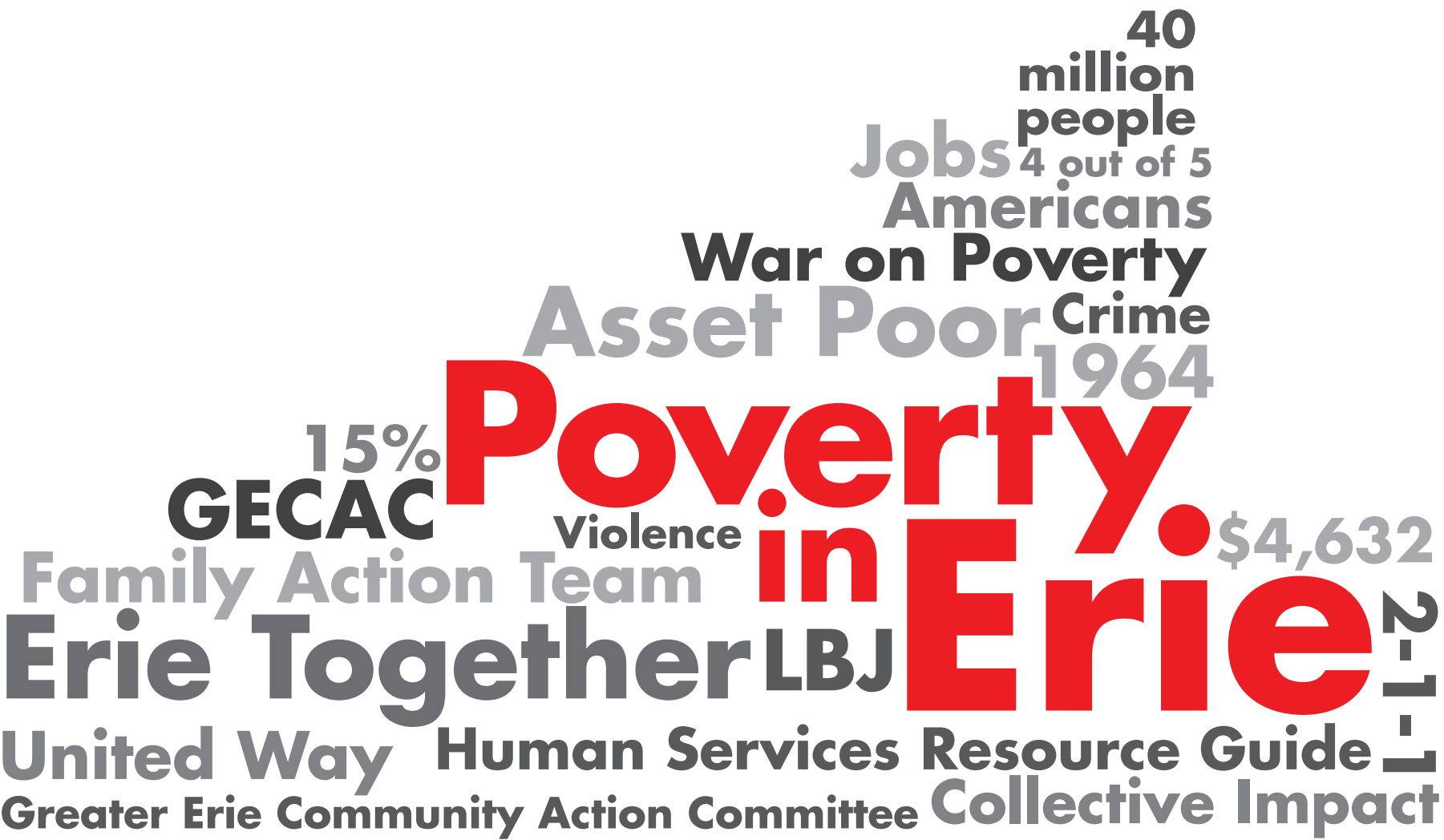


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ERIE READER



Bayfront Billboard Alley • Erie's Trash Bills Pile Up

Edward Snowden • Grammy Award-winning Snarky Puppy Comes to Erie • Falling Hollywood to play SXSW • Pa.'s Endangered Species List Threatened • The Bad Haircut: returns to Erie

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March 5, 2014

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From the Editors

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared war. That war was on poverty because nearly one out of every five Americans were living in poverty. The speech he gave led Congress to pass the Economic Opportunity Act and the onward we waged the war.

Fifty years later, that war is still being fought, and Erie County is one of those battlegrounds.

In her feature in this issue, Rebecca Styn explores the topic of poverty and how it affects Erie, comparing the the City to the County, the region to the state, and the state to the country. And while the number of those living under the poverty line decreased from 2011 to 2012, over 15 percent of Erie County residents still live there. That number jumps to over 25 percent when we consider the city, and one out of every ten Erie City residents live in "extremely poor or impoverished neighborhoods," Rebecca reports.

But what is the true face of poverty? When we hear the term "poverty," we may conjure up certain images. The man in the tattered jacket seeking refuge from the cold in a bus stop. The woman pushing a shopping cart filled with her only belongings as she looks for somewhere to spend the night. The couple standing by the side of the road holding a cardboard sign reading "Any bit will help..."

This is the face of poverty, but it's not the whole picture. Take for instance the "asset poor." As Rebecca notes, a household is asset poor if it has "insufficient net worth to support itself at the federal poverty level for three months in absence of income." For a family of three, that number is \$4,632,

and in other words, asset poor households — if met with a sudden economic crisis — would not be able to provide for their basic needs.

They — like many — are surviving paycheck to paycheck, living in fear that if they lost their income, they would lose the life they know.

The New York Times reported something else unnerving: 40 percent of Americans between the ages of 25 and 60 will live at least one year below the poverty line.

While each of us may not experience poverty firsthand, the likelihood is good that we know someone who is. After reading Rebecca's feature, you'll also come to know some of the initiatives and programs at work in Erie that are fighting that battle against poverty.

And this is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Let's face it: Poverty is a complex issue, which may be why we're slow to talk about it. How does crime factor in? Does poverty beget crime or crime beget poverty? Is it both?

How does the changing landscape of our region's industry affect this? Are other sectors creating those jobs lost at GE? Is hotel construction on our Bayfront a viable short-term or long-term answer? Should we bank on tourism?

The complexity of the question of how do we win the war against poverty isn't simple, and five decades later, history is still teaching us that, and we all still have much to learn. Which is why you'll see continued coverage of the topic here at the Reader, because if we're ever going to win the War on Poverty, it's going to take all of us working together.

Street Corner Soapbox

Edward Snowden: A slacker or the man who set us free?

By: Jay Stevens

When National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden started leaking the agency's top-secret documents last summer, a lot of Inside-the-Beltway journalists were quick on the attack.

Politico's Roger Simon called Snowden "The slacker who came in from the cold," and accused the contractor – "possessing all the qualifications of a grocery bagger" – of whistleblowing on the NSA as a kind of psychological compensation for failing to attain an advanced degree or finish his military training. "We've screwed this up," said *New York Times* columnist, Andrew Ross Sorkin, "to even let him get to Russia." Sorkin, apparently forgetting he was a member of the media and not of the government, also called for the arrest of Glenn Greenwald, the journalist who worked with Snowden to break the NSA story.

The *Washington Post's* Walter Pincus – a hereto respected name in investigative reporting –

We learned that the NSA has access to Americans' Google and Yahoo! accounts. We learned that the NSA logs all of our cell phone traffic.

wrote an embarrassing column for his paper, accusing Snowden of working for Wikileaks founder, Julian Assange, a column that later earned no less than three paragraphs of corrections from the paper's editor. Another *WaPo* columnist, Richard Cohen, called Greenwald, "vainglorious," and Snowden, "a cross-dressing Little Red Riding Hood." It's not like the *Washington Post's* editorial board blushed over these opinions; in July, the paper ran a patronizing editorial advising Snowden to turn himself in before he "harms efforts to fight terrorism and conduct legitimate intelligence operations."

It's been a long time since last summer – a long, long, cold time – and we've since learned a lot about the "legitimate intelligence operations" that the NSA has been conducting.

We learned that the NSA has access to Americans' Google and Yahoo! accounts. We learned that the NSA logs all of our cell phone traffic. That the NSA has access to our instant messages and smartphone applications and monitors the online data, not only of millions of ordinary Americans, but tens of millions of ordinary people across the globe. We learned that the NSA's program to collect Internet metadata is called, "Boundless Informant."

We learned that the NSA hacked into Google and Yahoo! data centers to better monitor our

Internet traffic. We learned that the NSA has worked with tech companies to build backdoor exploits in software in order to hack into networks. We learned that the NSA intercepts hardware deliveries for surveillance targets, and builds in backdoor exploits into servers, routers, even USB plugs – some are speculating that Apple's recent security patches for its computer and iPhone operating systems were to fix NSA-implemented vulnerabilities.

We learned that the NSA spied on foreign diplomats, embassies, and world leaders. We learned that the U.S. spied on our allies and tapped the cell phone of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and as many as 35 other prominent heads of government. That the NSA and its British counterpart monitored the delegates at the recent G20 summit – and not out of any security concern, but to gain advantages in trade negotiations. We learned that the NSA has been involved in corporate espionage. The NSA hacked into the network of the Brazilian oil company, Petrobras, and has been spying on Venezuela's state-run oil company, PDVSA.

We learned that the powers of the NSA are often abused by government workers and contractors. We learned that there were 2,776 violations of the NSA's rules from March 2011 to March 2012 alone. We learned the acronym, LOVEINT – or "love intelligence" – which stands for the practice of NSA officers to use the agency's powers to spy on spouses or partners.

We also learned that the NSA deliberately plants misinformation on the Internet to ruin the reputation of targeted individuals. Among the targets of the NSA's misinformation campaign were members of the hacktivist collective, "Anonymous." And we most recently learned that the NSA assisted their British counterpart, The Government Communication Headquarters (GCHQ), in collecting images, many of them sexually explicit, from Yahoo! webcam chats of more than 1.8 million users between 2008 and 2012.

In short, we learned that the NSA, working together with other surveillance agencies and with the support and assistance from a number of technology and telecomm corporations, has created a vast, global surveillance system, oper-



Snowden began leaking documents June 2013 that revealed a global surveillance apparatus run by the NSA

ates with little or no oversight, and targets data collection indiscriminately.

And what we've learned pisses us off. Polls taken of U.S. citizens as late as January show that two-thirds of Americans were concerned by the revelations of the NSA's programs and activities. In response, President Barack Obama has proposed reform of the agency – which most privacy advocates pan – and Congress will likely address it, as well. And Glenn Greenwald won a Polk Award in Journalism for his reporting of the NSA story – a shift away from the initial calls for his arrest.

But what about Edward Snowden? By now it's obvious the whistleblower has done the American public an enormous favor. It's also fairly clear none of these programs could have been questioned had Snowden gone through the official channels.

"We could have explained to Mr. Snowden his misperceptions, his lack of understanding of what we do," said NSA Inspector General, George Ellard, in a recent public appearance on the probable result of a "proper" complaint filed by the NSA contractor.

We're thankful that he didn't.

