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ERIE READER

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The Erie Reader is the only local voice for news, arts, and culture, and is Erie's only independent, alternative newspaper. Founded in 2010, the Reader has quickly become the region's award-winning source for arts coverage, a strong cultural compass, and a dynamic resource for news and opinion, welcoming perspectives from all viewpoints. With a dedication to long-form journalism and a commitment to provoking thoughtful discussion, the Reader tells the stories of the people and places making and shaping Erie, while highlighting the events and issues influencing life in northwestern Pennsylvania. The Erie Reader is published every other week and distributed at over 250 high foot-traffic locations in Pennsylvania from North East to Girard to Edinboro. In addition to appearing in print, Erie Reader adds new content daily at ErieReader.com as well social media sites. All rights reserved. All content © Flagship Multimedia, Inc, 1001 State St., Suite 901, Erie, Pa, 16501. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission. The opinions of our columnists and contributors are their own and do not always reflect that of the editorial board or organization. Direct inquiries to 814.314.9364 or contact@ErieReader.com.



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From the Editors

Progress is no laughing matter. Except when it is.

Job-seekers market themselves based on status quo measures of success. They're encouraged to stand out, of course; but usually by demonstrating their mastery of resume-fodder skills, like how "self-starting" or "cooperative" or "detail-oriented" they are. In other words, how adeptly they can conform.

But really, you never know what's going to help you make your mark in this life; what gift will be the one that gets you noticed. Dismissing unique talents as unmarketable is at best pessimistic and at worst ruinous.

And the same can be said for cities.

But not nearby Jamestown, N.Y. The birthplace of Lucille Ball is banking on its heritage with construction of the National Comedy Center.

As Sara Toth writes in this issue, "Local developers are already envisioning the center as a springboard for a Jamestown revival. ... And the state is taking notice of this potential. Empire State Development awarded \$1.5 million to the project in 2014; the state recently awarded the National Comedy Center another \$2.025 million, with \$525,000 dedicated to marketing as part of Market NY's I Love New York campaign."

Jamestown's Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz Museum & Center for Comedy opened in 1996. Having distinguished itself, the city could have continued to safely collect tourism dollars already flowing in from worldwide fans of Lucy and Desi.

But aligned with the center's mission to "enrich the world through the healing powers of laughter" and a commitment to the "development of the comedic arts," the community chose instead to roll with laughter.

Sometimes the greatest gamble is having the courage to value something out of the ordinary, and to trust that it'll be received by an appreciative audience.

To that end, Greg Dillon and

Lisa Austin envision an Erie that builds on its manufacturing heritage by ramping up resources and integrating compelling design. They ask us to "Imagine a time when consumers alike react to a beautiful design by saying 'I bet that was designed and made in Erie.'"

And Ed Perry reminds us that Congress' short-term reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund is inadequate, adding that "Congress also lifted the oil export ban, which could potentially lead to the loss of over a million acres of wildlife habitat to meet the new demand for oil production."

Sometimes the greatest gamble is having the courage to value something out of the ordinary, and to trust that it'll be received by an appreciative audience.

Laughter. Beauty. Open space. These elements are hard to quantify in dollars. Try to argue for their preservation and you'll get laughed right out of a budget meeting.

But we need them as much as breathing. In her book *The Solace of Open Spaces*, Gretel Ehrlich writes, "Space has a spiritual equivalent and can heal what is divided and burdensome in us."

Wild places that inspire joy and wonder – and communities populated by creative people valued for their aesthetic gifts – give us the strength to contend with the not-so-lovely elements of the modern world. Though they make life worth living, they're the first to be cut during cash-strapped times.

We undervalue them at our own peril.

And that's no joke.

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NEWS & OPINION

Just a Thought

Sowing the seeds of freedom



USDA

By: Katie Chriest

Right around the winter solstice every year, I receive a gift in the mail far more thrilling than anything tied up in a pretty bow: my Fedco seed catalog.

Fellow gardening geeks reading right now likely wear knowing smiles, thinking about the moment their own favorite seed catalogs arrive: those deeply descriptive and exquisitely decorated mini-books holding all of the promise of a coming spring.

Fedco is a seed co-op in Maine (of which I'm a member) that specializes in seed varieties proven to be hardy in northern climes. Even in typical Erie winters, I've harvested bunches of Fedco kale, swiss chard, and arugula.

But Fedco's appeal transcends its product.

For one, their catalog is famous for its impressive hand-drawn illustrations and its clever and erudite descriptions. Like the one for their Fedco Cap: "Whether you are hangin' with the boyz in the 'hood or toiling in the vineyards of the lord, nothing says style like a Fedco cap. ... We'll pick the color because Fedco knows what you want."

Most admirable, though, is Fedco's undaunted devotion to promoting seed

freedom. They have used their limited resources to fight Big Ag, a David and Goliath battle if ever there was one. And time and again, they have actively supported the rights of farmers and backyard gardeners to decide what they're growing and how.

Big Ag companies like Monsanto, on the other hand, want to dominate the food-growing market by creating demand for seeds they've patented that cannot be saved and reused; seeds whose success depends on fertilizers and pesticides that the companies happen to sell.

According to a May of 2013 *New York Times* article about Supreme Court seed-patent case *Bowman v. Monsanto Company*, "Farmers who buy Monsanto's patented seeds must generally sign a contract promising not to save seeds from the resulting crop, which means they must buy new seeds every year. The seeds are valuable because they are resistant to the herbicide Roundup, itself a Monsanto product." (And one that France, for one, banned from garden centers last year after the WHO deemed it "probably carcinogenic to humans.")

Monsanto won that case, as they often do. And truly, companies who develop technologies ought to benefit

from their use. That's what patents are for.

Now, however, utility patents apply to seed traits like heat tolerance and leaf color, according to the 2016 Fedco catalog. These patents "stultify any possible future breeding improvements by monopolizing those traits and uses that rightfully belong to the commons, cutting off any further opportunity for any other breeder to work with them. Once traits are tied up in private hands, varietal improvement comes to a halt."

Halting innovation is decidedly *not* what patents are for.

But Big Ag's power to influence those making the rules which will govern them is what's most concerning.

According to the Center for Responsive Politics' opensecrets.org, which reports donations to federal candidates, during the 2016 cycle, Syngenta Corp's

Like so many other aspects of consumer culture, choosing seeds every January has become a political act. Metaphorically, we plant seeds with every choice we make in this life. Wouldn't we rather plant the seeds of freedom?

PAC has donated 66 percent to Republicans and 34 percent to Democrats. Monsanto Co's PAC has donated 78 percent to Republicans and 22 percent to Democrats. And that PAC's spending has skyrocketed from \$133,500 in 2004 to \$985,100 in 2014. Meanwhile, though neither party's hands are clean, it's perplexing that the same party allegedly *against* big government control benefits most from Big Ag control.

So like so many other aspects of consumer culture, choosing seeds every January has become a political act. Metaphorically, we plant seeds with every choice we make in this life. Wouldn't we rather plant the seeds of freedom?

Katie Chriest can be contacted at katie@ErieReader.com.

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Erie At Large

When it comes to the state of our union, talk is cheap. Or is it?



BRAD TRIANA

By: Jim Wertz

President Barack Obama's final State of the Union Address validated the beliefs of both his greatest critics and those who laud his every action. For his critics, it outlined the first six chapters of Obama's presidential memoir: 1. Lie 2. Lie 3. Lie 4. Deny 5. Deny 6. Deny. For his supporters, it was a long-awaited response to the Republican chicanery that has blocked the presidential agenda as well as that of his party.

As *Slate's* Mike Pesca pointed out in his post-SOTU "Spiel," the full range of President Obama's communication skills were on display confirming that the 44th president may well be the great communicator. He delivered a smart, sardonic, and assertive assessment of the nation's numerous assets and the challenges it faces.

Pesca surmised that despite his many strengths, the presidential paradox created in the SOTU was that his rebuttal to the Republican party and, in particular, its presidential hopefuls – eloquent and witty as it was – also highlighted the fact that as the leader of the free world Obama could arguably be the worst communicator to hold the oval office. Why, if the country is so strong, if the economy is so robust, has he not told us sooner? Why, if the country is so safe, and our nation so revered, has he allowed the Republican party to hijack his message? What silenced the great communicator?

The answer is simple: Nothing.

This president has spoken to the press and the American people more and at greater length than any president in American history. According to the American Presidency Project at the University of California, Santa Barbara, the average length of an Obama State of the Union Address is just over 6,800 words. Bill Clinton, who averaged just over 7,400 words per SOTU, was the only president in the modern era to be more communicative than Obama in this venue.

Obama also racked up more screen time than Ronald Reagan, according to a review of media appearances by the *Washington Free Beacon*. That's a coup considering the Gipper spent more than five decades B-listing his way onto screens large and small.

But what's it all mean? Apparently nothing. All the words in all the world from one of the most eloquent executive office holders can't seem to generate enough traction for the American people to see that economic growth, advances in renewable energy sources, and historic decisions by the Supreme Court upholding marriage equality and the Affordable Care Act seem to mean little against the confluence of noise created by those with only pessimistic views of the state of our union and its future.

This sentiment resonated ever more sharply because it's not dissimilar to the communicative ills that Erie has faced over the past decade. Although, like most communities our size, we've never had politicians whose charisma

begs for them to be placed in the media spotlight, we could stand to hear more good news from our elected officials and the candidates who aspire to unseat them.

Mayor Sinnott has long been regarded as a someone who eschews the value of reaching people through the media. Shy, humble, or otherwise, that posture has probably not helped the sense of dread that seems to plague his community in the wake of violence, drug abuse, and looming joblessness.

It could be that the positive message is less resonant than its negative juxtaposition and summarily dismissed as naive or uninformed because the negativity reinforces the fear and anxiety fomented by everyday problems. In short, negativity becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Or it could be that it's simply easier

It could be that it's simply easier to say nothing at all than to take a side, positive, negative, or indifferent. It's harder to lead a parade of positivity in difficult times.

to say nothing at all than to take a side, positive, negative, or indifferent. It's harder to lead a parade of positivity in difficult times.

The presidential race that precedes the election of Erie's next mayor should serve as a cautionary tale for the cadre of hopefuls who covet that office. If their campaigns are fraught with doomsaying and naysaying, it will set the tone for a tumultuous term in office.

If the campaign is forward-thinking and forthright, it will be easier to relay the good news on the horizon.

You don't have to take my word for it. The president's been saying it for years.

Jim Wertz can be reached at jWertz@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @jim_wertz.

Erie Needs the Energy to Turn Itself Around

Buffalo is booming through the manufacture of solar panels; Erie should be taking note.

By: Ben Speggen

There was a lot to like about President Barack Obama's last State of the Union address. Grey hairs and wrinkles aside, it was a return to 2008 Obama: vibrant, vigorous, and spirited. Whether you agree or disagree with his brand of politics, ignoring the energy with which he spoke to the country was hard to do.

And you couldn't help but like the ideas. Education and opportunity. Growing and harnessing the powers of technology. Assessing and evaluating the U.S.'s place in a world gripped by terror. Making politics reflect the best of us instead of the worst of us. And tapping into the same collective energy that got an American on the moon, we're going to *cure cancer!*

Of course, it wasn't a conclusive speech. Some topics went undressed.

