wings to pizza to fresh perch sandwiches and more, the menu has something for everyone. Call ahead one hour for takeout since food is prepared fresh per order.

1518 Walnut St. // 455.0041

Japanese

SUSHI AND ASIAN CUISINE Fresh sushi and sashimi

steal the spotlight of this show but their supporting cast shouldn't go unnoticed. The Kim Chi is a great place to start and any of the noodle choices make for good choices to continue on. With veggie-friendly options and a staff happy to serve you, Sushi and Asian Cuisine is a must.

1014 State St. // 455.0596

AOYAMA Think it's hard to find a daily sushi bar in Erie? Find your way to Aoyama for the hibachi experience combined with an extensive sashimi and sushi menu. You'll have the choice between hibachi-style seating and the traditional sit-down dining experience, so your mood can do the choosing for you. Reservations are highly suggested.

970 Millcreek Mall // 868.7999

HIBACHI From flinging shrimp to slinging steak, Hibachi combines dinner with the show without service charges or ticket fees. If you're fine with sitting beside your date instead of across from him or her, opt for this straight-off the grill without time-to-chill dinner experience.

3000 W. 12th St. // 838.2495

Mediterranean

PETRA Open since 2004, Petra serves as Erie's window to the Eastern Mediterranean. The folks at Petra want you to have "a unique culinary experience." And with Mediterranean-inspired items on the menu you're unlikely to find anywhere else, this is a one of a kind dining experience.

3602 W. Lake Road // 838.7197

Mexican

EL TORO LOCO With a full bar and the best margaritas in town, there is something for everyone. Enjoy a little taste of Mexico right here in downtown Erie.

333 State St. // 454.5626

LATINO'S With fresh ingredients and a commitment to serving up the authentic Mexican-cuisine experience, Latinos is the place to go for more than just the average Tex-Mex experience. The place isn't flashy, but with food this good, it doesn't have to be.

1315 Parade St. // 452.1966

EL CANELO With three locations to serve the greater-Erie area, you're never more than a 15 minute drive from all the chips and salsa you can handle served up with sizzling fajitas, hand-wrapped enchiladas and burritos, and a whole lot more. Don't be fooled by the imitators.2709

W. 12th St. // 835.2290 and 4236 Peach St. // 860.8187 and 4459 Buffalo Rd. // 898.1531

MOE'S With friendly staff

servicing up fresh, made-to-order southwest fare, Moe's is a great place for quality, on-the-go Mexican food.

2052 Edinboro Rd. (Outside Millcreek Mall) // 868.2121

Middle Eastern

CASABLANCA From traditional to modern recipes, from strictly vegetarian meals to meals centered around a choice selection of fresh meat, Casablanca Grille looks to provide something for everyone looking for a good Moroccan meal—and the diversity's a good thing too since when it comes to Middle East Mediterranean cuisine, Casablanca is it. Reservations are recommended.

2174 W. 8th St. // 452.4544

PALM MARKET AND DELI

This authentic Arabic market and eatery offers delicious, freshly prepared food and baked goods for a very reasonable price. The market offers a wide variety of exotic food and merchandise.

2702 Parade St.

Pizza

PAPA JOE'S With specialty pizzas ranging from "Vegan Demise" to "Chicken Gorgonzola" and subs that go by the names of "Enchanted Eggplant" and "Chuck Norris," Papa Joe's brings more to the table than any commercial pizza joint. And to boot, they serve up a mean falafel sandwich—something that's a must.

3826 W. Ridge Rd. // 835.3360

VALERIO'S More than just Pizza, Wings, and Subs! Local Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria that has been serving Erie County for over 17 years. Offering a variety of Homemade Italian Dinners, Seafood, Daily Lunch Specials, and Catering Services. Check out our menus online at www.valeriospizzeria.com. With 3 convenient locations to serve you, we'll have you singing...Manga Italiano!

2179 W. 32nd St. // 833-2979 and 1803 E. 38th St. // 825-2693 and 724 Powell // 833-8884 // Catering Office // 866-3193

PENINSULA PIZZERIA Fresh, quality ingredients and friendly staff make this new pizzeria a popular choice for pizza, subs, and salads. Try the Oliver Perry's Hazard if you're feeling adventurous.

4115 W. Ridge Rd. // 838.8400

Suds and Grub

U PICK 6 TAP HOUSE Great beer meets great food at the corner of Fourth and State streets. From gourmet flatbreads to pizza muffins, there's plenty of great grub

to pair with the endless flow of over 20 microbrews on tap. And with helpful servers who know their beer, this is a great place to come to try the beers you've never had but have always wanted to.

333 State St. // 520.5419

SIX PACK HOUSE OF BEER

With an ever-changing lineup of brews on tap and cooler wall of six-packs to go, Six Pack also serves up some cheap eats to boot.

847 Pitt. Ave. // 454.1989

U PICK 6 BEER STORE Off the downtown beaten path, U Pick 6 takes pride in its revolving draft beer lineup. With some quick eats and sandwiches sliced up right in front of you, U Pick 6 draws you in for the beer and keeps you for the conversation.