Jay Stevens can be contacted at Jay@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Sneveys_Yaj. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/u8ay3>



News of the Weird

By: Chuck Shepherd

LEAD STORY — Prison Blues

Norway's prison system is regarded as among the most inmate-friendly in the world, but convicted mass murderer Anders Breivik is still not impressed. Breivik, serving 21 years for the 2011 bomb-and-gun attacks that killed 77 people, may already enjoy amenities unheard of for a comparable American murderer, but he sent wardens 12 demands in November, including an upgrade of his manual typewriter and his PlayStation 2 (to a PS3, with better access to game selection). He also demanded that his weekly government "allowance" (equivalent of \$49) be doubled, and said if the "torture" of his living conditions is not relieved, he would be forced into a hunger strike. (Breivik threatened a similar strike in 2012, citing "inhumane" conditions such as cold coffee, lack of skin moisturizer and insufficient butter for his bread.) [Los Angeles Times, 2-18-2014] [BBC News, 11-9-2012]

The Continuing Crisis

Following alarming reports, the Ohio attorney general's office began working with the Ohio Veterinary Medical Association in December to be vigilant for pet owners who might be commandeering their dogs' and cats' pain killers — for their own use. Worse, other reports suggested some owners were deliberately injuring their pets just to obtain the drugs. [Dayton Daily News, 12-11-2013]

The Super Bowl may be the "holy grail" for Las Vegas sports gambling, but outside the United States, horse-racing, soccer and, surprisingly, pro tennis dominate. Tennis provides bettors with 19,000 matches a year (compared to 1,200 NBA games, 2,400 Major League Baseball games and fewer than 300 NFL games), with betting on 400,000 individual games and even on individual points, of which there are nearly 2.5 million, according to a January New York Times dispatch from Melbourne, Australia. In January's Australian Open, a routine fourth-round women's match between players ranked ninth and 28th in the world attracted more than \$4 million in wagers — on just the first set. [New York Times, 1-22-2014]

Grrrrr! (1) In Chedzoy, England, in January, the border collie spaniel Luce was "re-homed" after Royston Grimstead, 42, learned that she had chewed completely through a wheel arch on his \$120,000 Aston Martin. Said Grimstead, "(S)he had this guilty look on her face." (2) A magistrates court in Aberystwyth, Wales, convicted Ms. Rhian Jeremiah, 26, of criminal damage in January for biting into the roof of a Fiat 500 during an alcohol-fueled incident last year. Said the car's owner, "I could hear metal crunching" (but, said Jeremiah's lawyer, "not quite like" the scene in a James Bond movie featuring the character "Jaws"). [Yahoo News, 2-4-2014] [BBC News, 1-10-2014]

When a brand-new, exhaustively itemized medical coding system debuts in October (planned long before "Obamacare," by the way), doctors will find, for example, dozens of separate numbers to describe dealings with a patient's big toe (left one, right one, with or without nail damage, blisters, abrasions, critter bites, fractures, dislocations, sprains, amputation, etc.). Among the odder listed "origins of injury," reported The New York Times in December, are codes for "burning water skis" and injuries incurred in opera houses, or while knitting, or as a manifestation of sibling rivalry. The current system has about 17,000 codes, but the new one totals 68,000 for diagnoses plus 87,000 for procedures. [New York Times, 12-31-2013]

Close Enough for Government Work

Clare Lally, weary of her three-flight front walk, demanded a wheelchair ramp on her government-subsidized house in Duntocher, England, for her daughter, 7, who has suffered from bulbar palsy since birth, and the West Dunbartonshire Council came through promptly. A front-yard-dominating concrete platform was built in January (costing the equivalent of \$67,000), consisting of a 10-level "snake"-style series of ramps with steel railings. Not only does navigating the "snake" take time, but Lally now complains that the ramp has been taken over by neighborhood kids as a skateboard run. [Daily Record, 2-13-2014]

Smooth Reactions

Higher-Intellect Confrontations: (1) Following an evening of heavy drinking, according to police in Russia's Sverdlovsk region in January, a former schoolteacher, 52, was charged with fatally stabbing his host, 67, during a dispute over whether poetry or prose is the more important literary form. (2) One Russian man shot another (non-fatally, with rubber bullets) in the town of Rostov-on-Don in September in an argument over theories of German philosopher Immanuel Kant. (3) Nadja Svenson, 22, was charged on Christmas Eve in Londonderry, N.H. (a night with clear skies, apparently), with stabbing her father in the chest during bickering over the position of the Big Dipper. [RT.com, 1-30-2014] [RIA via Reuters, 9-16-2013] [Union Leader (Manchester), 12-26-2013]

Perspective

The lukewarm prosecution of two Steubenville (Ohio) High football players for an August 2012 rape was foundering until Internet hacker Deric Lostutter, 26, raised the incident's profile, but now Lostutter faces a vindictive prosecution and the possibility he could serve a prison sentence five times longer than the wrist-slap detention the now-convicted rapists served. When Lostutter took interest, many Steubenville students and residents had been hoping to quiet the case or even blame the victim, but (according to November reporting by Rolling Stone) apparently one Steubenville High official managed to convince the FBI that Lostutter's hacking of the official's personal emails was a greater national threat than the rapes and provoked a SWAT raid on Lostutter's modest farmhouse. (Besides the football players, the city's school superintendent was indicted for tampering with evidence and three other officials for false statements and failing to report child abuse.) [Rolling Stone, 11-27-2013]

The Way I See It

Garbage Bills Pile Up

By: Rebecca Styn

Close to a quarter of a century ago, the city of Erie started charging for garbage pickup. At the time, residents paid \$48 annually.

Today, those living within Erie's city limits pay that much every quarter – that is, until now.

City Council approved the city's 2014 budget back in December. As a result, city residents will now see garbage fees increase from an average of \$48 every three months, or \$192 per year, to \$55 every quarter, or \$220 per year.

Initially, there was a "sunset provision" as part of City Council's budget that said those fees would only be valid through 2014 and would have to go through a vote to keep the increase; otherwise, the charges would roll back to last year's dues. Mayor Joe Sinnott went on to veto the "sunset provision" as he stated it wasn't sound budgeting practice, and although some members of City Council tried to override the veto, those councilmembers were ultimately defeated in a 4-3 vote.

What this means is that the garbage increases will now go into effect beyond 2014, without a separate vote needed by City Council to approve them beyond this year.

When the charges for garbage pickup first began, the city included the garbage fee in the same billing cycle with water and sewer bills. However, those bills became separate long before Sinnott's administration took office. It was after the separation when major delinquencies started to occur – most likely because customers didn't feel as compelled to pay them, because as they found, if you don't pay your water bill, your water gets shut off, but that same consequence doesn't happen for garbage pickup.

In fact – and with all due respect – during his tenure on City Council, Mario Bagnoni, in staunch opposition to the initial proposed garbage fee, would often tell his constituents to not pay their bills because there was nothing that the city could do about it anyway. Read: An elected official was telling citizens to not pay their bills.

Here's something else to consider: although there's a drastic increase in fees from inception to today, the fees have not been raised in four years, when we all know the cost of business goes up annually. So, even if nobody was on that list of delinquencies, the fact that fees haven't been raised in four years is notable. Most importantly, though, isn't the fee increase – but rather the residents that are not paying their bills. The list of garbage delinquencies (over \$100) contains close to 3,600 names on 88 pages, including a former Erie City Council member, a former city school board member, and a number of landlords. Not to mention, it was not so long ago that one of our current county council members was on this list. We entrust these people to

not only govern on our behalf but also expect them to be the most responsible citizens, the pillars of our society – and serve as our representatives.

Perhaps sadder, though, is that this issue isn't unique to Erie. This is everywhere. In my research, I found a number of cities and states that not only have a garbage delinquency problem, but also have local officials on their list of unpaid delinquents.

And all of that aside, what about the rest of the 3,600 citizen on the list? I know in life we all go through trying financial times, but there are individuals on this list who haven't paid their bill in ten years. *A whole decade.*

Why – you might ask – haven't these people picked up the phone or stopped into the Erie Water Works office to setup a payment plan since such a thing is available. And you're right to ask that since it takes a village, folks – and not just to raise a child, but to keep us moving forward. To grow and to succeed.

The fact is, there really isn't much the city can do about this. They can't stop collecting trash because people won't pay their garbage bills to the authority. Sure, they can put a lien on someone's property, but they can only collect money when the property sells. And the

"sunset provision" was never going to work in the first place.

They could go back to putting all the bills into one lump sum and maybe that would drive people to pay for fear of being delinquent in areas they feel are more important than trash. But until they do anything, for the love of all things Erie, those of you who are on that list – please set up a payment plan and pay something, pay anything.

It's called being responsible – whether you're an elected official or not.

The city does have the entire list on their website. And it's for all to see. It's a start, because it's a shame tactic and it's because their immediate options are limited.

So, for all those curious, the current list of all delinquent accounts greater than \$100, is now posted on the city's website, www.erie.pa.us.

Love? Hate? Agree? Disagree? I want to hear from you. Email me at rStyn@ErieReader.com, and follow me on Twitter @rStyn. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/606ak>



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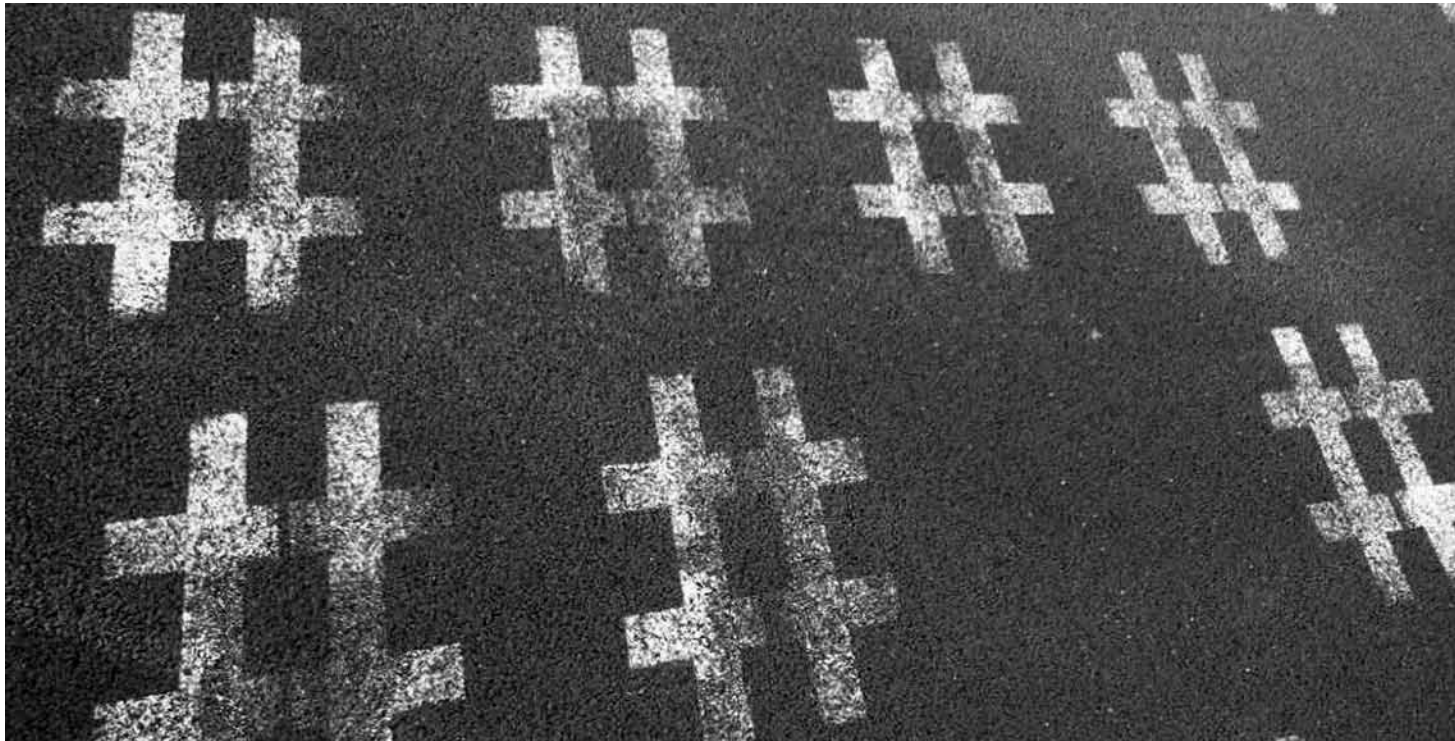
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Michael Coghlan

Tech Watch

#Do #You #Hashtag #?