The word "gun" appeared just once amidst a nationwide gun-violence epidemic. Iran was only mentioned twice (with just four words separating the two mentions). "Terrorists" was heard seven times.

Regardless, tucked away mid-speech just after Obama assigned the task of curing cancer to Vice President Joe Biden, the president opined that the "same level of commitment" to critical research must be committed to developing clean energy sources.

"Look," Obama said, "if anybody still wants to dispute the science around climate change, have at it. You will be pretty lonely, because you'll be debating our military, most of America's business leaders, the majority of the American people, almost the entire scientific community, and 200 nations around the world who agree it's a problem and intend to solve it."

While we can debate gun control,

argue about our approach to terrorists, and squabble over foreign policy, we can't dispute science. Call it an inconvenient truth, call it whatever you will, the climate *is changing* and we in the U.S. are significantly contributing to that change, amassing nearly 16 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions.

Implementing carbon taxes as a solution aside, businesses, organizations, and cities are working to reduce their carbon footprint through more efficient and cheaper alternatives. Like solar and wind.

Where we stand in the shift away from carbon and to these alternative energy sources is a choice Erie must make about its future. And we needn't look far for inspiration.

Call it an inconvenient truth, call it whatever you will, the climate is changing and we in the U.S. are significantly contributing to that change, amassing nearly 16 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions.

For now, let's consider solar.

But just look at our winters! We get no sunlight! It could never happen in Erie!

Hogwash. Germany – the world leader in solar energy development – gets less sunlight per year than Erie. And people like John Purvis with Solar Revolution are proving that a market for solar energy exists in Erie. So we can do it.

But there's also the construction of the panels.

For that, Erie should be ogling Buffalo because SolarCity is more than ogling Buffalo. With a \$1 billion investment from New York State – as part of the "Buffalo Billion" initiative – many are hopeful that the newly rooted presence of SolarCity, America's largest solar power provider headquartered in San Mateo, Calif., will turn "Buffalo and western New York into a hub for advanced manufacturing and renewable energy." Prior to installing a solar

panel factory on the site of a demolished steel factory in South Buffalo, SolarCity purchased *all* of its panels from China.

"The goal of the Buffalo Billion is to stoke an economy that's just started to grow again after half a century of decline," Joel Rose reported for NPR. "Real estate prices are going up. Millenials are moving into the city. And for the first time in years, giant construction cranes are rising into the sky."

Howard Zemsky, a local real estate developer and the president of Empire State Development, the state agency that's in charge of the Buffalo Billion, told Rose: "For a town that would've been easy to bet against after 40 years of decline, I think it's had a huge impact on Buffalo and western New York."

Don't think Erie could contribute in the manufacturing game? While healthcare and social assistance agencies make up the largest employment sector in Erie County, manufacturing has been leading the way through a post-Recession economic recovery, as noted in fellow *Erie Reader* Contributing Editor Jim Wertz's co-authored work with Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority Executive Director Perry Wood in The Jefferson Essay that examines Erie's Advanced Industries.

In that work, Brookings Centennial Scholar Bruce Katz noted that "The U.S. seems poised for a manufacturing renaissance and places like Erie can participate in that, and already are, because of your location and legacy assets."

Erie has been a good-at-making-stuff-kinda place. It's in our roots.

It began when Daniel Dobbins orchestrated the construction of the War of 1812 fleet here in Erie. It continued a century later when GE Transportation opened its first plant in Erie. Another hundred years later, we must look to our future yet again not only to see what's sprung from our roots but to decide what new seeds can be planted.

We can't afford to be a dream-simple-or-dream-singularly-kinda town *if* we're going to be a care-about-manufacturing-and-its-role-in-our-future-kinda city.

And *if* we care about our rebound, we'll need the energy. The once-written-off Buffalo has it. Do we?

Ben Speggen can be contacted at bSpeggen@ErieReader.com. You can follow him on Twitter @BenSpeggen.

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News of the Weird

Moving sex ed into the driver's seat, and other odd phenomena.

By: Chuck Shepherd

The New Grade Inflation

They are simply "spas" designed to attract teenagers," according to one university official — plush, state-of-the-art "training" complexes built by universities in the richest athletic conferences to entice elite 17-year-old athletes to come play for (and, perhaps, study at?) their schools. The athletes-only mini-campuses include private housing and entertainment (theaters, laser tag, miniature golf) — but, actually, the schools are in a \$772-million-plus "arms' race" (according to a December Washington Post investigation) because soon after one school's sumptuous, groundbreaking facility opens, some other school's more-innovative facility renders it basically second-rate. And of course, as one university official put it, the "shiny objects" have "nothing whatsoever to do with the mission of a university." (Donors and alumni provide much of the funding, but most schools by now also tap students' "athletic fees.") [Washington Post, 12-21-2015]

Redneck Chronicles

Police in Monticello, Kentucky, charged Rodney Brown, 25, with stealing farm animals and equipment from a home in December but offering

to return everything if the victim (a man) had sex with him. Brown allegedly took 25 roosters, a goat and some rooster pens and other rooster-care equipment. (Because Brown also supposedly said he'd beat the man up if he called police, a "terroristic threatening" count was added to "promoting prostitution.") [WKYT-TV (Lexington, Ky.), 1-5-2015]

Made in Heaven: William Cornelius, 25, and his fiancée, Sheri Moore, 20, were arrested at the Bay City (Michigan) Mall in January, charged with theft. Police found a pair of earrings and a necklace swiped from Spencer Gifts on her, but she refused to "snitch" on Cornelius, who had minutes earlier proposed to her via a Wal-mart loudspeaker and given her a ring, to applause from onlooking shoppers as she accepted. Cornelius, holding \$80.93 worth of goods (a watch, an edible thong, a vibrator and "BJ Blast" oral-sex candy), was apprehended at the mall food court, having apparently (according to the police report) "fallen asleep at a table while tying his shoe." [Bay City Times, 1-7-2015]

Latest Religious Messages

Islam Rising: (1) A geography class at Riverheads High School in Augusta County, Virginia, alarmed some parents in December when students were

assigned to copy an Arabic script to experience its "artistic complexity." However, the phrase the teacher presented for copying was the "shahada" ("There is no god but Allah"). District officials called that just a coincidence that the phrase was presented only for calligraphy and never translated. (2) A Washington state uncle complained in December that a WolVol toy airplane he bought for his nephew on Amazon.com, instead of making engine noises, recited spoken words which a Whatcom County Islamic Society spokesman said was actually a prayer that hajj pilgrims speak when they journey to Mecca. (Wolvol said it would investigate.) [Schilling Show via Fox News, 12-15-2015] [KING-TV (Seattle), 12-28-2015]

Wait, What? NPR's "Morning Edition," reporting on the violent tornadoes that hit North Texas on the night after Christmas, interviewed one woman who said she was luckier than her neighbors because of her faith. She was entertaining 10 relatives when she heard the "train-like" sound of the winds approaching and took everyone outside to confront the storm: "We ... started commanding the winds because God had given us authority over ... airways. And we just began to command this storm not to hit our area. We spoke to the storm and said, go to unpopulated places. It did exact-

ly what we said to do because God gave us the authority to do that." [NPR.org, 12-28-2015]

Weird Science

The most promising current concussion-prevention research comes from a study of ... woodpeckers (according to a December Business Week report). Scientists hypothesize that the birds' apparent immunity from the dangers of constant head-slamming is because their neck veins naturally compress, forcing more blood into their craniums, thus limiting the dangerous "jiggle room" in which brains bang against the skull. A team led by a real-life doctor portrayed in the movie "Concussion" is working on a neck collar to slightly pinch the human jugular vein to create a similar effect. [Business Week, 12-28-2015]

Researchers from the University of York and the University of St. Andrews wrote in the journal *Biology Letters* in December that they observed wild male parrots using pebbles in their mouths to help grind sea shells into powder and hypothesized that the purpose was to free up the shells' calcium in "vomitable" form so that they could pass it to females before mating, to help improve their offspring's health outcomes. [Discovery News via Washington Post, 12-15-2015]

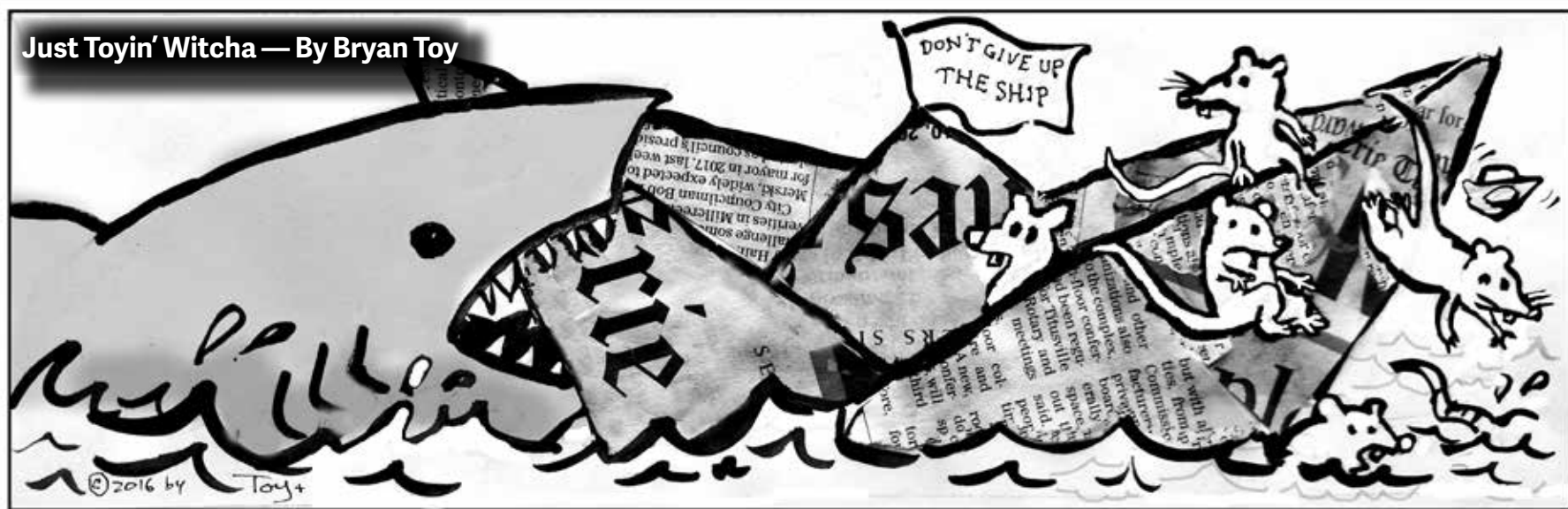
The Continuing Crisis

National Pride: (1) Factory worker Thanakorn Siripaiboon was arrested in December in a Bangkok suburb after he wrote a "sarcastic" comment on social media about the dog that belongs to Thailand's king. For the crime of "insulting the monarch," Thanakorn faces 37 years in prison. (2) Michael McFeat, a Scottish man working on contract for a mining company in Kyrgyzstan, was arrested in January after he (on Facebook) jokingly called the country's national dish "horse penis." ("Chuchuk" is indeed a sausage made from horsemeat.) The crime he was charged with carries a five-year prison term. [New York Times, 12-14-2015] [BBC News, 1-4-2016]

Leading Economic Indicators

The government of the Netherlands, seeking to boost the economy while simultaneously improving highway skills, enacted legislation in December to allow driving instructors to be paid in sexual services provided the student is at least 18 years old. Though prostitution is legal, the transport minister cautioned that the "initiative" for the new arrangement must be with the instructor so that the country gains better-trained drivers as a result. [CNN, 12-21-2015]

Just Toyin' Witcha — By Bryan Toy



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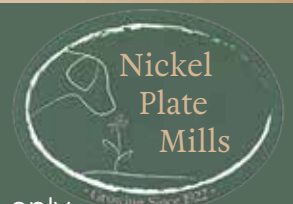
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Considering the City

Let's manufacture some prosperity.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Greg Dillon and Lisa Austin

Despite a litany of recent closings, including grim news from GE, manufacturing remains at the core of Erie's economic life. One in five area jobs is in manufacturing, about twice the national average. We know how to *make things* here. Erie's romance with manufacturing dates almost to the dawn of the industrial revolution. Forges and foundries provided decent jobs and related businesses sprouted up to support this industry.