7520 Peach St. // 866.2337

Steakhouse

SENSORY 3 Next time you're at Presque Isle Downs & Casino, take a break from the table games and check out this bar and grille. If you're cashing in your chips for fine dining, we bet on being satisfied by a fine steak since Sensory 3 serves up some of the best cuts in the area.

8199 Perry Hwy // 866.8359

COLONY PUB & GRILLE - Multiple fireplaces and three intimate dining rooms make the Colony a popular spot for a romantic dinner.

2670 W. 8 St. // 838.2162

RICARDO'S Opened in 1943 by two brothers, Ricardo's serves up some of Erie's finest steaks. Chef Peter West and Cathy Merksi run one of Erie's choice restaurants that's known for its hand-cut, grain-fed western beef and delicious, mouth-watering ribs cooked outside year-round. Hearty Italian fare with casual feel of fine dining make Ricardo's a must.

2112 E. Lake Rd // 455.4947

VICTOR'S - Located inside the Bel-Aire hotel, Victor's offers fine steak and seafood with drink specials every night of the week.

2800 W. 8 St. // 833.1116

Thai

KHAO THAI The only full-time Thai restaurant in Erie. Luckily, it's fantastic! Try the drunken noodles for a spicy delight. Vegetarian friendly. BYOB

36 N. Park Row // 454.4069

Vegetarian

WHOLE FOODS CAFÉ Offering a wide variety of vegetarian staples, including wraps, sandwiches, soups, pizza, and seasonal specialties.

1341 W. 26th St. // 456-0282

Wings

BUFFALO WILD WINGS

Fourteen original sauces and loads of televisions make BW/W a great place to meet friends for the big game. Full bar menu available.

Interchange Road (Across from Millcreek Mall) // 868.9464

ODIS 12 Award-winning wings and affordable sit-down dining. Odis 12 features over 100 different flavors, including the crowd-favorite "ugly cousin."

664 W. 26th St. // 452.6347

GREENGARDEN TAVERN Classic corner bar atmosphere, great prices, excellent wings. Honey-hot barbecue and cranch are standouts. Go Browns!

1543 W. 8th St. // 454.3367

PARK TAVERN - Known for its wings, the Park Tavern boasts a family-friendly smoke-free environment. Try some Herbies or crispy Cajuns. Buffalo Cajun is also recommended.

4205 E. Lake Road // 899.8661

Sweet Treats

MIGHTY FINE DONUTS If you love donuts and are looking for something off the well-worn path to Dunkin' Donuts and Krispy Kreme, this local gem is your destination spot. Heralded by locals as the best donuts ever

2612 Parade St. // 455.6408

ROMOLO CHOCOLATES Tony Stefanelli apprenticed with his family in the chocolate business for nearly 20 years. Where'd that get him? He's one of only 26 master confectioners and he's right here in Erie. So for hand-made pieces of chocolate, be sure to stop by Romolo's—then boast to your out-of-town friends about having a master confectioner in your city.

1525 W. 8th St. // 452.1933

PULAKOS George P. Pulakos opened his first chocolate shop at 926 State St. in 1903. Over a hundred years later, the fourth-generation-run chocolate shop is still one of Erie's favorite places for a wide selection of all things chocolate—and other delicious snacks too.

2530 Parade St.

DONUT CONNECTION - Just off the corner of Peach and Liberty streets sits a family-owned donut shop that's celebrating its Golden Anniversary this year. With the "best coffee" in town and a wide selection of delicious hand-cut donuts, this is a great place for a for a sweet treat.

3842 Liberty St. // 864.8702



MIXOLOGY CONTEST WINNER

Fat Willie's Wing House

205 Waterford Street Edinboro, PA 16412

814.734.5187

Where the wings and house are always rockin'!

Bartender: **Andrew**

Drink: **Apple Raspberry Twist**

*"Every drink is made with love
at Fat Willie's Wing House."*



1 shot raspberry schnapps
Fill pint glass with ice
Top with Strongbow.

Check out **Beer Loves You** Youtube page for
links to all of the **Strongbow** videos.

YouTube /BeerLovesYou

Thanks to all of the contestants and voters
who participated in the contest!



**Strongbow Hard Cider has a crisp, refreshing
taste and is easy to drink.**

Made from more than 50 varieties of apples.

Best served in a glass over ice.

Gluten Free, 5.0% ABV



GET IN YOUR GAME!



WIN FREE PLAY OR CASH PRIZES!

Fridays in December • 1pm - 9pm
Receive one FREE entry every day you play plus a bonus entry for every 100 points earned!

FREE **NEW YEAR'S EVE ICE BAR**

Dance Club
Tuesday, December 31, 2013
10pm - 2am
DJ BY DYNAMIC SOUNDS



2014 *presque isle downs & casino*

You ARE INVITED to the MOST FABULOUS NEW YEAR'S EVE party this town has ever THROWN SO RING IN

Clubhouse Party at 9:30pm
Tuesday, December 31

Featuring Chris Higbee, live feed to Times Square and Champagne Toast at Midnight!

Tickets \$20 in Advance
\$25 at Door

presque isle
downs & casino

GET IN YOUR GAME

I-90 Exit 27, Erie PA | presqueisledowns.com | 1.866.ERIE.FUN



If You or Someone You Know Has a Gambling Problem, Help is Available. Call 1-800-GAMBLER.