By: Abby Witham, Epic WebStudios

Maybe you’ve seen it – maybe you haven’t. But before taking over as the host of *The Tonight Show*, Jimmy Fallon, with the help of Justin Timberlake, released a #hashtag bit in 2013 in which Fallon and Timberlake have a face-to-face conversation as if it were on Twitter using “hashtags.” But what are hashtags, and why is it important that we talk about how to help those in Erie effectively use them?

In short, a hashtag is a word – or combination of words – with the pound sign (#) in front of it. Basically, you *hashtag* so the word or words you are using can be searched and linked. Think of it as a rapid means of searching conversation and ideas via social media platforms, because once content is published, users are able to click on the hashtag to see a real-time feed of everyone

else who is using that same hashtag. For instance, I could use #ErieReader for any Erie Reader-related content and others who have the same interest and are searching that topic can easily find it. Simple enough, right? Not so fast. Many social media users don’t really seem to understand the point of this tool or how best to use it, illustrated

Searchable links, hashtags help you join and create conversation on various social media platforms.

by Fallon and Timberlake’s taking this tool of fine to use it in person-to-person conversation, hashtagging words and phrases that wouldn’t yield any useful search results.

Let’s be clear: They’re joking – and using hashtags lightheartedly. And so can you. Want to voice your current and personal feelings? Go ahead: #IJustDontGetThis or #QuestloveIsTheBest! But the chances people are searching those, though, is slim.

So if you want to use hashtags to join and participate in relevant conversations and share information more effectively, here are five tips to better utilizing hashtags when you want to better engage your community:

1. Start with what’s already being used. For instance, trying to start the trending hashtag #HousewivesOfEriePA isn’t likely to immedi-

ately take off because, well, that conversation just isn’t happening yet. So do some searching first before setting out to immediately begin using hashtags.

2. Don’t overuse hashtags in a post. If you have more than three hashtags in one Tweet or Facebook post, you are overdoing it. #spamming #nobodycares #keepitsimple #IStoppedReadingTheseBecauseThereAreTooManyAndTheyreTooLong.

3. Write it right. Since hashtags only work as one clumped word, never use spaces or punctuation. Entering either of those into a hashtag will break the link and will make it more difficult to search your hashtag, so if you use #Erie Reader only “Erie” will be linked.

4. Length is key. Don’t make your hashtags extremely long because it decreases the likelihood someone is searching the *exact* same thing (see my “I stopped reading” reference above). And certain social media platforms limit your character count, so always think: efficient as well as effective.

5. Make your hashtag worth clicking. If you are thinking of hashtagging words that make no sense, don’t do it. Why would anybody hashtag the word #me? Nobody is actually going to click on that and see what is happening in real time of the word #me. Make your friends/fans want to click the hashtag. #Todaywasjustnotmyday-Ineedchocolate serves no searching purpose because it’s more about an individual and less about information.

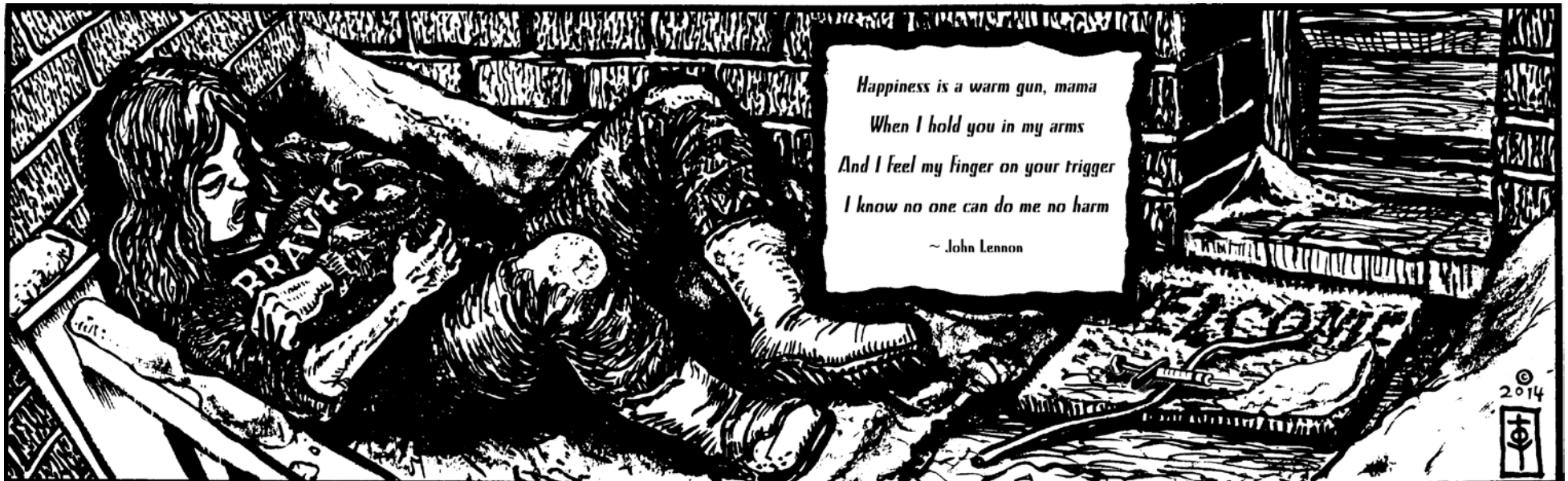
Fallon has two #Hashtag videos – and they signal something clear: Hashtags permeated both social media *and* culture. And this isn’t a bad thing, because hashtagging is fun *and* helpful. Just be sure you are properly using a hashtag by sticking to those five basic tips, and you’ll be joining, spreading, and creating conversation in no time.

So don’t be a #fail at #hashtags – just keep it #simple and be #smart.

Abby Witham can be contacted at Epic@ErieReader.com. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/jevvs8>



JUST TOYIN’ WITCHA By: B. Toy



Protecting Nature or Profits?

Bills in the Pennsylvania House and Senate have the potential to radically change threatened and endangered species classifications.

By: Mary Birdsong

Currently making their way through the Pennsylvania General Assembly, proposed bills have the possibility to radically change the way an animal gets designated as “threatened” or “endangered” in Pennsylvania, and also change the review process, mandate the creation of a more-accessible database of threatened or endangered species, and stipulate changes to the permitting process conducted by the Department of Environmental Protection.

With House Bill 1576 and Senate Bill 1047, what’s at stake is the welfare and future of vulnerable species and the preservation of quality wilderness within the state. While there are numerous complexities to these bills, two major changes are the most vital to understanding the bills’ impact.

Each of these bills mandates that: “No Commonwealth agency may take action to designate or consider fish, wildlife, or plants as threatened or endangered unless the fish, wildlife, or plants are designated under the (federal) Endangered Species Act of 1973.”

Some species are currently only state-listed, and the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) or the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) have the freedom to propose an animal for designation based solely on state conditions. For example, the peregrine falcon is considered threatened in Pennsylvania but is not under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

State Rep. Curt Sonney R-54th Dist., a co-sponsor of the bill, says that this alignment with the ESA is intended for future species, not ones already on the Pennsylvania-only list. Others aren’t so sure. “One of the issues with this bill from the beginning was its muddy language; this point is open to interpretation,” says Scott Weidensaul, naturalist and author from Schuylkill County.

The bills also stipulate that any decision made



The peregrine falcon is currently considered “threatened” in Pennsylvania.

by the PGC or the PFBC to place species on the endangered or threatened list — or designate a wild trout stream — must be reviewed by the Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) created in 1982 to essentially protect the interests of small business.

The PGC and the PFBC are exempt from having their decisions reviewed by the IRRC. There is some disagreement as to why, but most people involved agree that it was to ensure that decisions like listing a threatened or endangered species are based on scientific findings and not politics.

Under the current proposals, IRRC will be required to review them with all of the criteria it is mandated to use, such as public health and welfare and economic impact, as well as the soundness of scientific data. Opponents say this politicizes the process and creates redundancy.

Paul Burroughs, Conservation Chair of Presque Isle Audubon, says this will take the decision away from scientists and give it to the political process. “It opens the door to cherry-picking species for listing or delisting,” he says.

Rep. Sonney disagrees, saying that the bill will make decision making more transparent and streamline the permitting process. He says “With IRRC review, concerns will be brought to the surface so all parties are aware of them and know what the impact will be.”

State Sen. Sean Wiley, D-49th Dist., points out, however, that the true impetus behind the bills may be understood by reading President Pro Tempore Joseph Scarnati’s (R-25th Dist.) memorandum announcing his sponsorship of SB 1047, when Scarnati writes, “(this) legislation, will allow Pennsylvania to maintain a national standard of protection for our fish, wildlife, and plants without unduly harming our businesses and employers who provide family sustaining jobs in the Commonwealth.”

The PA Game Commission (PGC) and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission are opposed to the bills, as are environmental, fishing, and sportspeople’s groups across the state. Supporting the bill are primarily companies that are in the mining, building, and land development industries, and the coalitions that support them.

Both the PGC and the PFBC have independent review commissions of their own, says John Arway, Executive Director of the PFBC. “I truly don’t understand the need for this legislation. We already have an open, transparent, and defensible regulatory process.”

Sen. Sean Wiley, speaking of SB 1047, says he is not supportive of its efforts or those of HB 1576. because they attempt to further residential, commercial, and industrial development in the Commonwealth at the expense of wildlife habitats. “I am always a strong supporter of stimulating economic growth and development, but never at a cost of this magnitude,” he says.

Both bills were identical when first introduced, but HB 1576 has now seen amendments and is slated for leaving committee to make its way to the house floor by March 10. SB1047, still in its original form, is in committee. Travis Lau, spokesperson for the PGC, says of HB1576, “the amendments address some issues, but there are still valid concerns.”