Today's Industries

Erie still boasts an impressive number of tool and die, metal forming, machining, woodworking, and fiber-related businesses with a talent pool rivaling any city. For example, about 10 percent of all plastics processed in the U.S. are, in one way or another, touched by companies in our region. This is really a staggering number.

Infrastructure and Distribution

Such a history and resource profile point to one very important fact: Erie has fantastic industrial infrastructure. Jason Williams of Penn State Behrend points out that the plastics industry can get anything it needs within a 100 mile radius of the city.

But the challenge of economic development is a puzzle with many parts. A distribution system is critical, and Erie has rail, air, water, and road networks. We're at the intersection of two interstate highways, for instance, though a dearth of direct flights from major U.S.

cities is a negative for businesses considering a local presence.

Failure: the Path to Success

Innovation and entrepreneurship are critical to economic health, and successful cities have been able to marshal the energy and creativity of *all* members of the community.

In his book *Adapt*, Tim Harford, senior columnist for the *Financial Times*, outlined three steps to success. Try new things and expect some failure. Make failure survivable ("Don't put all your eggs ..."). And, know when you have failed, while learning from the failure. We need to create opportunities for entrepreneurs to try ideas without risking everything while learning from failures and trying again.

Innovation Erie

The Innovation Erie product design competition (co-founded in 2007 by Civitas, Edinboro University, the StART-up Incubator, Penn State's Plastic Technology Center, and the Erie Art Museum) invites novice and established entrepreneurs to "compete" for legal, marketing, and manufacturing help – and some cash – to bring new products to market. Despite its small purse, Innovation Erie has fostered the creation of almost a dozen businesses and several jobs. Erie needs to expand this model.

Nearby Cities

Cleveland, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh have achieved impressive renewals with a few common threads. These cit-

Participants in last year's Made in Erie workshop discuss a proposed chair design. A press conference presenting information about this year's workshop will be held on Friday, Feb. 5 at 11 a.m. at the Blasco Library.

ies invested in open spaces to attract private development and retain highly adept, energetic, creative people. They leveraged a skilled workforce for new business development and repurposed older infrastructure for emerging opportunities. Erie should embrace these models to provide our own unique spin. In a technological economy, this will entail private and public investment in R&D, as well as continual modernization of the educational infrastructure. We need to make ourselves stand out.

Why We Buy

Think about why you buy one product over another. Of course price is important. But it's deeper than that. We try to surround ourselves with objects that make us feel something: a favorite chair, a mug that feels just right, a clock that pleases our visual sense.

Design connects with emotions. It's often the interface between the product and the human senses that determines success or failure.

So when the nuts, bolts, and code lines have been carefully assembled, the inventor shoots a hopeful glance to the market, confident that the product will do what is intended, but not always quite assured that it will "connect" with the customer. Despite technological excellence, the result often hinges on emotion. Products may live or die on the elements of design.

Therefore, last year we developed a series of workshops to provide a venue for entrepreneurs, inventors, educators, or tinkerers to learn about industrial design, share experiences, and unleash their creative energy.

Making Erie a Manufacturing Destination through Better Design

The industrial design needs of our community are not being met. Universities and industrial development organizations have an obligation to address this. Supporting entrepreneurs and innovators could benefit the region for generations.

If this community can marshal its industrial, educational, and enabling public sector mechanisms, we may reach a time when Erie is known for *excellence* in design. Allied with the manufacturing infrastructure, this would be an unstoppable combination. Imagine a time when consumers, shoppers, and connoisseurs alike react to a beautiful design by saying "I bet that was designed and made in Erie."

2015 Workshops

With support from our institutions, the StART-up Incubator Fund, Erie County Library, Ben Franklin, and Civitas, three workshops were held in the Blasco Library last fall. They were led by Devin Roberts, who was trained in Industrial Design at the Cleveland Institute of Art. He holds a Masters Degree in Marketing and has 14 years product design experience.

Other contributors included: Case Western professor Henry Adams, who presented a historical overview; Lisa Austin, who reviewed the elements of design; Greg Dillon, who considered cost in product design; Penn State Behrend professor Shraddha Sangelkar, who discussed "empathetic" design; and Erie Art Museum director John Vanco, who analyzed a selection of chairs from his personal collection. Participants' feedback was very positive.

So, we decided to offer another series this year. The workshops will again be at the Blasco Library and led by Devin Roberts. Our fervent hope is that this series will be looked back on as the germ of an idea that blossoms into something special.

To learn more about the 2016 Made in Erie spring training, the public and media are invited to a press conference on Friday, Feb. 5 at 11 a.m. at the Blasco Library, 160 Front St., Erie. Greg Dillon, Penn State Associate Professor of Engineering, can be reached via email: dillon@psu.edu. Civitas member Lisa Austin, Edinboro University Professor of Sculpture and 3D Design, can be reached through civitaserie.com, via Facebook at CivitasErie, by email at Lisa@civitaserie.com, or by scheduling a Friday morning meeting at the Civitas office in the Masonic Building.

The Uncertain Future of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Congress has offered a short-term reprieve, but there's more work ahead if we hope to protect regional recreation sites.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Ed Perry

There was a lot of horse-trading going on in the waning days of this congressional session, and one trade-off will have long-term implications for land conservation. Included within the omnibus appropriations bill that members of Congress passed in late December was a three-year reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) with \$450 million set aside for conservation and recreation projects.

But on the other hand, Congress also lifted the oil export ban, which could potentially lead to the loss of over a million acres of wildlife habitat to meet the new demand for oil production. America has had a 40-year ban on exporting oil, mainly because we imported so much, but this all changed with the domestic fracking boom. This makes the need to permanently reauthorize and fully fund LWCF at its \$900 million funding level even more important.

LWCF is the program that has helped us to protect our most precious places for conservation and recreation. A visionary Congress that recognized the value of healthy outdoor recreation activities created LWCF more than 50 years ago. Conserving our most precious landscapes was a worthy goal. More importantly, they understood that investing revenues from

the use of non-renewable natural resources – offshore oil and gas extracted from federal waters – into these conservation and recreation projects was logical.

Since it was enacted, LWCF has protected some of our nation's most iconic parks and historic places, conserved essential wildlife habitat, and provided active outdoor recreation opportunities through thousands of local parks in

virtually every county in the nation.

Most residents of northwest Pennsylvania probably don't even know that many of their favorite outdoor recreation sites are most likely available thanks to LWCF. In Congressman Thompson's district, recent funding has been used to renovate the boat ramp on East Avenue, fund the community park in North East Township, and provide funds for Wander Park in Millcreek Township.

However, Congress let LWCF expire in September 2015. Therefore, it is critical they reach an agreement to continue this valuable program. Supporters of LWCF across the country voiced their frustration about losing the program and the potential implications to conservation and recreation. In Congress, there has been broad, bipartisan support for reauthorization of the program in both the House and the Senate; and yet some in Congress held up the reauthorization process, claiming that this highly effective program needed to be "fixed."

Including a three-year extension of LWCF in the omnibus appropriations bill will help to keep the program alive and working, but it does not solve the long-term need of providing permanent, full funding. This will now be even more important with the potential of expanded energy development to support the newly allowed oil exports. It is critical that Congress get

to work to permanently reauthorize LWCF and to fend off efforts to weaken the conservation and recreation purpose of the law by placing heavy restrictions and red tape on the remaining resources for land and water conservation.

After 50 years, there is always room for some updates to make a program like LWCF even more effective for its fundamental mission. A bipartisan group of senators has developed legislation that makes needed adjustments to LWCF, but stays true to its conservation legacy; there is matching legislation in the House. Other proposals would simply reauthorize the program permanently and ensure that the full \$900 million that is supposed to be available for conservation and recreation is appropriated every year.

I hope that Congressman Thompson will recognize what a valuable tool LWCF has been in our region for such a long time. I encourage him to stand strong in support of a Land and Water Conservation Fund reauthorization bill that allows this highly successful program to continue to conserve special places across America for hiking, fishing, hunting, and playing ball.

Our communities deserve this thoughtful approach, and our children and grandchildren will thank us for our foresight in helping to conserve our precious landscapes like Pymatuning State Park.

If you believe as I do, that Congress needs to quit diverting the \$900 million in royalties paid by energy companies drilling for oil and gas on the Outer Continental Shelf to uses other than creating and protecting national parks, national wildlife refuges, and national forests; and to provide matching grants to state and local parks and recreation projects, then it's important that your elected representatives hear from you.

Ed Perry is the Pennsylvania outreach coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation Climate Change Campaign (paglobalwarmingoutreach@gmail.com). He lives in Boalsburg, Pa.

Geeked Out

Enter the captivating world of disarming documentaries.

By: John Lindvay

Making a Murderer is a Netflix documentary series about the wrongful imprisonment and subsequent murder trial of Wisconsin man Steven Avery. You have probably heard rumblings about this series around the various Internet feeding troughs, and rightfully so. *Making a Murderer* is captivating, frustrating, and woefully sad.

The show joins the ranks of such other intriguing media like Sarah Koenig's

Making a Murderer will leave viewers with their blood boiling as they witness the full force of the legal system wrongfully coming to bear against a poor family in Wisconsin.

podcast *Serial*, or the HBO docu-series titled *The Jinx*. The first season of *Serial* is about Adnan Masud Syed, who was arrested and convicted for the murder of Hae Min Lee, his girlfriend. As Koenig investigates the case, many doubts are raised over the conviction, and Koenig ultimately ends the series still full of doubts. *Making a Murderer*, on the other hand, will leave viewers with their blood boiling as they witness the full force of the legal system wrongfully coming to bear against a poor family in Wisconsin.