As the process gets closer to full assembly debate, there are still many unanswered questions as to the true purpose and impact of these bills.

“Ironically,” says Weidensaul, “if these bills pass, the result could be stricter federal oversight and regulations if U.S. Fish and Wildlife finds state protections lacking.”

Mary Birdsong can be contacted at mBirdsong@ErieReader.com, and you can follow her on Twitter @Mary_Birdsong. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://eridr.com/hbp7k>





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Pat Vahey, Suzi & The Buzz, Steve Trohoske

sat.3/8
Claire Stuczynski 10pm-1am

sat.3/15
Rodger Montgomery and Mark Dolak
9:30pm

fri.3/21
Doug Phillips 6-8pm
Erie Ale House Acoustics 8-11pm
Eric Oliver, Jake Johns, Heather DeVore

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Brian Talbot

– it’s a movement,” says Bill Jackson, President of the United Way of Erie County. “It started out heavily including social service agencies and educators, yet recently we are starting to see more business people and elected officials in the public sector getting involved. We’re all in this together – it’s not just individually, it’s the community. And we’re starting to see that.”

Their aspiration statement – *Working together to make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work and thrive* – is one the group lives and breathes.

Erie Together’s movement is to make the Erie region a community of opportunity where everyone can learn, work, and thrive, Mary Bula, Project Facilitator for Erie Together and Vice President, Collective Impact at the United Way of Erie County, explains.

“Once we identified the areas we wanted to target, the objectives we wanted to achieve, we kept them in line with the aspiration statement,” she says of how Erie Together is focusing on strategic ways to prevent and reduce poverty. “And as a result, the level of collaboration in this community has been astounding.” To explain further, Mary went on to provide an example. “We want more children to be ready when they enter kindergarten so that they hit the ground running – and are able to learn. We need to make sure they progress satisfactorily through the third grade and at third grade are hitting third grade reading benchmarks.”

Interesting to note, is that up until third grade, children are learning to read – and after third grade, they are reading to learn. So, this benchmark is pertinent.

“In addition, we want kids to have quality career exploration experiences so they know what their opportunities are.” Erie together has set a goal that 80 percent of Erie county students be exposed to three or more career exploration experiences by the end of their 8th grade year. This helps them to have a better understanding of what direction they want to go in.”

Currently, 12.7 percent of Erie County eighth graders have had three career exploration experiences, 31 percent have had one, and an alarming 40.5 percent have had zero.

And these efforts are only part of their overall equation – not only focusing on children. Erie Together is comprised of four main action teams: early childhood readiness and success; aligning education to careers; individual and family stability; and balancing economic and workforce development.

So far the movement has achieved

One in four people in Erie City are living in poverty.

overall decrease is significant. In 2012, 25.7 percent of city residents were living below the poverty line. In addition, Erie’s poverty rate for children younger than 18 also fell from over 47 percent to just under 37 percent.

An improving economy has most likely played a role – most recently the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the annual average unemployment rates in 2013 declined in 43 states, Pennsylvania included, which saw unemployment rates fall from 7.9 percent to 7.4 from 2012 to 2013. And this trend is trickling down to Erie.

In addition, there have been many targeted efforts available, with programs going on for decades throughout Erie. But the situation would be much more dire if Erie had to rely on the economy to solve everything.

One of the newer initiatives in the war against poverty is Erie Together, which was begun in 2009 as a result of a study that the Greater Erie Community Action Committee (GECAC), United Way of Erie County, and Mercyhurst University conducted to identify ways to address the issue. After extensive due diligence regarding best practices throughout the United States and beyond, this movement was launched and it now includes hundreds of local individuals and organizations working together.

“Erie Together is not a 501(c)(3) and is not a program or an agency

The Many Faces Poverty in Erie

From small towns to the suburbs to the inner city, many are living below the poverty line

By: Rebecca Styn

A half a century ago as the poverty rate in the United States neared 25 percent, over 40 million people were living on less than \$3,000 a year. During that time, stories of destitution began to percolate out nationally, and those tales – coupled with the disheartening statistics – compelled President Lyndon B. Johnson to declare a War on Poverty during his State of the Union Address. While it wasn’t the first time poverty had been mentioned in the political playing field, it was one of the most memorable.

That war has yet to be won and is still being waged today.

However, more often than not, those living on the front lines of that war and those who spend the most time entrenched on the battlefield are unjustly stereotyped. Many Americans believe the notion that poverty only affects a relatively small number of American citizens, that the poor are destitute for years at a time, that too much welfare assistance is provided, and that poverty is ultimately a result of simply not working hard enough.

Each of these assumptions is completely wrong.

The New York Times recently reported that, “between the ages of 25 and 60, almost 40 percent of Americans will live at least one year below the poverty line in their lifetime...”

The *Times* also reported that over time, “most also pull themselves back out of it.”

And startlingly, if related conditions are considered – such as unemployment, welfare use and near poverty levels – four out of five Americans will encounter one or more of these events throughout their lifetimes.

And while the perception of poverty may be primarily observed in inner-city blocks, households in poverty can be found throughout a variety of both urban and suburban landscapes, as well as in small to

medium towns and communities across America – much like Erie County.

Over 15 percent of Erie County residents live below the poverty level, and that percentage increases to over 25 percent in the city of Erie with 10 percent living in extremely poor or impoverished neighborhoods. While both the city and county’s rates decreased in 2012, when compared to 2011, they are worse than the state average of 13.9 percent but better than the national average, which is 15.9 percent.

Within these numbers though, some groups are drastically more penurious than others.

Take for instance the “asset poor” in Erie County. A household is asset poor if it has insufficient net worth

to support itself at the federal poverty level for three months in the absence of income of less than \$4,632 for a family of three in 2011. In order words, asset poor households would not have enough money to provide for basic needs during a sudden job loss or medical emergency.

Asset poor statistics are staggering for Erie County – and particularly the city of Erie. In the city, 38 percent of all households are asset poor, which is twice as high as Pennsylvania’s 19 percent of households. Of these numbers, individuals under 35 years old hold the highest share at 48 percent. As one can see, this economic and social condition is more persistent and prevalent than income poverty.

Asset poor households aside, the



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several benchmarks and outcomes as a result of its objectives. As an example, in the early childhood readiness action team, the group has: enhanced connections between school districts and early care providers; created a common definition of "Kindergarten Readiness"; and recently developed a Parent Toolkit for Kindergarten Readiness, amongst others.

In another action team, Individual and Family Stability, through Erie Together, Georgia DeFreo, Vice President of Operations at GECAC helps more families become more self-sufficient using the "Family Action Team (FACT) model.

"We work directly with families and take a good long hard look at their current situation – helping them to set goals and match them up with others in the community who can provide them support in helping them to achieve those goals," she says.

The FACT program model helps low-income families move from dependency to self-sufficiency through education, self-assessment, and a mentoring experience. Other accomplishments of the ongoing objectives of this action team include the facilitation of partnerships with local churches, social service organizations and other entities to deploy the FACT program on a larger scale; a "Human Services Resource Guide" to help connect families to the help they need and an agreement to support implementation of 2-1-1 in Erie County, the social services equivalent of 9-1-1. 2-1-1 is a comprehensive information and referral service available to everyone and will ultimately serve approximately 735,000 people in 12 counties in northwestern Penn-

sylvania.

And these are only a handful of objectives and benchmarks the group has achieved. The underlying philosophy of Erie Together is that poverty is a community issue requiring a community-wide response inclusive of all sectors and residents.

It will be difficult to completely eradicate the poverty, but it is a war that fifty years later may be won. By staying on the offense and offering programs and initiatives to educate and inform, we are arming ourselves – and others – for now and in the future. Programs like Erie Together are always looking for volunteers, but what they need most of all is for us to truly understand the full scope of the battle, to take the time to research these organizations involved and to fully grasp the magnitude of the situation.

During his 1964 speech, President Johnson declared: "It will not be a short or easy struggle, no single weapon or strategy will suffice, but we shall not rest until that war is won. And it must be won in the field, in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House."

Because in the end, in order for us to help we must begin to truly understand that poverty is an issue of us, rather than an issue of them.

Rebecca Styn can be contacted at rStyn@ErieReader.com, and you can follow her on Twitter @rStyn. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erindr.com/vgser>



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Lighthouse Park, McCarty Memorial Park, Barber playground, Soldiers & Sailors Cemetery, Wayne Block House, Soldiers & Sailors Home, Mill Creek, Amendola Memorial Field, Dobbins Landing, GAF site, playground at Front and Wallace, the park at Front and Chestnut, playground at Walnut and Second, Liberty Park, Levy Jaycee Park, Bayview Park, Allen-Hetico Field, Nitkiewicz park at Cascade, the Strong Vincent field, and Frontier Park.

And what about the streets? In 1913, John Nolen proposed that Erie consider taking the major arteries and linking them to the water with pedestrian bridges or cuts through the bluff, as has been done at State and Holland. Perhaps these ideas are not feasible, but couldn't we consider grand staircases at Liberty (to Liberty Park), Sassafras (to the former GAF site and Convention Center), and at Parade and other main boulevards?

Each staircase could be connected to each other via blocks-long, Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant paths. As paths diagonally crisscrossed the hillside, they could provide a gentle grade for pedestrians and people using a wheelchair or pushing a stroller or bicycle. Within the network of paths, an occasional mini-plaza could allow people to rest or gather to watch the sunset. Walkways could be designed around existing mature trees.

Prior to last year's cleaning and clearing, a Bayfront Promenade was installed along the top of the bluff. An outcry by some residents led to a design-modification of the most "view-blocking" elements of the controversial fencing. Though some homeowners are still not pleased, the pathway has proved to be very popular. The Port Authority reportedly has two additional walkways planned. But why aren't these plans visible to the public ahead of time? Why not involve stakeholders and residents in the planning phases, rather than building first, and then dealing with concerns?

Shouldn't the Port Authority and the

Erie Community Foundation post site plans to permit community discussion of this important project? What kind of park is worthy of overlooking our "regional crown jewel?" Since we built a highway between the water and the bluff, we should look for inspiration from other places that elegantly handle traffic. Instead of creating a junior Peach Street, we should aspire to something as gracious as Cleveland's Martin Luther King Boulevard. The Erie Bayfront Bluff Park will take years to finish. But, judging from how things are going, it will be "good enough" rather than great.

Our problem is a lack of good planning. Well-meaning groups sometimes (unintentionally) harm Erie's public realm. Consider the EMTA decision to create a gigantic bus garage, office, and parking lot for employees. Using eminent domain, the EMTA acquired property and forced a successful business to relocate. The EMTA demolished viable buildings including the massive Cold Storage structure (which alone cost an estimated 2 million to tear down). Worst of all, EMTA's decision to close a railroad underpass – Division Street – forces low-income residents to walk extra blocks before heading north. Now, instead of walking to school from their homes north of 16th Street, Peifer-Burleigh students take a bus. Closing a connecting street reduces circulation options and isolates neighborhoods.

As residents of Erie, we don't have to settle for "good enough." Like our collective great-grandparents who commissioned John Nolen's city vision, we can ask for – and receive – a world-class masterpiece on Erie's Bayfront bluff.