I've become increasingly interested in media that dives into criminal cases. Obviously, it is fascinating to hear how the plot twists and turns as new evidence is uncovered. But more importantly, what many of these series do is highlight how institutions like the legal system can be **[Cont. on page 30]**



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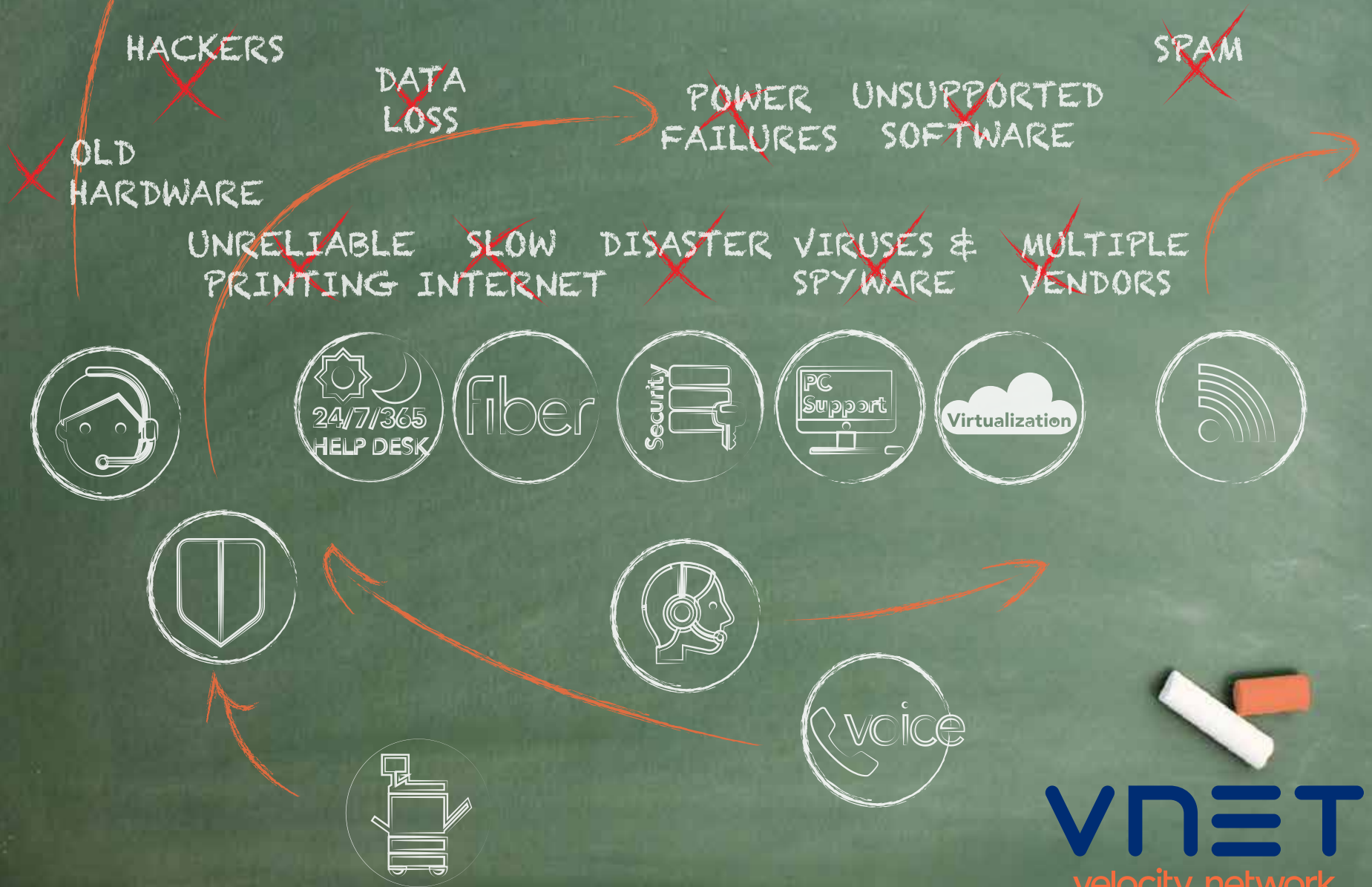
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A Hero's Journey

Hero BX and the future of Lake Erie Biofuel



Used cooking oil, animal fats, and chemicals are the raw materials that later leave Hero BX's East Lake Road facility in nondescript tankers with the day's payload: Hero BX biodiesel.

fuel at Kwik Fill or Country Fair, you're burning local biodiesel.

The other half of Hero BX biodiesel either goes into the northeastern U.S. as home heating fuel or into the southeastern U.S., where it's primarily used as transportation fuel.

Location, Location, Location

Part of the Hero BX strategy is leveraging its location against those of its competitors.

"This business is all about economies of scale," says Chris Peterson, vice president of finance and commodity risk. "Eighty-five percent of the cost is in our raw materials. It's the rest of the costs that we have to manage."

Transportation is a major part of the remaining costs. So being the easternmost biodiesel producer along major rail and ground transport corridors helps to keep those costs in check.

When the firm began in 2005, 90 percent of its product went into European markets. But in 2009, the European Union imposed tariffs on U.S. made biodiesel that closed those markets to U.S. producers. Hero BX needed to reevaluate its strategy.

It did that by developing new markets up and down the east coast. But to remain profitable, Hero BX needed to manage its costs. "If we were going to make a domestic market we had to be more cost effective," Peterson recalls. "We had to use cheaper materials which meant that we had to retrofit the plant and the process to handle cheaper, lower grade materials, like cooking oils and other waste greases."

Originally, the biofuel was 80-90 percent vegetable oil and 10-20 percent animal fats. That had to change because, as in the petroleum industry, profits are pennies on the gallon.

With the help of its in-house

million dollar laboratory that refined the chemistry of its biofuel, and maximizing the returns on its biodiesel as well as the byproducts it yields, Hero BX recovered from its transition as a foreign manufacturer to a domestic producer. That process took almost 18 months.

"Mechanically, we were changing the plant and up here in the office we were changing our business plan and our strategy. It was pretty hectic in 2009-2010," Peterson says.

Then came another hit: Foreign producers were granted subsidies by both their home countries and the U.S., and the home heating oil market became aggressively

Nearly half of Hero BX's biodiesel fuel stays in Pennsylvania and is blended with petroleum fuel to become part of the diesel fuel used in vehicles in western Pennsylvania. So, if you buy diesel fuel at Kwik Fill or Country Fair, you're burning local biodiesel.

more competitive. Hero BX was again forced to search for new markets for its product.

"We're competing against double subsidized product. We used to sell quite a bit of our capacity into New York Harbor," says Peterson, "but we made a conscious shift in our marketing strategy to develop markets in the southeast."

That successful move into the southeast prompted the purchase of a biodiesel refinery in Moundville, Ala. last November, now giving Hero BX an easternmost foothold in the southeast as well as the northeast.

It's the former Veros Refining facility with a 15 million gallon per year capacity. According to Peterson, it wasn't sustainable as a small refinery. But as a complement to Hero BX's Erie facility, he



BRAD TRIANA

By: Jim Wertz

Trucks and trains quietly roll in and out of the biodiesel refinery on East Lake Road. To its west sit the long smokeless stacks that were once the symbol of prosperity at Hammermill/International Paper, and to its east, the open waters of Lake Erie.

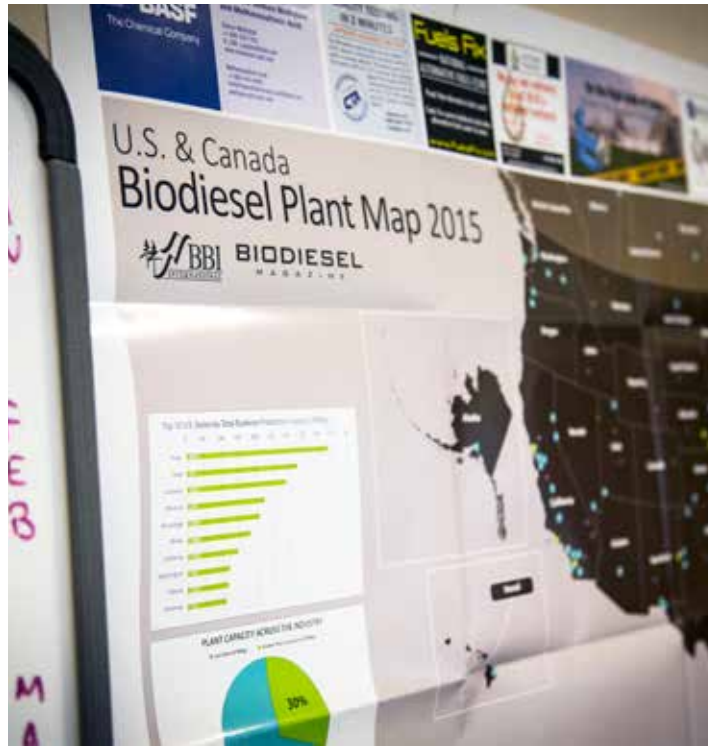
Each day people drive under the railroad trestle on which unmarked black tanker cars are pulled into the facility, carrying tens of thousands of gallons of used cooking oil, animal fats, and chemicals: the raw materials that later leave the facility in nondescript tankers with the day's payload: Hero BX biodiesel.

Lake Erie Biofuels, which does

business as Hero BX, is one of the top ten biodiesel producers by volume in the country. Capable of producing 50 million gallons of biodiesel a year, it's one of the bright spots in the Erie economy, grossing more than \$15 million in annual sales.

Hero BX is a wholly owned subsidiary of Black Family Holdings, LP, and as the easternmost biodiesel producer in the U.S., it's literally positioned itself to be a powerhouse in biodiesel production.

Nearly half of its biodiesel fuel stays in Pennsylvania and is blended with petroleum fuel to become part of the diesel fuel used in vehicles in western Pennsylvania. So, if you buy diesel



With room to grow in Erie, Hero BX also purchased a biodiesel refinery in Moundville, Ala. last November, now giving the company an easternmost foothold in the southeast as well as the northeast.

every day. The raw materials come into the facility by truck and rail. Each truck holds about 7,000 gallons of materials, such as vegetable oil, cooking oil, or animal fats – base materials known as feedstock – or the chemicals used to refine the feedstock. Each rail car has the capacity of seven trucks.

Both trucks and trains haul materials into the facility five days a week, unless demand calls for an extra day of production. The plant runs on two 12-hour shifts, which Peterson says is more efficient than the downtime created by three shift changes per day. The average laborer earns a salary in the mid-\$50K to low-\$60K

thinks it will work.

“As a standalone 15 million gallon plant, it didn’t survive because you still have to have your equipment people, your

procurement people, accounting, human resources. We’ll do all that from Erie,” he says. “We’ll manage all of that back-of-the-house functionality out

of the Erie office, then it’s just the production cost in Alabama. It may be a little bit of patting ourselves on the back, but we think we’re pretty good

at running a biodiesel plant.”

The Chemistry of the Company

Hero BX produces roughly 160,000 gallons of biodiesel

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In addition to having a well-rounded legal education, Rick Filippi has secured access to serve before the U.S. Court of Appeals (3rd District) and the United States Supreme Court. He also has experience in local politics, having served on Erie’s city council from 1998 to 2001. Additionally, he was elected Erie mayor from 2001 to 2005.

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The feedstock goes through a multi-step process where it is treated to remove impurities, such as metals and other contaminants. Those purified oils are then combined with methanol or other industrial alcohol before a catalyst is added to create a chemical reaction between the feedstock and the methanol. That reaction produces two different products that separate naturally in the production process, making multiple product streams and, more importantly, two profit streams: biodiesel and glycerin.