Civitas members can be reached at their website www.civitaserie.com, or by email at Lisa@civitaserie.com, or occasionally at the Civitas office in the Masonic Temple Building, 32 W.

Eight St. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/yjmsb>



Considering the City

Erie's Bayfront Bluff Park has Potential

By: CIVITAS members Lisa Austin, Michael Beightol, and Stephen Sonnenberg

In 2010, Erie's Bayfront bluff was wildly overgrown with invasive species and littered with garbage. While teenagers made their way through rough terrain to Presque Isle Bay, folks along the top of the bluff could rarely glimpse the water. Enter the Erie Community Foundation.

In 2011 the Erie Community Foundation announced a gift to the city: a "Bayfront Beautification Project." Running thirteen blocks from Cascade to Wayne streets the "linear park" was designed to provide "safe pedestrian access to the Bayfront" in a "scenic park-like vista" featuring "shrubbery, flowers, and trees."

Almost three years into the project, there has been some success: there are some better views of the bay and there are isolated gardens developing here and there. But the bluff is missing too many trees, and getting down to the water is neither easier nor safer.

Instead of promoting access, the focus seems to have been on clearing the bluff to install corporate logos-on-stilts. While Erie's zoning code does not permit advertising signs on the waterfront, the signage was described as "part of the park." Apparently members of Erie City Council agreed with this view, eliminating the need for a conversation with zoning officials.

Semantics aside, the signs randomly

dotting the bluff are harmless: this "billboard alley" can be cleared in a few days. The trouble seems to be the lack of a well-designed plan for an urban park. Like the Pittsburgh consultant's organizational plan for the former GAF site, this park (so far) seems to be a suburban design. Built in isolation, suburban designs ignore the street grid (and their neighbors) and care most about the movement and storage of cars and trucks.

In vital places, the "negative" space around each "built thing" is as important as the built thing itself. Consider a living room large enough for two couches and chairs: the seating will often be organized around an open

center. A "negative space" is created in the space the furniture surrounds. In a city, the negative space *between* built things helps define the quality of the public realm: its walkability, its destinations, its vistas, its sense of excitement and energy, or sense of enclosure and protection. These experiential qualities define a city.

Erie deserves a landmark on the Bayfront Bluff. After clearing, the first priority should have been to start building the bones of this new "place" – a series of paths and plazas. From the top of the Erie bluff, multiple paths could have linked to each other and to the whole roster of existing open spaces near the water: Lakeview Cemetery, Land

Brian Graham

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Female Vampires in Movies, Miley Cyrus, and more

Edinboro University of Pennsylvania continues marking Women's History Month with an array of film screenings, presentations and other events throughout the day at EUP's Frank G. Pogue Student Center. Interested in tracing the roots and growth of the female vampire on the big screen? Check out Roger Solberg's talk, "Female Vampires in the Movies: From the 1930s to the Present," from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. Is Miley more your thing? Then take a seat at 12:15 p.m. for Rhonda Matthews' "They Came in Like a Wrecking Ball," which examines the girl-to-woman, very public transformations of Cyrus and other former Disney child stars like Britney Spears, Selena Gomez, and Demi Lovato. Those presentations are just a bit of what's happening at the 'Boro that day in Women's History.

When: 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Where: Edinboro University Frank G. Pogue Student Center, 219 Meadville St., Edinboro
Contact: 732-2000; edinboro.edu

Celebrate The Artist

Head down to Edinboro University for the opening night of the 5th Annual Michael V. Gmitter Scholarship Exhibition: Celebrate The Artist. Work from all thirteen finalists are being exhibited in Bruce Gallery and awards will be announced at 6 p.m. If you can't make it to opening night, don't fret — the show runs through March 14.

When: 5 to 7 p.m.

Where: Doucette Hall, 219 Meadville St., Edinboro
Contact: 732.2000

Gideon's Army

Lawyer-turned-filmmaker Dawn Porter will be at Allegheny College in Meadville for a free screening and following discussion of her documentary, *Gideon's Army*, starting at 5:30 p.m. at the Gladys Mullenix Black Theatre in the Vukovich Center for Communication Arts. The documentary — tracing the story of a group of young public defenders in the Deep South — debuted on HBO Documentary Films in 2013, and was an official selection of the U.S. Documentary Competition at the 2013 Sundance Film Festival, where it premiered.

When: 5:30 p.m.

Where: Vukovich Center for Communication Arts, Allegheny College, 555 N. Main St., Meadville
Contact: 332-3100; allegheny.edu

Mercyhurst North East Culture Series presents From Witch Doctor to Which Doctor

Have an interest in alternatives to contemporary medicine? Then you should come see Patricia Stubber, Instructor of Family and Community Medicine, Penn State College of Medicine, free of charge at the Alex Theatre as she explores the potential influences of cultural views and customs on health care and

The Bad Haircut: A Disconnected Comedy

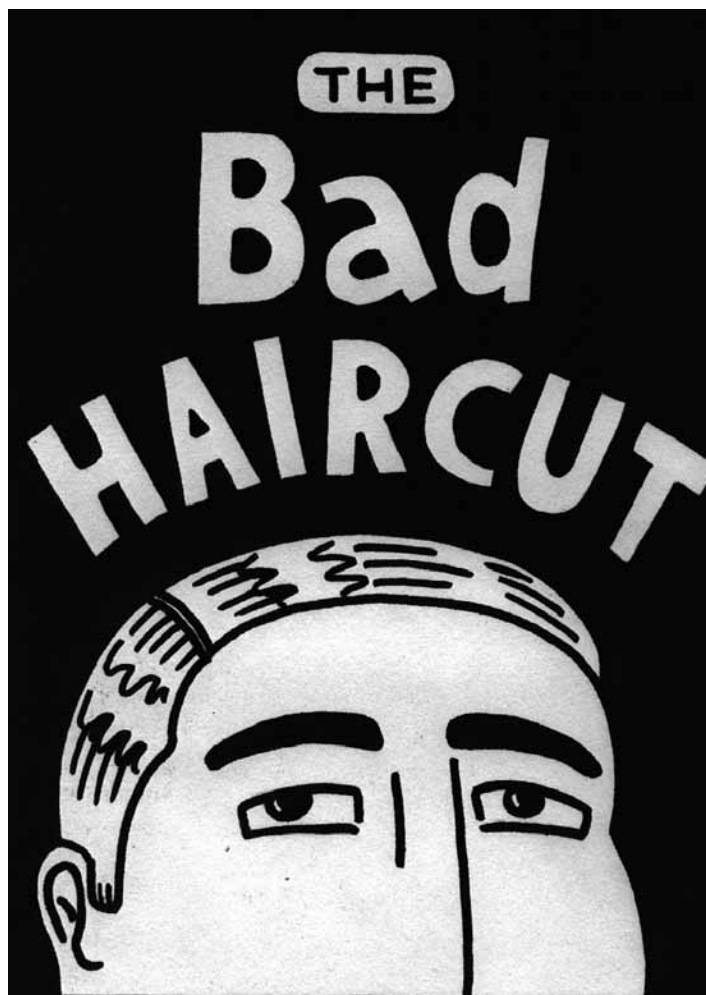
It was just eight months ago that we were losing our worries in the warm summer breezes of July, the sun warming our skin as we stood beneath baby blue skies dusted with wisps of white.

Despite the sunshine, Managing Editor Ben Speggen was busy watching someone else become lost that July, as Richard Boler's play *The Bad Haircut: A Disconnected Comedy* debuted at the Renaissance Theater. It turned out that staying inside was a great move, as Ben was blown away by Boler's first play since 1991, writing in an *Erie Reader* review that the local writer's work was "brilliant, timely, and necessary" and that *The Bad Haircut* "demands us to think and deserves our attention."

Fortunately for Ben and any other Erieite that enjoys all things brilliant, timely, and necessary, last July wasn't the only chance to see *The Bad Haircut*. Boler's story of a man who feels disconnected from modern life following an unfortunate trimming of his follicles will return this March as it begins a three-weekend run at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 7 at PACA, giving Erie an opportunity to witness the amusing, thought-provoking original piece in 2014.

Whether you're a fan of culture commentary or looking for a good laugh, make sure to get an appointment for *Bad Haircut* and reconnect with local theater. — Alex Bieler

March 7-8, 14-15, and 21-22 / PACA, 1505 State St. / pacai505.com



the various evidence-based treatments that are offered.

When: 7 p.m.

Where: 16 W. Division St., North East
Contact: 725.6277

thurs 3.06

Arts & Drafts Fest

Arts & Drafts Fest returns for the thirteenth time this March to help celebrate local artists' ability to create wonders for the eyes, ears, and taste buds during a three-day affair at The Brewerie at Union Station. The biannual bash will bring 30 artists, 15 live bands, and a whole lot of The Brewerie's own craft beers together to help you enjoy the amount of de-

tail and ability it takes to create something, whether it's a painting, a song, or an Apparition Amber Ale.

When: exhibits open noon to midnight, live music after 7 p.m., March 6-8

Where: 123 W. 14th St.
Contact: brewerie.com

Women of Word: Poetry 2014

Women's History Month events continue at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania with "Women of Word: Poetry 2014," being presented from 7 to 8 p.m. at the Dr. William P. Alexander Music Center's recital hall. The poets presenting put this word out in advance: "No subject is safe from us. We taste, ruminate, and then eject into the air for our audience to compare to their own feelings on the matter. We take you up and,

sometimes, not so gently set you down. Please come, close your eyes, and take the empowerment ride [that is] 'Women of Word.'"

When: 7 to 8 p.m.

Where: Dr. William P. Alexander Music Center, Edinboro University, 219 Meadville St., Edinboro
Contact: 732-2000; edinboro.edu

"Broadway's Next H!t Musical" at Edinboro University

When improvisation, music and audience participation are combined, hilarity is surely to ensue, and hilarity, thy name is "Broadway's Next H!t Musical." After gathering fictional, hit song suggestions from the audience, improvisers will ad-lib material that will have the whole house in gut-wrenching, cheek-cramping laughter. Cost is \$10.

When: 7:30 p.m.

Where: 219 Meadville St., Edinboro
Contact: events.edinboro.edu

fri 3.07

The Story Next Door

Award-winning journalists from across the United States — including three Pulitzer Prize winners — will visit Allegheny College to help students and community members document "The Story Next Door" at a two-day conference exploring community journalism in action. The conference — which includes a uniquely local sunrise-to-sunset multimedia documentary — is free and open to the public, and no pre-registration is required. Altogether, it's "a grand storytelling experiment," says Cheryl Hatch, visiting assistant professor of journalism in the public interest at Allegheny.

When: morning-to-night events both days

Where: Vukovich Center for Communication Arts, Allegheny College, 555 N. Main St., Meadville
Contact: 332.3100; allegheny.edu

Stephen Trohoske's Art Groupies

After you're done enjoying your favorite Gallery Night stops, swing down to Erie Ale House for Stephen Trohoske's Art Groupies. Trohoske, Erie's Mr. Bassman, will team up with Eric Brewer, Elly Vahey, and Stix Thompson to give their own spins on classic tracks from Tom Waits, The Clash, and Joy Division, plus many others that the quartet feel liking playing.

When: 10 p.m.

Where: 1033 State St.
Contact: 454.4500

sat 3.08

Erie Philharmonic Presents: Pictures at an Exhibition

Violin times two. The Erie Philharmonic's own Concertmaster, Ken Johnston, joins the new Concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Symphony, Noah Bendix-Balgley for double doses of Ravel as well in La Valse and with Mussorgsky in the iconic Pictures at an Exhibition.

When: 8 p.m.

Where: 811 State St.
Contact: 455.1375



Contributed Photo

Start Making Sense

Given how influential the band Talking Heads was for many current artists (I'm looking at you, St. Vincent), it makes sense that some musicians would try and emulate the sounds of Heads' frontman David Byrne and company. In fact, that love of the beloved new wave band led one group to Start Making Sense.

The Bethlehem, Pa.-based act returns to the crooked i to lovingly recreate the tunes of Talking Heads. Now you may ask yourself, "Why should I go there?" This is not your usual tribute band, as former Talking Heads keyboardist Bernie Worrell gave Start Making Sense his stamp of approval, and for good reason, too, as the band's live show is a thrilling recreation of Talking Heads' signature style.

If the sound isn't enough for you, lead singer Jon Braun even mirrors David Byrne's famed dance moves and twitches to help give you the full once in a lifetime experience. If you're a Talking Heads fan, it makes total sense to check out this excellent tribute act. If you're not, it's time to get a lesson in the ways of Talking Heads and take in one psycho killer of a show. — Alex Bieler

Saturday, March 8 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. / The crooked i, 1013 State St. / facebook.com/thecrookedierie

The Great Gatsby

F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* may not have received much critical acclaim when it was first published in 1925, but the classic story of the mysterious Jay Gatsby and the "new wealth" citizens of West Egg is now considered the second best novel in the English language of the twentieth century, according to the Modern Library editorial board. Starting Friday, March 7, you can witness Fitzgerald's magnum opus brought to life right in Erie.

The Erie Playhouse will be treating The Flagship City to a three-week stage run of the beloved American tale of obsession, excess, and the American dream. While Baz Luhrmann's cinematic adaptation from 2013 may have relied on 3D glasses and flashy effects to fill theater seats despite mixed reviews, the Playhouse production should thrill fans of the Fitzgerald classic, with Domenic DelGreco playing the story's narrator Nick Carraway and Brendan Daugherty taking the lead as Gatsby.

Fitzgerald may have died thinking he was a failure, but you can witness his masterpiece by taking a trip through the valley of ashes up to West Egg to see *The Great Gatsby* when it graces the Erie Playhouse stage. — Alex Bieler

March 7-8, 12-16, and 19-23 / 13 W. 10th St. / erieplayhouse.org / 454.2852



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The Irish Rovers

After 50 years and 40 albums together, you could say that the members of the Canadian folk band The Irish Rovers have experience on their side, having shared their traditional tunes with North America both on stage and through TV on their self-titled show in the '70s.

However all rovers must stop roving sometime. The Toronto troop officially announced that the band is entering its final phase, as the The Irish Rovers are embarking on their farewell tour. Local fans of The Irish Rovers need not worry, however, as the tour includes a stop at the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst University, treating the Erie community to their signature songs one last time.

The Irish Rovers gave North America over half a decade of their craft, and now the community has one last chance to celebrate their long, celebrated career, so roll on down for a final night of Roving. - Alex Bieler



Sat. March 8, 8 p.m. / Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. / miac.mercyhurst.edu

sat 3.08 cont.

Blended Spirits Ranch Appreciation Dinner

Join in for a fun filled evening of dinner, dancing, chinese, and silent auctions and great music provided by Eric Brewer & Friends and Lucky Dog for a great cause! Blended Spirits Ranch's mission is to provide a safe and structured environment for using equine therapy to help individuals feel empowered and build self-esteem. Through equine assisted activities; individuals are healed while the ranch provides a haven for neglected horses.

When: 6 p.m.
Where: 7794 Peach St.
Contact: jnoble2005@gmail.com

Strangers and Liars CD Release Party

Hop on over to the music reviews and read Ben Speggen's review of Americana pop-rockers Strangers and Liars and then hop down to the King's Rook Club to check out SnL's "Original Electrified Music in the American Tradition."

When: 9 to 11 p.m.
Where: 1921 Peach St.
Contact: StrangersAndLiars.com

tues 3.11

Women's History Events at Edinboro University

Women's History Month events continue at Edinboro University with back-to-back presentations from political science students from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at the R. Benjamin Wiley Center, room 107. First, recent EUP grad Ashley Rutter will present "Pants and Heels: The Dichotomous Nature of the Portrayal of Women in National Politics." After that, EUP student and local gay-rights activist Joshua Szczesny will take the floor for his talk, "The New Glass Ceiling: Feminism, Lesbianism and Income Inequality in the LGBT movement."

When: 7:30 to 9 p.m.
Where: R. Benjamin Wiley Center room 107, Edinboro University, 219 Meadville St., Edinboro
Contact: 732.2000; edinboro.edu

wed 3.12

SPANK! Fifty Shades of Parody

SPANK! The Fifty Shades Parody is the hilarious new comedy that brings all the naughty fun of the best-selling book to life. Your inner goddess will be laughing out loud with this clever re-imagining of the

characters as they come alive with hysterical comedy, musical numbers, and steamy performances from the leading hunk in the grey tie, plus lots of surprises! Learn more at spankshow.com

When: 8 p.m.
Where: 811 State St.
Contact: 452.4857

thurs 3.13

Broccoli Samurai w/ Gnosis

When a band is called Broccoli Samurai, it's a safe guess that the members of that group are looking to have fun. Broccoli Samurai is definitely one of those bands, doling out healthy servings of playfulness along with their electronica dance jams. Head to the crooked i for this show if you're in need of a good time or are trying to cheat on your serving of vegetables.

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

fri 3.14

Icarus Witch w/ Second Empire and Heidt

Pittsburgh heavy metal troop Icarus Witch returns

to Sherlock's for another night of their signature heavy melodic style. The quartet has earned rave reviews from Classic Rock Magazine and an Guitar World, and now they look to keep building to their rocking reputation along with guests Second Empire and Heidt.

When: 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Where: 508 State St.
Contact: 453-7760

sat 3.15

Aqueous

When Aqueous is up on a stage, you're no longer seeing a show, you're part of an experience. The Buffalo groove rockers are coming back to the crooked i to create more memories at the State Street venue with their intense guitar jams and catchy songwriting, all making for one great night.

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

mon 3.17

St. Patrick's Day Bash: The Tradesmen w/ Human Animal

St. Patrick's Day is a wonderful holiday here in Erie, and if you can last the whole day, the crooked i has a treat for you. The Tradesmen will be playing at the State Street establishment to help finish off this wondrous Irish holiday with plenty of Celtic punk along with hardcore group Human Animal.

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

tues 3.18

Dramashop presents: Love Actually Isn't

Don't miss the final installment of Dramashop's staged-reading series — which just happens to be part of Gannon University's Fringe Festival — because it's Hollywood in Erie by way of Erie... or something like that. Love Actually Isn't covers love, doubt, closure, and comprise in six one-act plays by Erie-native Dan Johnson, whose work was produced last year in the Hollywood Fringe Festival. So Dan, who's from Erie and had his work produced in Hollywood, will now have the chance to see his Zach Flock-directed work set on an Erie stage, which is all around pretty damn cool if you ask us.

When: 8 p.m.
Where: Renaissance Centre, 2nd Floor, 1001 State St.
Contact: Dramashop.org



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MUSIC REVIEWS

Beck

Morning Phase
Capitol

★★★★★



Although Beck calls his first new album in six years a companion piece to his stellar 2002 album *Sea Change*, it's hard not to think of *Morning Phase* as a sequel. It can be a harsh designation, as the word "sequel" often leads one to think of lesser versions of a beloved original, but we find Beck treading the familiar melancholy territory of *Sea Change*, just not quite as well as he did 12 years ago. Of course, that's not to say that *Morning Phase* isn't a worthwhile return to heartbreak; in fact, it's a lovely set of 13 tracks assisted by an ample amount of sorrowful strings and reverb. It's hard not to get sucked in when Beck yells "I'm so tired of being alone" to kick off the excellent single "Blue Moon," while the veteran musician creates lovely arrangements for his new assortment of sad songs. *Morning Phase* may feel like a sequel, but it's certainly a worthy one. - Alex Bieler

St. Vincent

St. Vincent
Universal

★★★★★

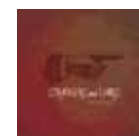


It's not often that a musician could describe their sound as a sort of "techno-shamanism," but when Annie Clark of St. Vincent used that term to describe her new album on *The Colbert Report*, it sure did fit. *St. Vincent*, Clark's fourth solo album under her saintly pseudonym, is a musical marriage of earthly desires in a digital age. "I'm entombed in a shrine of zeroes and ones" she sings during the dark, fuzzy breakdown of "Huey Newton" before the album shifts to the exquisite, almost robotic single "Digital Witness," an efficient track influenced by Clark's time working with David Byrne. Elsewhere, Clark displays her impressive fretwork on "Birth in Reverse," showing off her ability to provide soft and rough textures to her sonic soundscapes. Clark's career has been fascinating to watch, and on *St. Vincent* she's become the queen of her own musical world. - Alex Bieler

Strangers and Liars

Live That Way
Independent

★★★★



Just one year after releasing their debut album *Five Seat Concert Hall*, Erie-based Americana pop-rockers Strangers and Liars return with their sophomore follow-up *Live That Way*. Ten tracks – including a full-band version of drummer Tom Hitt's "Elizabeth Off and On" (a cool tune then, and a cool tune now) from his solo record *Scribe and Jester* – capture the essence of good, ol' fun rock 'n' roll. Some of the songs play a bit long and could benefit by losing a phased-out guitar solo or three, but the loose feel the band plays with creates the sense that four guys at work are having fun and enjoy the experimentation that comes with making music. While it is one of their longer songs, album standout "Lost" captures Tommy Link's songwriting at its best, blending thoughtful lyrics with a catchy melody with a tight delivery from the rest of the band. - Ben Speggen

Jerry Gaff

Sojourn, Pieces for Guitar
Self-released

★★★★



Sonorous, solitary, and somnambular, *Sojourn's* 11 tracks display a wide range of emotional expressiveness reminiscent of a backwoods expedition through uncharted sylvan dales; with veteran local fingerstyle guitarist and composer Jerry Gaff leading the way on the mostly-instrumental journey, expect to experience rich and deeply moving Americana-esque themes that occasionally include tinges of isolation and melancholy that gracefully subside, revealing a warm, comfortable destination just over the next hill. While it may be a stretch to call the inclusion of the vocal track "Breathe Deeply" a "gaffe," *Sojourn* could have benefited from the omission of this mood-breaker, however, overall, this album — mostly recorded and mastered at Cycling Troll Recording Services in Fairview, Pa. — is still worth a spin, whether you're trekking through the wilds on a raw winter's day, or laying in a candlelit bathtub with a bottle of American Honey. - Cory Vaillancourt

Snarky Puppy

Grammy Award-winning
Band Comes to Erie

By: Ryan Smith

I couldn't get any of the many members of Snarky Puppy on the horn for an interview last week.