The biodiesel, of course, becomes fuel. "There is a mandate in Pennsylvania that all transportation diesel contain a minimum of 2 percent biodiesel and in the western part of the state that's met mostly using our product," Peterson says. "That's why so much of it

stays in state."

The glycerin gets sold to any number of vendors for use in the pharmaceutical industry, cosmetics, and even animal feed, among others.

Aside from diatomaceous earth, a soft natural powder that's used in the filtration of the biodiesel, there is virtually no waste in the production process. For every 100 pounds of feedstock, 10 pounds of methanol is added to produce 100 pounds of biodiesel and 10 pounds of glycerin.

The matrix that is the refinery is connected by nearly four miles of pipe and three miles of wire, installed primarily by Erie contractors William T. Spaeder Company and Keystone Electric Construction. The most visible and notable components of the 13-acre facility are the seven million gallons of tank storage adorned with the Hero BX logo visible from East Lake Road.

A Hero's Journey

Peterson says the company will almost double in size with the addition of the refin-

Hero BX has received support from the Erie delegation in Congress, and the current EPA volume mandates ensure that biodiesel will be part of the American diesel pipeline at least for the immediate future.

ery in Alabama. There are 43 full time, living-wage-earning employees at the Erie facility. The rest of the jobs will be in Alabama, where the refining process will require more manpower because the facility

is not as technologically advanced.

If the Moundville plant is profitable after the first year, Peterson hopes to expand.

"We're on 13 acres here," he says. "That facility is on 55 acres. There's a lot of room to grow down there."

If the aged southern plant is capable of matching the quality thresholds set in the Erie facility, Peterson believes it could scale to 20-25 million gallons, giving Hero BX a larger presence in the biodiesel marketplace.

"We've got customers waiting for production from that plant and we'll have customers fighting over that production," he anticipates.

The Erie facility also has room to grow.

Much of that anticipation rests on variables that are outside of the company's control. Just as Hero BX was forced to evaluate its strategy in

2009 when European markets closed because of tariffs and the domestic home heating market was limited because of subsidies for foreign producers, federal volume mandates and excise tax credits for biodiesel will, to date, expire at the end of 2016.

"We're a heavily regulated business," Peterson laments.

Nevertheless, Peterson remains optimistic. He says the company has received support from the Erie delegation in Congress, and the current EPA volume mandates ensure that biodiesel will be part of the American diesel pipeline at least for the immediate future.

It's a challenging path, to be sure. But Hero BX has navigated such obstacles before and, so far, with great success.

Jim Wertz can be reached at jWertz@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @jim_wertz.



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Comedy Central

Jamestown embraces its cultural heritage and laughs all the way to the bank.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Sara Toth

Driving over the Chadakoin River in Jamestown, N.Y., on the Washington Street bridge, a sign greets you, welcoming you to the future site of the National Comedy Center.

Once you cross the bridge, however, you'll find another sign – a billboard testament to the comedy roots borne of the region's soil: a mural, with the smiling faces of television's *I Love Lucy*: Lucy, Desi, Frank, and Ethel, gazing down upon the river and the city.

Lucy, of course, is Lucille Ball, a native of Jamestown and a goddess of sorts when it comes to comedy, women, and the town in which she was born. And Lucy had a dream.

"She would love for her hometown to become a destination for the celebration and cultivation of the comedic arts," says Journey Gunderson, execu-

tive director of the National Comedy Center – the establishment that is helping make Ball's dream a reality.

Set to open in 2017, the National Comedy Center is an extension of the annual Lucille Ball Comedy Festival and the Lucille Ball-Desi Arnaz Center for Comedy. Ground broke on the \$50 million project last summer. When it's completed, the National Comedy Center will be a state-of-the-art venue: part living museum and part entertainment venue, with something for everyone. That is, if you like to laugh.

The center is expected to be home to about 70 different exhibits – everything from the earliest written jokes to examinations of how the Internet has changed comedy.

"Everything you can imagine is covered," says Gunderson.

But this is not a static museum experience. "Certainly, it's very media-based," Gunderson says, including a hologram theater that allows patrons to experi-

ence stand-up sets from famous comedians throughout history. Gunderson says the center is working to secure rights to holo-cast performances from Red Fox and Andy Kaufman, for example, and "you'll be able to relive what it must have been like to see these performances in person."

The idea is for the center to be a participatory experience; right when a person walks in, he or she will be given a bracelet or a badge containing a computer chip that will – with the help of some basic questions and answers – tailor parts of the experience to personal senses of humor.

"It's designed to be customizable, but this is also a chance to learn," Gunderson says. "Say you really like political comedy, but you might not know about George Carlin. Part of these exhibits are tracing the history of [comedic genres] and making connections."

Beyond the high-tech, some interactive exhibits will be of the old-fash-

When it's completed, the National Comedy Center will be a state-of-the-art venue: part living museum and part entertainment venue, with something for everyone. That is, if you like to laugh.

ioned variety. People will have a chance to see what a writers' room is like for a sitcom, or try their hand at improv, for example.

"This is a place where you will learn about the greatest artists and their contribution to comedy, but also come away with a greater appreciation for their process itself, because you've had the opportunity to experience the process," says Gunderson.

Beyond being a tourist attraction, the National Comedy Center is expected to bring in \$20 million annually. It will be a boon to the local economy, but Gunderson also expects it to enrich the lives of people in the region culturally.

"The level of programming that we've brought here via the annual festival is



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

of the caliber that is seen anywhere in the world when it comes to comedy,” she says. “When this comes to fruition, the vision is a calendar year of that caliber programming.”

The programming of the festival is already top-notch. When ground broke last summer during the festival, comedy legends were on hand – people like Jerry Seinfeld and Regis Philbin.

“It’s important to me to make the festival a microcosm of what the center will become,” Gunderson says.

And because of the mild winter, the foundation for new construction of the center is already completed, and construction will pick up again in the spring. The National Comedy Center will be made up of three different buildings – two of which are already in existence: the old train station and the former trolley garage, both situated on the riverfront.

“The adaptive reuse of two existing buildings is a great aspect of this,” Gunderson says. “It will bring new life to the waterfront.”

Local developers are already envisioning the center as a springboard for a Jamestown revival. Last month, AE-

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FEATURE

COM Technical Services Inc. presented findings from a study conducted, envisioning the town's future. The findings weren't a plan, per se, but "a menu of options" the town could pursue, AE-COM's Linda Cheu said at that meeting – options that included rehabbed parking, restaurants, and public gathering spaces.

The National Comedy Center will ultimately serve as a heretofore nonexistent headquarters for the celebration of what comedy is, and what it means.

And the state is taking notice of this potential. Empire State Development awarded \$1.5 million to the project in 2014; the state recently awarded the

National Comedy Center another \$2.025 million, with \$525,000 dedicated to marketing as part of Market NY's I Love New York campaign.

"[The additional funding] is a clear indication of the state's belief in and support for the National Comedy Center," says center chairman Tom Benson, "and that the partnership that we established last year is strong and long-lasting."

A vital part of the area's future, a fruition of Lucille Ball's dream for her hometown – these are the promises the National Comedy Center holds. More than that, it will ultimately serve as a heretofore nonexistent headquarters for the celebration of what comedy is, and what it means.

"Comedy is not widely accepted as an art form," Gunderson says. "When you look at a stand-up comedian, they're the writer, producer, director, and performer all in one. It's time comedy got the recognition as an art form it deserves."

Sara Toth can be contacted at sToth@ErieReader.com, and you can follow her on Twitter @SaraAToth.

So Much More than Lucy



Working at a time when leading ladies were mostly valued as "love interests or sex symbols," Lucille Ball "broke barriers in that she wasn't valuable for just being attractive."

comedy.

"She was among the first, honestly, to not care if she looked ridiculous in the process of getting a laugh," Gunderson says. "At that point in time, most female roles, especially leading ladies, were love interests or sex symbols, kind of passive and thus attractive in a traditional sense. Lucille Ball changed all of that."

Look at the main premise of *I Love Lucy*, Gunderson says – at every plot, every laugh. The common theme? "She was always trying for more; she wasn't satisfied being in the house."

Hijinks would ensue, of course, but that desire driving the laughs struck a chord.

"That resonated with women – and everyone – in the 1950s," Gunderson says. "She broke barriers in that she wasn't valuable for just being attractive. She was valuable in that she could really make people laugh." – Sara Toth

While Lucille Ball may be best known for her starring role as Lucy Ricardo in "I Love Lucy," she had a body of work that extended well beyond that show's six-year run in the 1950s.

"She was 42 movies into her career by the time *I Love Lucy* came on the air, and many weren't comedies," Gunderson says.

But her legacy is more than her movies and her television shows; Ball was also a trailblazer for women and for

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The Snow Queen

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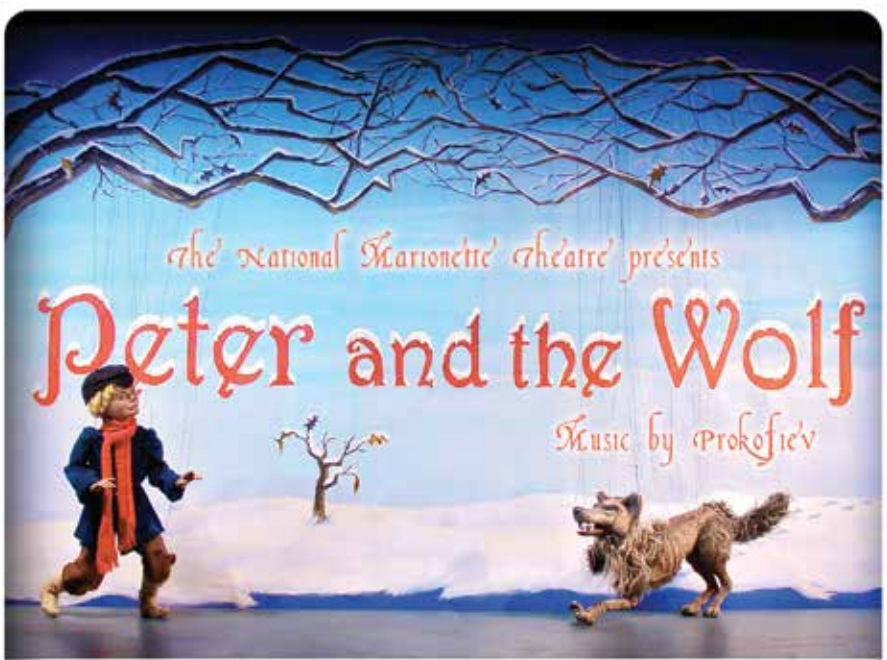
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Jane Turville, B.A.
"The Greenest Building"
film screening and discussion with director and author - In partnership with Preservation Erie
Feb. 10



Roxanne Sukol, M.D.
Medical Director, Cleveland Clinic's Wellness Enterprise, Dept. of Preventative Medicine
"Preventing - and Reversing - the Growing Trend of Diabetes and Obesity"
Feb. 29

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Date /Time	Title	Instructor
COURSES		
Jan. 26 / 1-2:30	Great Books: Happiness and Discontent	Corrine Egan, B.A.
Feb. 4 / 4-6	American Short Stories	Marjorie Podolsky, M.Ed.
LECTURES		
Jan. 26/ 7-8:30	Vladimir Putin - President or Tsar? Understanding the Russian Bear	Fr. Steve Simon, J.D.
Jan. 27/ 7-8:30	Road to the White House 2016	David Kozak, Ph.D.
Jan. 28/ 7-8:30	The Agora Examined: The Influence of Ancient Greece on the Fields of Politics, Art, and Philosophy	<i>Free</i> Michael Hinman, B.S.
Feb. 1/ 4-5:30	Remarkable American Women: Shirley Chisholm	<i>Free</i> Corrine Egan, B.A.
Feb. 2 / 7-8:30	Who Scares Us and Why? A History of American Panic - From Witches to Muslims	William P. Garvey, Ph.D.
Feb. 4/ 7-8:30	Assessing the Erie County Civic Leadership Program and the Presque Isle Connector	<i>Free</i> K. Hinsdale, B.A.; H. Kirby, M.B.A.; & L. Ridge, M.A.
Feb. 8/ 7-8:30	Practical Suggestions for Surviving in the (Mis)Information Age	John K. Gamble, Ph.D.
Feb. 9/7-8:30	JFK on Being a Catholic President	Barry Grossman, J.D.
Feb. 10 / 7-8:30	The Greenest Building: Documentary Viewing and Discussion with the Director & Writer	Jane Turville, B.A.*
Feb. 11 /7-8:30	An Unlikely Trio: Washington, Lincoln & the Jesuits on Leadership	Andrew Roth, Ph.D.
Feb. 16/ 7-8:30	Who Really Runs America?	<i>Free</i> C. Brock, M. Litt., K. Dahlkemper B.S., & B. Kibler, Ph.D.
Feb. 17 / 7-8:30	Syria: Shifting Alliances and Instability in the Middle East	Baher Ghosheh, Ph.D.
Feb. 18 / 7-8:30	Shakespeare's 400-Year Afterlife - Reinventions and Adaptations for Our Times	Douglas King, Ph.D.
Feb. 23 / 4-5:30	The Tale of the Steamer The Erie - Lake Erie Calamity	<i>Free</i> Angela Beaumont, M.A.
Feb. 24 / 4 -5:30	The Dark Side of the Internet: Cyberterrorism and Cybercrime	<i>Free</i> Dan Nick, M.A.
Feb. 25/ 7-8:30	Evaluating Pennsylvania's Role in the Global Market Place	David Briel, M.B.A.*
Feb. 29 / 7-8:30	Preventing - and Reversing - the Growing Trend of Diabetes and Obesity	Roxanne Sukol, M.D.*
Mar. 1 / 7-8:30	The Evolution of Terrorism: Understanding the Lone Wolf Phenomena	J. Breckenridge, Ph.D. & O. Danzell, Ph.D.
Mar. 3 / 7-8:30	Lou Tullio: A Real Erie Guy - Behind the Scenes	<i>Free</i> P. Cappabianca, M.A.; J. Savocchio, M.A.; & C. Vaillancourt

Spotlight on Erie

January 20 to February 2, 2016

Matty B's Birthday Bash Dresses Up the Kings Rook Club



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Friday, Jan. 22

Celebrate! Dress snazzy! Twist, jive, and boogie all night!

Those are the directions for – and the duties of – all who enter the Kings Rook Club on Friday, Jan. 22, the night of Matty B's 30th Birthday Bash.

A musical feast befitting Matt Boland – one of Erie's most well known and hardest-working musicians – the bash is a country, blues, and rock 'n roll review featuring performances by Boland's own Matty B & the Dirty Pickles, Bootleggers Bible Club (of which Boland is also a member), and local legends the Rodger Montgomery Blues Band.

"Matty has been around the scene a long time, constantly re-inventing himself, and has become a local staple in the music community," says club promoter/manager Ryan Bartosek. "We're happy he chose to celebrate his 30 trips around the sun at the Kings Rook Club."

To best enjoy the evening's stellar lineup and bask in Boland's glow, party guests are asked to "dress up in their suits and dresses, do their hair up nice, and make it a sharp affair," Bartosek adds.

Like many awesome events at the Kings Rook, Boland's birthday bash is a free show for members and guests, and memberships and renewals will be readily available for purchase.

Happy birthday, Matty B. – Ryan Smith

9 p.m. // 1921 Peach St. // facebook.com/KingsRookClub

Potent Poetry: Poets' Hall is Pulsing with Good Words

Friday Jan. 22 and Friday, Jan. 29

Rudyard Kipling, in a speech to the Royal Academy of Surgeons in 1923, told his audience, "Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind." And it just might be in poetry that the potency of words reaches its pinnacle. Upcoming events from Poets' Hall, Erie's most focused and successful poetry institution, aim to ensure the continued vibrancy of the spoken word in our community.

On Jan. 22, it's presenting Poetry Scene at the Avalon Hotel at 6:30 p.m., followed by its regular Friday Night Writes at 8:30 p.m. Poetry Scene is co-hosted by Kim Noyes and Chuck Joy, and will feature local poet Jack Wonner, a longtime fixture in the poetry community. Friday Night Writes will feature TeamPulse, a poetry slam team from Jamestown, N.Y. This five-member group includes Elise Etc., Autumn Christine Louise, Rycheigh Allan, Sierra Tango, and Autumn Echo. Both events will offer an open mic for those wishing to participate.

According to Joy, the earlier event is an attempt to provide an opportunity for people who need an earlier time slot. "Lots of different people, like people with families, need something earlier in the evening. We want as many people as possible to be able to enjoy or participate," says Joy.

And Joy himself will take the spotlight on Jan. 29. Called a "pillar of the poetry community," by Erie's current poet laureate, Cee Williams, Joy will be presenting pieces from his collection *Every Tiger Wants to Sing*, and his newest publication, *Said the Growling Dog*. There will also be an open mic for anyone who wants to present.

For six years now, Poet's Hall has been at the forefront of supporting poets and spoken word artists in the community, as well as conducting youth outreach programs and, of course, crafting works that move and enchant those listening. It might be time for some word therapy. – Mary Birdsong

Jan. 22, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.; Jan. 29, 8 p.m. // Room 210, Avalon Hotel, 16 W. 10 St. // A \$3 donation is suggested for both nights (the \$3 covers both events on Jan. 22). facebook.com/PoetsHall // poet2thebone@gmail.com



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MUSIC

Dave VanAmburg & Friends

Jan. 21, 28 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Maxi's Restaurant, 2800 W. 8th St. jazzerie.com.

Colony House Band

Jan. 21, 28 — 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Colony Pub & Grille, 2670 W. 8th St. jazzerie.com.

Travis Rocco

Jan. 22 — noon
Gannon University, 109 W.

6th St. travisrocco.com.

Violinist Bella Hristova

Jan. 22 — noon to 1 p.m.
WQLN, 8425 Peach St. wqln.org.

Dave Callaghan Quartet

Jan. 22 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Wegman's Cafeteria, 6143 Peach St. jazzerie.com.

Salmon Frank

Jan. 22 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Sprague Farm & Brew Works, 22043 US Hwy 6 &

19 sleepingchainsaw.com.

Friday Night Jazz

Jan. 22, 29 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Oasis Pub, 3122 West Lake Rd. jazzerie.com.

Whiskey Road Rock Show

Jan. 22 — 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Matty B's Birthday Bash

Jan. 22 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921

Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Erie Ale House Acoustics

Jan. 22 — 9 p.m. to midnight
Erie Ale House, 1033 State St. facebook.com/ErieAleHouse.

Sean Patrick McGraw

Jan. 22 — 9:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
Peek'n Peak Resort, 1405 Olde Rd. pknpk.com.

Gilligan's

Jan. 22 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Romeo and Juliet

Jan. 23 — 8 to 10 p.m.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. eriephil.org.

Geek Army

Jan. 23 — 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

The Spectacle that is Leader of Men

Jan. 23 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

The Division Street Machine

Jan. 23 — 10 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Small Town Rollers

Jan. 29 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Sprague Farm & Brew Works, 22043 US Hwy 6 & 19 sleepingchainsaw.com.

Ruby Port Band

Get More than Your Phil: Big Russian Music with a Side of Appetizers

Friday, Jan. 22 and Saturday, Jan. 23

The Erie Philharmonic has put together two nights of warm and spirited music with a free open rehearsal on Friday, Jan. 22 and a symphonic concert on Saturday, Jan. 23. The series showcases the fiery and passionate creations of Russian composers Alexander Glazunov, Dmitri Shostakovich, and Sergei Prokofiev. And offers up some innovation, too.

In a new twist, the organization is adding a party atmosphere to open rehearsal, called Friday at the Phil. Besides the typical meet and greet with Music Director Daniel Meyer and violin soloist Bella Hristova, the Phil is offering a special happy hour party with drink specials and appetizers from Make It Fabulous. Musicians will also be on hand to allow people to try out their instruments.

"The purpose of Friday at the Phil is to bring new people to the Philharmonic. We want everyone in Erie to have the opportunity to hear the live music that the Philharmonic presents," says Lisa Herring TeCulver, the Phil's Director of Community Impact. "There are so many people who would enjoy the music but have preconceived notions of what a night at

the Philharmonic is like," she adds.

What the orchestra will be rehearsing on Friday and presenting on Saturday are three dynamic compositions. Opening the evening is Glazunov's *Intermezzo Romantico*, which is characterized as a musical tribute to the style of Pytor Ilich Tchaikovsky. Shostakovich's moving First Violin Concerto follows featuring Bulgarian-American violinist, Bella Hristova.

The evening's finale is Prokofiev's ballet score from *Romeo and Juliet*, which the Philharmonic promises will be "rife with special details and sonic surprises."

If you want to learn more about the pieces and composers on Saturday, come at 7 p.m. for a pre-concert chat with WQLN classical music host, Brian Hannah.

Combining warm and passionate Russian music with a few spirits and some non-stuffy fun should make the cold of January melt away. — Mary Birdsong

Jan. 22, Happy Hour, 6 to 8:30 p.m.; open rehearsal, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. // Jan. 23, 8 p.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // 455.1375 // EriePhil.org



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jan. 29 — 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Sonny's Fugitives and Dioniso

Jan. 29 — 10 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Misunderstood and Everybody Hates Mondays

Jan. 29 — 10 p.m. to midnight
Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Division Street Machine

Jan. 30 — 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Kriadiaz

Jan. 30 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Big Something and Haewa

Jan. 30 — 10 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

DANCE

Stardust Ballroom Dance Lessons

Jan. 25 & Feb. 1 — 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Realife Assembly, 3902 W. 38th St. facebook.com/Stardust-Ballroom-Dance-Club-of-Erie-597514403606573/?ref=hl.

FOOD & DRINK

Vegan Book Club

Jan. 21 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Barnes & Noble, 5909 Peach St. theerievegsociety.org.

Fridays with the Phil

Jan. 22 — 6 to 8:30 p.m.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. facebook.com/EriePhil.

Acoustic Jukebox Happy Hour

Jan. 22 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

Sips, Suds & Songs

Jan. 22, 29 — 8 to 11 p.m.
The Cork 1794, 17 W. Main St. cork1794.com.

Mind, Body, Beer

Jan. 26 — 7 to 8 p.m.
Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St. facebook.com/

ErieAleWorks?_rdr=p.