Not a one in the bunch, which is big. Bummer. That woulda been pretty fun, I thought – the best, the really loose and free and adventurous, true-original jazz musicians, they usually talk a lot like they play, you know.

Snarky Puppy wasn't being all snarky or snooty or whatever on me, though (which, I guessed, could have been the case, what with the fantastic quasi-collective's very recent Grammy Award win and all the other ways they're getting recognized more and more these days as being, well, fantastic).

Nope, they woulda been happy to accommodate under other circumstances, their agent suggested. Thing was, they were out and away – across-the-world out and away – on tour in Jakarta, Indonesia.

By the Internet's estimate, that's just about 9,913 miles from Erie, Pennsylvania. And by the time Snarky Puppy gets to the crooked i's stage on March 20, bringing a colorful, deep universe of free-form music – "music for the brain *and* booty," they call it – along with them to the Gem City, they'll have bridged every one of those many miles, and more.

The performance, being hosted by the i and presented by the Mercyhurst Institute for Arts and Culture as part of its 'MIAC Live' series, is being funded in part, according to Mercyhurst, through the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation's Jazz Touring Network program, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

As far as local shows go, this one's unique in those partnerships, and, all-around, it's kind of a big deal.

The 18-piece outfit – a true fusion of world-wise musical talents – won this year's 'Best R&B Performance' Grammy, was included among iTunes' 'Best of 2012' picks in the jazz category, and has earned praise from critics everywhere from the Boston Herald to the BBC. Currently based in New York, their once-underground sounds have been filling major spaces around the globe over the past couple of years.

"Snarky Puppy is an unbelievable band, and have only touched



As part of the MIAC Live Series, Snarky Puppy will bring their infectious blend of jazz and R&B to the crooked i Thursday, March 20.

the tip of the iceberg as far as their success is concerned," Ryan Bartosek, co-booking agent for the i and Rubber Tramp Live (and, otherwise, a learned man of music of here, of there, and of everywhere), said when I caught up with him last week.

"It's always nice when a band of this musical caliber comes through and local fans can get a chance to soak it all in," he added. "I expect most of Erie's musical community to be in attendance, with their jaws on the floor."

"Hopefully it inspires some people."

MIAC announced last month that renowned New York-based improvisational jazz singer Alison Wedding will be opening for Snarky Puppy. A few members of the band – its leader and bassist, Michael League, drummer Ross Pederson, and guitarist Pete McCann – also serve as Wedding's regular backup, so the night's warm-up is sure to be one eclectic meeting of the musical minds as well.

The i's doors open at 7 p.m. for the March 20 show, with the night's performances slated to start at 8.

For tickets and more information, visit miac.mercyhurst.edu, or call the MIAC box office at 824.3000.

Ryan Smith can be contacted at rsmith@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @RyanSmithPlens. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/ooioov>



Falling Hollywood to Play SXSW

The stars at night...Are big and bright...Deep in the heart of Texas!

By Cory Vaillancourt

The boys in Falling Hollywood have been blowing local minds for nigh on to 2 years now, but this month, they'll be taking their infectious, punky brand of Rust Belt folk rock to Texas, where they will become the first band from Erie to play at the Convention Center of the prestigious South by Southwest festival in Austin.

"We are incredibly honored," said frontman/guitpicker Nick Taylor. "This could mean big things – record labels, opening slots for national tours, or hopefully an invite back to the main stage next year. If nothing else comes of this, it will be the experience of a lifetime."

SXSW was started as a music festival in 1987 by the staff of Austin's alternative weekly newspaper, the Chronicle. Since that time, it's grown to become one of the – if not *the* – most influential conference/festivals in the world, with specific segments devoted to film, music, and interactive technology.

Taylor, along with fellow vocalist/axeman Matt Flowers, bassist Bill Frackowiak, and drummer Brad Triana will play two shows at SXSW's Interactive Expo, on March 6 and 7; the lucky crowds who catch these gigs will be treated to a special...ummm... treat.

"We plan to once again tear away the excess, and play in our raw, acoustic set up," Taylor told me, "exposing the raw core of Falling Hollywood that first captured the ears and hearts of our fans here at home."

That raw core Taylor speaks of first manifested itself in Falling Hollywood's stunning 2012 debut album, *Set the Table*. They strayed slightly from that formula with their energetic follow-up album *Heavy Weather* late last year. However, both albums are among the most highly regarded releases by a local group in years.

And although Falling Hollywood's popularity has long since grown outside of their native region – as evidenced by recent gigs in Greenwich Village, Brooklyn, and Cleveland – this set of performances in Texas could end up earning them the recognition they deserve on a national scale.

"We are incredibly optimistic for this year and our music," said Taylor.

For more information on Falling Hollywood, visit www.Falling-Hollywood.com. Contact Cory Vaillancourt at cVaillancourt@ErieReader.com. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/hnqcs>




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Outside Voices

Would you support a ban on fracking in Erie County?

Cam El-Farouki

"I am concerned about the ramifications of fracking in terms of ground water and also earth movement and possible earthquakes, so I feel like I'd want to see more information about the long-term consequences."



Jessica Hunter

"I think that there are definitely questionable things that are happening right now. We need to find out what the long- and short-term effects are on health before we can even go further with a ban. I understand it generates a lot of revenue, but at what cost to health and safety?"



Joshua Harbaugh

"I would [support a ban] because it can affect the quality of the local water supply, livestock, and everything to do with that. At the same time, the economy sucks and people need to have jobs but...it's detrimental to the environment, so I would support it."

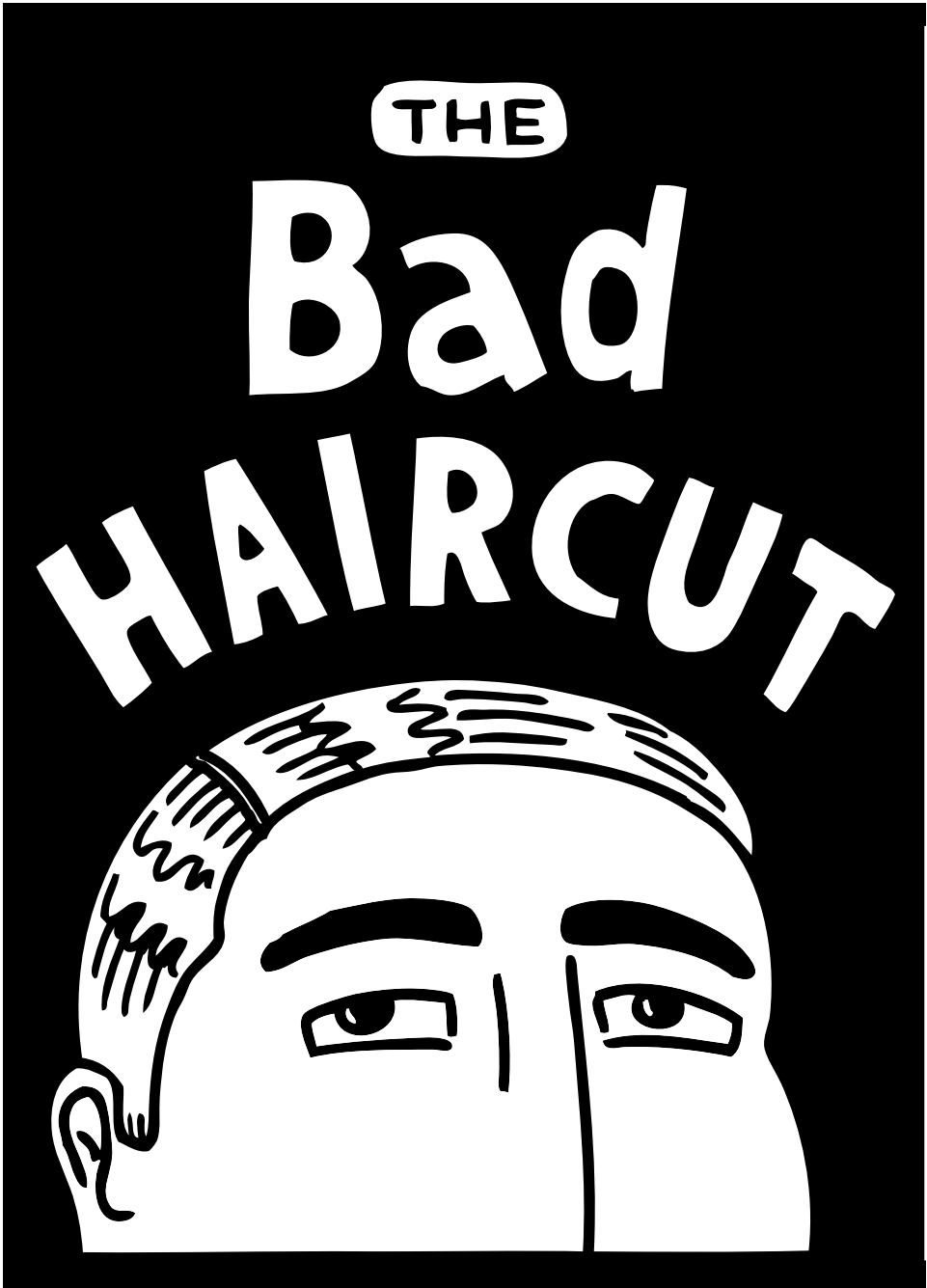


Drummer Volkman

"I would support a ban on fracking in Erie County because it does ruin the environment and that's more important than any economic benefits that we could receive from it."



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Geeked Out

Twitch Plays Pokémon

By: John Lindvay

Backseat drivers are the worst. But it would be worse if you had to obey every command they shouted out. And it would be even worse if there were, say, 60,000 people in the backseat, and you still had to obey each direction.

Sounds like a nightmare, but it's not. This is Twitch Plays Pokémon – thousands of viewer/participants on the Internet shouting commands to one lowly screen playing Nintendo's Pokémon.

This recently happened and went strong for over two week as a massive audience congregated in a chat room to watch a live feed of a game of Pokémon. The twist is that the chat room controlled the player. So instead of one individual making each command second to second, it rotated between 60,000 people each taking a turn every second. It is as beautiful as perplexing and chaotic as you imagine.

And what is more incredible is that beyond all doubt, this gaggle of gamers beat the final boss on day sixteen.

Pokémon is the wildly popular handheld game franchise from Nintendo. I'm sure you've heard the popular catch phrase of needing to "Catch 'em all!" but if you're unfamiliar allow me to briefly explain. Pokémon is a game about collecting fantasy beasts that you then train and use in friendly spars with other trainers. But what's happened with Twitch Plays Pokémon took the game to a whole other level.

Explanations are in order. First, Twitch.tv is a fast-growing website that is dedicated to gamers who broadcast – or stream, as most call it – themselves playing games to anyone willing to watch. There are wide arrays of streamers, and viewers can watch their favorite game being played or see what their favorite streamer is up to.

Want to watch some Call of Duty played by a "pro-gamer?" Twitch has you covered. Want to watch some people build cool monuments in indie-hit Minecraft? There are streams for that.