Rick & the Roadhouse Rockers Happy Hour

Jan. 29 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/sherlocksparkplace.

FILM

D-Day: Normandy 1944 Movie

Ongoing through Jan. 31 — 11 a.m. & 1 p.m. & 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trepci.org.

Deepsea Challenge

Ongoing through Jan. 31 — noon
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trepci.org.

Tiny Giants

Ongoing through Jan. 31 — 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trepci.org.

Beasts of the Southern Wild

Jan. 21 — 8:30 p.m.

Jekyll & Hyde's Showing its Musical Side

Friday, Jan. 22 and beyond



STEVE CARDMAN

If you're a fan of creatively delicious food and decadent draft beers, chances are you've already been to Jekyll & Hyde's. Lately, they've been dipping their toes into the music scene, too. Since the bar opened five years ago, musicians have naturally gravitated there. Bartender and Events Organizer Rochelle Carlotti elaborated that "artists and other adventurous clientele have always kind of felt at home here, since we offer a food and drink menu that's a little off the beaten path. It felt like a natural next step to have those same people perform and bring even more new experiences to Jekyll & Hyde's." Things got off to a start this fall, with acts like Tyler Smilo and Junk Shop Failure playing. The atmosphere is intimate, but Carlotti explained that "we're small, but that hasn't stopped us

from having a good time." Bands play on the "Hyde" side of the bar (that's the one with darker walls and lower lighting). On Friday, Jan. 29, Tyler Smilo returns. The Bootlegger's Bible Club will play the next week on Feb. 5, with John Nolan on Feb. 12. Artists play longer sets, starting at 10 p.m. and ending at 1 a.m.

In addition to performances, the bar has a few other ideas in the works. Recalling the days of the Crooked I, they hosted a "Vinyl Night" with Steve Maynard to a packed house. Friday, Jan. 22 will see another, this time paying tribute to David Bowie (Bowie attire earns guests a free drink). Be on the lookout for other theme nights and fun surprises in store. — Nick Warren

Jekyll & Hyde's Gastropub, 8 E. 10th St. // 456.0072 or jekyllandhydeserie.com

CALENDAR

Big Something and Haewa Bring Accomplished Jams to the Kings Rook Club

Saturday, Jan. 30



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In 1901, 63-year-old schoolteacher Anne Edison Taylor became the first person to ride a barrel over Niagara Falls. Publicity stunt?

"Jam session," she explained, visibly shaken but intact.

Both language's greatest peril and greatest beauty is in its subjectivity; the same word(s) can mean different things to different people. To anyone who has ever dwelt with or neighbored an "aspiring musician," the term "jam session" might elicit feelings of dread, helplessness, despair – or, like Ms. Edison Taylor, an overwhelming impulse to plunge from a high altitude.

But to the tens of thousands who flock to summer festivals such as Bonnaroo, Firefly, or the (more local) Great Blue Heron to watch *accomplished* musicians jam out, the phrase holds a much cheerier connotation – unity, vitality, a sense of connectedness with the music and one's surroundings. Those who venture to the Kings Rook for its Big Something-Haewa double feature will receive a glimpse of the summer festival experience, although black lights are as close as you'll come to soaking

up rays and shoes/shirts are required.

Big Something will take the stage in the downstairs concert complex with its energetic and infectious blend of funk, rock, electronica, and hip-hop. The North Carolina collective consists of frontman/guitarist Nick McDaniels, bassist Doug Marshall, keyboardist/trumpeter Josh Kagel, lead guitarist Jesse Hensley, drummer Ben Vinograd, and Casey Cranford, who plays saxophone and

a fascinating apparatus called an EWI (Electronic Wind Instrument). The band plays originals in the vein of contemporaries such as Galactic, Disco Biscuits, and Perpetual Groove, but also reaches back to the more progressive end of late 70's/early 80's pop-rock for covers (Talking Heads, Don Henley, the Who, etc).

Those migrating upstairs will be greeted by the much Phish-ier sound of Rochester, N.Y. power-trio Haewa. Their identification as a "psychedelic funk" band suits them well, as they veer into the unconventional chord progressions and structures of jazz without compromising their sense of groove. Their most recent EP, *Demon Tea*, even integrates elements of Southern and stoner rock, such as on the swampy "Earth Speaks."

So next time the amateurs resolve "to just play and see where it takes [them]," take yourself to see where the pros take you – it usually makes for a much better trip. – Matt Swanseger

10 p.m. // King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach St.
// www.facebook.com/kingsrookclub // \$10

Kings Rook Club

**SAT JAN 30

BIG SOMETHING

DOWNSTAIRS CONCERT COMPLEX
UPSTAIRS LOUNGE HAewa

**SAT FEB 19

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+ RODGER MONTGOMERY
BLUE BAND
+ BOOTLEGGERS BIBLE CLUB
[FREE]

SAT 01/23

THE DIVISION STREET MACHINE
[FREE]

FRI 01/29

SONNY'S FUGITIVES
+ DIONISIO
[FREE]

SAT 01/30

BIG SOMETHING
[DOWNSTAIRS]

+ HAewa

[UPSTAIRS]

FRI 02/05

THE ELEKTRA KINGS
[FREE]

SAT 02/06

SEAN PATRICK &
THE NEWGRASS REVOLUTION
[FREE]

FRI 02/12

OAKKAO
+ WAVE TRAILS
[FREE]

SAT 02/13

VIBE & DIRECT
[FREE]

FRI 02/19

BASTARD BEARDED
IRISHMEN

[DOWNSTAIRS]

+ BOOTLEGGERS
BIBLE CLUB

[UPSTAIRS]

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The Creatives are Getting Restless
Annual Juried Student Show
4.27 - 5.6

The Bruce Gallery At Doucette Hall
Edinboro University
Edinboro, PA 16444
www.brucegallery.info
Follow at Bruce Gallery on FB

CALENDAR

Edinboro University, 405
Scotland Rd. [facebook.com/edinborofilmseries](#).

The Lodger: A Story of the London Fog (1927)

Jan. 22 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424
Westlake Rd. [facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse](#).

National Theatre Live - Treasure Island

Jan. 23 — 12:55 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo
Performing Arts
Center, 501 E. 38th St.
[mercyhurst.edu](#).

The Street Fighter (1974)

Jan. 29 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424
Westlake Rd. [facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse](#).

Met Opera - Turandot (Puccini)

Jan. 30 — 12:55 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo
Performing Arts
Center, 501 E. 38th St.
[mercyhurst.edu](#).

The Sin of Harold Diddlebock (1947)

Jan. 30 — 8 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424
Westlake Rd. [facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse](#).

VISUAL ARTS

Land, Sea and Sky: Details from Nature

Ongoing through Jan. 23
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Rob Katkowski Other Worlds

Ongoing through Feb. 2
Glass Growers
Gallery, 10 E. 5th St.
[glassgrowersgallery.com](#).

Colorama

Ongoing through
Feb. 7 — 9 a.m.
Cummings Gallery, 501 E.
38th St. [mercyhurst.edu](#).

Assembled Visions

Ongoing through Mar. 26
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Art of the Comic Book

Ongoing through May. 22

Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Kids as Curators

Jan. 22 through March 13
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Plenty

Jan. 25 through May 7
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

The Fluidity of Gender

Jan. 26 through March
13 (Opening Reception
Jan. 26 — 7 to 9 p.m.)
Allegheny College,
520 N. Main St. [sites.allegheny.edu](#).

Dark Garden

Jan. 30 through Jan 8, 2017
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

THEATRE

Killer Joe

Jan. 21, 22, 23 — 7:30 p.m.
& Jan. 24 — 2:30 p.m.
Edinboro University's
Deibold Center for
Performing Arts,
219 Meadville St.
[laughrioterie.com](#).

The Snow Queen

Jan. 22, 23 — 7 p.m. &
Jan. 23, 24 — 2 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10
St. [erieplayhouse.org](#).

Ernest Hemmings

Jan. 27 — 8 to 10 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State
St. [ernest458.wix.com/tstmrkt](#).

COMMUNITY

Ask the Expert at Millcreek Municipal Building

Jan. 20 — 6 to 7 p.m.
Millcreek Municipal
Building, 3608 W. 26th
St. [lifeworkserie.org](#).

Minecraft Free Play

Jan. 20, 27 & Feb
3 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Box of Light Studios, 419
State St. [boxoflight.org](#).

Presque Isle History Week: Life of a Sailor

Jan. 20 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental
Center, 301 Peninsula

[Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov](#).

Presque Isle History Week: Life of a Lighthouse Keeper's Kid

Jan. 21 — 10:30
to 11:30 a.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental
Center, 301 Peninsula
[Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov](#).

Ask an Expert: Speech Pathology

Jan. 21 — 12:30 to 2 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach
St. [lifeworkserie.org](#).

43rd Annual Bus Trip to the March for Life

Jan. 21, 22, 23 — 11 p.m.
St. George Church, 5145
Peach St. [peopleforlife.org](#).

Erie MakerSpace Weekly Open House

Jan. 21, 28 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Station Square, 181 W. 14th
St. [eriemakerspace.com](#).

Bella Hristova Master Class

Jan. 21 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Walker Recital Hall, 501
E. 38th St. [facebook.com/EriePhil](#).

Baron Vaughn

Jan. 21 — 7 p.m. & Jan. 22,
23 — 6:40 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.
Jr.'s Last Laugh, 402 State
St. [jrslastlaugh.net](#).

Erie BayHawks vs. Toronto

Jan. 21 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. [erieevents.com](#).

LEGO Free Play

Jan. 22, 29 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Box of Light Studios, 419
State St. [boxoflight.org](#).

Written in the Stars Canvas Painting Class

Jan. 22 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Claytopia, 1503 W. 15th
St. [heathercash.com](#).

Presque Isle History Week: Construction of Perry's Fleet

Jan. 22 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental
Center, 301 Peninsula
[Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov](#).

Poets' Hall Presents

Gannon University Theatre's Fringe Fest Erie 2016 Takes Multiple Stages Throughout February

Opens Sunday, Feb. 1

Inspired by Edinburgh's Festival Fringe, the world's largest outdoor arts festival, a local university theatre department once again brings Erie a slice of Scotland as sweet as a strawberry scone.

Now in its sixth year, Fringe Fest Erie 2016 (FFE), promises audiences "a taste of the experience of the Edinburgh festival – smaller cast shows, 'edgy' material, and non-traditional staging," according to Gannon University's Schuster Theatre website.

A fundraiser for the theatre program's triennial attendance at the Scottish fete, FFE is held at Gannon and other downtown locations.

"Over the last few years, we have expanded in size to include associate productions from local theatre companies, including the Erie Playhouse, All An Act, Performing Artists Collective Alliance (PACA), and Dramashop," said Jax Vadney, FFE producer and Gannon lecturer via email.

For 2016 there are three student-written productions: *An Apartment with Grayson* by Michael Fujito, *Six Sigma* by Michael Haas, and *The Dog Logs* by CJ Johnson.

Also at Gannon: *Lazarus Laughed* by Eugene O'Neill, who is best known for *The Iceman Cometh* and *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

Lazarus Laughed is a powerful exploration of the events following the raising of Lazarus from the dead by Jesus, and the lives that this extraordinary event touched, explained Vadney.