Just from the front page alone, I noted that there are roughly 300,000 people watching the more popular games – and roughly 60,000 dedicated to Twitch Plays Pokémon.

So how did Twitch Plays Pokémon happen? Some industrious-minded people wanted to run an experiment with the chat rooms on Twitch.tv. They wanted to see if they could hook the chat up as a controller to a game that requires turn-by-turn commands, like push a button to move one unit. If I were to write the word "up" in the chat room, Red (Pokémon's default protagonist name) would move up. Remember that bit about backseat driving, and how it's the worst? Imagine 60,000 different, unsynced commands flying at a game randomly: Beautiful, contained, geeked-out chaos.

If you are just a casual observer watching the stream, it all seems pretty tame. The character on the screen is moving in very odd and nonsensical patterns because, well, it can't tell which backseat driver to listen to first, so it all just looks very random. However on the right side of the screen, you can see the battle wage. A single user can only give a command every 30 seconds, but with 60,000 commands flying the stream of text is an incomprehensible torrent. In all actuality, it is amazing anything ever got accomplished.

To help this, the host of this experiment introduced a new system to further play with this hive-minded approach. Two commands were added as options for players to use: anarchy and democracy. These two political ideas are contextualized as a bar with a line separating the two at the halfway mark. As more viewers clamor for anarchy, the bar fills past that halfway mark and anarchy is the rule. All commands slung out are sent to the game client and executed. If democracy reigns, the game pool voted for a 10-second period and used the winner of that vote as the next command. It's worth noting that the Twitch Plays Pokémon purists want to protect anarchy, as that is how the game was originally incepted, but a new faction fought for democracy to assume control of the hivemind.

What is probably the most incredible aspect of all is that they actually beat the game. While it may take someone a day or two of playtime to complete the game alone, it is incredible to know that in just 16 days, tens of thousands of people can effectively brute force their way through it.

Wasn't there some saying about infinite amount of monkeys typing on an infinite amount of typewriters would eventually compose Shakespeare? I guess it might be sort of true – even if they are all kicking and screaming like a bunch of backseat drivers.

John Lindvay can be contacted at jLindvay@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @FightStrife. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit http://erindr.com/r/q9n



60,000 gamers gathered together to play Pokémon — as one player.

Her happiness is in the bag.

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Sudoku

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

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

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Answer to Sudoku

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Tibetan priest
5 More than enough
8 Ancient Heb. month
12 Son of Samuel
13 Television channel
14 Before (Lat.)
15 Dissertation
17 Two-horse chariot
18 A (Ger.)
19 Braid linen tape
21 Male cat
22 Card game
23 Balto-Slav
25 Rain tree
28 Iron lung
31 Smile
32 Hours (abbr.)
33 Insect
34 Active
36 Nutlike drupe
37 Diagonal (abbr.)
38 River into the North Sea

DOWN

1 Dead
2 Shelter (Fr.)
3 Air
4 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
5 Arawakan language
6 City on the Irish
7 Eye of an insect
8 All points

39 Health resort
41 Chronicles (abbr.)
43 Affirmative
46 Senior (Fr.)
48 Stoe (2 words)
50 Caliph
51 Pointed (pref.)
52 Aweto
53 Cella
54 Favorable vote
55 Eight (pref.)

bulletin (abbr.)
9 Fr. historical provinces
10 Foe of Othello
11 Ray
16 Noun-forming (suf.)
20 Always
22 Haw. porch

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

PANT RAGA CTR
WETA ADAR OHO
OSHA IERI NOM
LPN PURSUE
TOG ICA SAC
AGO CONC PRAE
AGA RAJAH ILL
LIPO TONO PEA
OVI UNA TCH
ONWARD ARS
BUD ARAB ARAB
EDE DEMI GIBE
DER EYAS OAST

24 Clemenceau's nickname
25 Signed (abbr.)
26 Adjective-forming (suf.)
27 Phil. island
28 Civil Rights Commission (abbr.)
29 "Casablanca" character
30 As written in music
32 Pike
35 Son of (Scot.)
36 Look after
38 Evil intent, in law
39 Cross oneself
40 SW US cotton
42 "Dream Girl" playwright
43 Fish sauce
44 Mongol tent
45 Blood disease (suf.)
47 Ger. spa
49 Indo-Chin. language

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		

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ER Sports

By: James R. LeCorchick

Coaching Advice

IT'S FINALLY official that Cathedral Prep Offensive Coordinator **Brad Orlando** is the new football coach at McDowell High School, replacing Mark Soboleski, who resigned following the past football season. Orlando is a McDowell grad who played for the Trojans before going to Penn State. When Orlando called the shots at CP, the Ramblers won a state title while becoming one of the top-scoring units in the state, as Orlando mastered the spread offense. His past two signal-callers – **Damien Terry** and **Billy Fessler** – accumulated staggering passing numbers, Terry now at Michigan State while Fessler is still deciding where to attend college.

While it came as no shock that the Millcreek School District hired Orlando, I have to admit I was beyond a bit surprised when the football coaching positions were opened at Harbor Creek and Iroquois.

I know McDowell didn't ask me for any guidance when selecting a new coach, but that didn't deter me from offering it. And that advice was to hire Brad Orlando.

That went so well that I'm now feeling compelled to assist Harbor Creek and Iroquois in hiring new mentors.

I have two names to toss out, and while this doesn't mean I am discounting numerous other candidates, it just means I firmly believe these are two excellent possibilities. And I stress excellent.

First, I want to state I firmly believe the HC job is a much better job for a variety of reasons, including numbers and facilities. Iroquois is land-locked while Harbor Creek has the potential to have tremendous growth.

Also, please keep in mind that these are my recommendations, and I have not discussed this with either of the coaches.

With that being said, the two names I feel that are great candidates are **Matt Melle** and **Matt Morgan**. Currently, Melle is the Defensive Coordinator at Cathedral Prep and Morgan is the head coach at Mercyhurst Prep.

While the offense garnered most of the headlines for Prep, Melle's defense flew under the radar and was one of the top units in the state. The Ramblers gave up very few points and allowed minimal yardage against them.

I initially felt Melle, who was also the head coach at Cleveland Villa Angela-St. Joseph before moving to Erie for family reasons, would follow Orlando to McDowell as his DC and the fact that Millcreek is in a position to offer him a teaching position. However, I'm not too sure this is etched in stone and that Melle would not be open to running his own program somewhere.

Meanwhile, Morgan has done a sensational job at Mercyhurst Prep with limited resources and he also may be convinced to make a change. The Lakers were on the verge of dropping the sport, but he took over and molded them into a regional power behind a strong rushing attack.

There's no doubt in my mind that if I was on a selection committee at HC or Iroquois, I would make sure I touched bases with these two before making a decision. After all, the worse thing that can happen is they tell you, "No!"

Interesting Discussion

I CAN'T TELL you how many discussions I've been involved in with people who wanted to talk about who was the best (fill in the sports blank) player in Erie sports history. And while I find them interesting, there never is a totally "correct" answer.

However, I was out with some Erie sports fans the other night and someone brought up: "Who were some of the most underrated athletes ever in Erie?"

It was a great discussion, and it went on for hours with many great names being brought up. And while there was no totally "correct" answer to this question, I gave it a lot of thought over the next couple of days and I finally came up with my most underrated.

And it was someone I played with – and against.

I believe that former St. George and Cathedral Prep (Class of 1964) star **Pat Lupo** has never received the recognition he deserved.

He was a star at every level – and every sport – he participated in.

From Millcreek Youth Athletic Association to St. George's to Cathedral Prep, he was "The Man." And tie in the fact he was one of the most humble superstars ever, and you can see why "Loops" got my vote.

My first experience with him was not a pleasant one, though, as I was

a cocky seventh-grader at St. Andrew's getting ready for my first start in basketball and we were scheduled to open the season up against SGS. To be honest, we thought the Lancers were a bunch of hicks, as none of us even knew where the school was.

The Lancers were the defending Class B champs, but now it was time for them to move up to the big time and play a powerful Class A SAS team. When Lupo was finished going against a "real" team, he led his team to a 37-34 win – and he scored 33 of the 37 tallies the winners had. Obviously, that is something that sticks in your mind.

He also led a Millcreek Little League team to the national finals in Williamsport as well as being selected All-City in three sports – football, basketball and baseball – at Cathedral Prep.

Lupo was the All-American Boy when I was growing up, and as good as he was, Lupo was the total team player, as he performed on more championship teams than anyone else I can think of.

Hard to believe he flew under the radar with his credentials but he did.

Shining Stars Moving On

ERIC CAMPBELL, one of the best soccer players ever in the Erie area, will play his college soccer at the Air Force Academy. The Harbor Creek High School star was a D-10 All Star and a two-time District 10 Player of the Year.

The Huskies ace paced HC to back-to-back titles his junior and senior seasons and did the same thing for Mercyhurst Prep when he was a Laker his first two years of high school.

In his career, the future Falcon had 101 goals and 55 assists.

And soccer wasn't the only sport he excelled in, as Campbell was also an all-region tennis doubles player. He was also a two-year member of the National Honor Society.

CATHEDRAL PREP football star **Felix Manus-Schell** has been selected to play in the prestigious Big 33 Game, pitting the Pa. all-stars against the Maryland all-stars in Hershey on June 14 at Hershey Stadium. He will play his college football at Division I Old Dominion.

Manus-Schell will be a defensive back for the Monarchs. At Prep, he was a two-way star and set a school record this season with 13 touchdown receptions.

CP teammate **Marlon Tyree** and McDowell's **Tyree Spearman** will also play for Pa.



Pictures from the Past

Top: (Left) Cathedral Prep Class of 1964 all star Pat Lupo poses (Right) Lupo receives the Erie Athlete of the Year Award his senior year from Walter Kuhl.

Bottom: The Seneca All-Star team that advanced to Williamsport. SITTING (L-R) — David Spires, John Izzi, Clair Allen, Tristy Moore. KNEELING — Jim Kilpatrick, Dave Carne, Doug Bannister, James Mosher, Chuck Mangin. STANDING — Dennis Whiteman, Tom King, Pat Lupo, Allen Palmer, Ken Meyers, Gary Behr. COACHES — Charles Faulkner, Bill Merz, Bert Mosher.

Letter to ER Sports

Jim, I went to the McDowell/Prep basketball game Tuesday night at the Hammermill Center. For a family of four, it cost \$19. That includes four tickets and parking. How can you beat that?

Both teams laid it out on the floor. What a great game to watch. Those kids put it all on the line and played their hearts out. The game was well coached and officiated.

In defeat, the coaching staff of Prep displayed class. Congratulations to McDowell. What a great way to spend a February evening in Erie.

Take care, Jim.
Curtis Ferber

(Contributor's Note: Mr. Ferber is a native of Pittsburgh, his children go to McDowell but he epitomizes how transplants appreciate what we have here. For years I have listened to natives whine and complain about almost everything, but it takes an "out-of-towner" to open our eyes to the great things in our city. Thanks, Curtis. JRL)

James R. LeCorchick can be contacted at jLeCorchick@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @JRLSports. To follow this story or comment, scan the QR code or visit <http://erirdr.com/83agb>



12 NEWS



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