"It invites the audience to question their own faith and the strength of conviction in the face of tyranny and doubt," she added.

Associate productions include *A Bright New Boise* by Samuel Hunter at Dramashop, and Agatha Christie's *Black Coffee* by All An Act Theatre Productions, plus more.

"Having our Downtown Erie partners involved in Fringe has enhanced the experience for our students and we are

Now in its sixth year, Fringe Fest Erie 2016 (FFE), promises audiences "a taste of the experience of the Edinburgh festival – smaller cast shows, 'edgy' material, and non-traditional staging."

very thankful to have them onboard," said Vadney.

But are there any FFE offerings that skate along propriety's "fringe?"

It depends.

Gannon's Schuster Theatre website offers a caveat that some material may not be suitable for some theatergoers, and suggests checking their website or brochure.

Hence avoiding any adverse fringe benefits. – Gregory Greenleaf-Knepp

Feb. 1 - 24 // various times and locations // engageu.gannon.edu/organization/schuster/calendar/details/661509

Kriadiaz Headlines a Hard-hitting Lineup at Sherlock's

Saturday, Jan. 30

Cleveland heavy metal quintet, Kriadiaz, is storming the stage at Sherlock's on Saturday, Jan. 30, along with a handful of other hard-hitting local and regional acts.

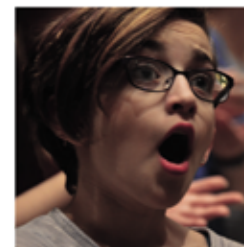
Founded by former guitarist of Mushroomhead, Dave Felton, Kriadiaz is an undeniable powerhouse of all things heavy, incorporating techniques from both old and new styles of the genre to create a metal experience that any head-bangers can, well, bang their heads to. Their self-titled 2013 album is oozing with the stylistic influences of Black Sabbath, Lamb of God, and the most obvious influence, Pantera.

Also on the bill are Toro Blanco, and Erie's own The Light In The Dark. Each band differs greatly from the next, Toro Blanco delivering a psychedelic blues/stoner rock, while The Light In The Dark plays an ambient and dynamic Deftones-esque alt-metal. Rest assured that the sonic atmosphere at Sherlock's will be anything but stale on this night. – Tommy Shannon

8 p.m. // Sherlock's, 508 State St. // \$5



ROUSE PHOTOGRAPHY



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YPC Erie is northwestern Pennsylvania's only comprehensive youth choral music program and an outreach program of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Penn State Behrend.

For more information, call 814-898-6789 or visit behrend.psu.edu/YPCErie.



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CALENDAR

Poetry Scene

Jan. 22 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Avalon Hotel, 16 W.
10th St. facebook.
com/PoetsHall.

Card Making Class

Jan. 23 — 1 to 3 p.m.
Arundel Cellars,
11727 E. Main Rd.
arundelcellars.com.

Presque Isle History Week: Presque Isle's Historical Structures

Jan. 23 — 1 to 3 p.m.
Beach 10 Parking
Lot, 301 Peninsula Dr.
events.dcnr.pa.gov.

What Makes a Bird a Bird?

Jan. 23 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental
Center, 301 Peninsula
Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Erie Otters vs. Niagara

Jan. 23 — 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809

French St. erieevents.com.

Basement Transmissions Monthly Sewing Circle

Jan. 24 — 3 to 6 p.m.
Basement Transmissions,
145 W. 11th St. facebook.
com/basement.
transmissions.

Vibrant Life Series

Jan. 25 — 10:30
to 11:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.org.

Erie Arts & Culture Website Directory Training

Jan. 25 — 6 to 8 p.m. Erie
County Public Library
Computer Training
Room, 150 E. Front St.
erieartsandculture.org.

Moonlight Snowshoe Hikes

Jan. 25 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature
Center, 4105 Asbury Rd.
asburywoods.org.

Wise Words for Wellness with Dr. Rebecca Wise

Jan. 26 — 10:30
to 11:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.org.

Barbara Behan Souper Book Swap

Jan. 26 — 11:30 a.m.
to 1:30 p.m.
Mercyhurst University,
501 E. 38th St. nah.
eriebenedictines.org.

Great Books: Happiness and Discontent

Jan. 26 & Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 &
Mar. 1, 8 — 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational
Society, 3207 State
St. jeserie.org.

Great Books: Counterparts

Jan. 26 & Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 &
Mar. 1, 8 — 4 to 5:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational
Society, 3207 State
St. jeserie.org.

Gentle Yoga with Karla Bretz

Jan. 26 — 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.org.

Canvases and Colors with Heather Cash

Jan. 26 — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature
Center, 4105 Asbury Rd.
asburywoods.org.

Vladimir Putin - President or Tsar?

Jan. 26 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational
Society, 3207 State
St. jeserie.org.

County Council Meeting

Jan. 26 — 7 p.m.
Erie County Courthouse,
140 W. 6th St.
eriecountypa.gov.

What Makes a Bear a Bear?

Jan. 27 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental
Center, 301 Peninsula
Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Road to the White House 2016

Jan. 27 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational
Society, 3207 State
St. jeserie.org.

Taylor Williamson

Jan. 28 — 7 p.m. & Jan. 29,
30 — 6:40 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.
Jr.'s Last Laugh, 402 State
St. jrslastlaugh.net.

The Agora Examined

Jan. 28 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational
Society, 3207 State
St. jeserie.org.

Harlem Globetrotters

Jan. 28 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. erieevents.com.

Open Studio Drawing

Jan. 28 — 7:30 to 9 p.m.
Erie Art Museum,
411 State St.
erieartmuseum.org.

Evening Fireside Talk: Bald Eagle

Jan. 29 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Rotary Pavilion, 301
Peninsula Dr. events.
dcnr.pa.gov.

Erie BayHawks vs. Maine


Jan. 29 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. erieevents.com.

Erie Kennel Club Dog Show

Jan. 30, 31 — 9
a.m. to 5 p.m.
Bayfront Convention
Center, 1 Sassafras
Pier erieevents.com.

Dave Chaffee Arms and Bikini Classic

Jan. 30 — noon to 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs &
Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy.
eriesportscommission.



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CALENDAR

com.

Snowshoe Saturdays

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

Erie BayHawks vs. Toronto

Jan. 30 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

6th Annual CVC Cornhole Tournament 2016

Jan. 31 — noon
Clarion Bel-Aire Hotel and Conference Center, 2800 W. 8th St. cvcerie.org.

Erie Otters vs. Mississauga

Jan. 31 — 5 to 7:30 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

Great Lakes Shipwreck Exhibition Featuring Lake Erie's Maritime Heritage

Feb. 1 through Apr. 25 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Remarkable American Women: Shirley Chisholm

Feb. 1 — 4 to 5:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational

Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Who Scares Us and Why? A History of American Panic

Feb. 2 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Decorative Nature Birdhouse

Feb. 2 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. asburywoods.org.

Erie BayHawks vs. Delaware

Feb. 3 — 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieevents.com.

United Way's Erie FREE Taxes Sites Open Jan. 25

Tis the season. No, not *that* season. *That* season is over and done, and has possibly left you with some financial headaches. Tax season can help alleviate that financial stress through tax refunds.

But those refunds come with some headaches of their own. The main stress being tax preparation. Form 1040, 1040a, 1040xyz, W-2's, W-4's, WD-40, etc. What does it all mean?



KEN TEGARDIN

If you are a resident of Erie County who makes less than \$54,000 annually, you are eligible for free tax preparation. Even if you do not have a permanent address or the documents necessary, Erie Free Taxes can help you.

Erie Free Taxes can also determine if you are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit. This credit is often available even if you do not owe anything in taxes. This could mean money in your pocket, and how often does *that* happen? If you are a fellow sufferer of empty pocket syndrome, you will probably agree with me: not often enough.

With 11 service locations in the City of Erie, and county locations in Corry, Edinboro, Fairview, Girard, and North East, VITA tax preparation services are accessible to all residents. Most VITA locations offer appointment-only services, but a few do offer walk-in services. Drop-off services are even available at some locations for anyone with time constraints.

For those who prefer to prepare their own taxes and make less than \$60,000 annually, online services are available through Erie Free Taxes at UnitedWayErie.org/ErieFreeTaxes. — Angie Jeffery

If you would like to find out more about VITA tax preparation services and the Earned Income Tax Credit, call 456.2937, ext. 236 or visit UnitedWayErie.org/ErieFreeTaxes.

Fear not: Help is here; not only here, but help is *free*.

The United Way of Erie offers free tax preparation for residents of Erie County through the Erie Free Tax/VITA program. Erie Free Taxes helps eligible low and moderate income wage-earners to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) by providing free tax preparation services through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA).

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MUSIC REVIEWS

David Bowie

Blackstar
Columbia 5 Stars



We might never see another record like this. We certainly won't see another artist like David Bowie. While it's almost impossible not to think of this album in the context of his passing, **★** (Blackstar), released on his 69th birthday, is an astounding album in any context. Early listeners were treated to a rich, cutting edge masterpiece from one of the world's most respected icons. Saxophonist Donny McCaslin proves a standout player, adding a swirling undercurrent of modern jazz. Drummer Mark Guiliana's syncopation recalls the techno of 1997's *Earthling*. Bowie's voice is epic and haunting, his lyrics even a bit esoteric. Two days after the album's release, the world learned that Bowie had died. I found out during my morning drive to work that Monday. I listened to the radio in disbelief as tears started streaming down my face. How could this happen two days after he had released an unprecedentedly brilliant 26th studio album? As more information surfaced, the timing proved intentional. The artist had, amidst our grief, given us all a wonderful gift. – Nick Warren



Hinds

Leave Me Alone
Mom + Pop Music 4 Stars



Leave Me Alone is an impressive debut from Madrid's Hinds. The four women of the group give us jangly echoes apt for repeated listens. The tone of the album embodies the upbeat, confident laziness of the best modern garage rockers. Fans of Chastity Belt or Mac Demarco will quickly get what they're about. Squishy reverb tinges every guitar lick as the rhythm section bangs out a steady, swayable beat. Vocals are shared brilliantly by guitarists Carlotta Cosials and Ana Perrote. Throughout the entire album, the two weave in and out of unison to form a charmingly distinct trademark. The duo started out on SoundCloud, covering bands like Madrid's Los Nastys and Burger Records' Dead Ghosts. Then known as Deers, the band changed their name due to legal pressure from The Dears. They didn't have to look far, switching out the name for a catchier four letter cervidae synonym. This, like everything the band does, was done with a smoky-eyed smile. Keep your ears open for this buzz-worthy quartet. – Nick Warren



Ron Pope

Ron Pope & the Nighthawks
Brooklyn Basement 3 Stars



Pop songwriter Ron Pope finds himself donning a gruff, southern-fried attitude, but is it authentic? Pope is great at what he does. He's able to write passionate, catchy, even anthemic tunes at a prolific rate. The 11 tracks of *Ron Pope & the Nighthawks* were chosen from a crop of almost 150 that the band wrote this year. Transplanted from their regular homes in Brooklyn, the band hunkered down at a house in northern Georgia to write and record the album. From the first few notes of "Southern Cross," I knew it would be one of my favorite tracks all year. The album wavers though, sometimes seeming like the band is doing impressions. "Ain't No Angel" sounds like the Black Keys' "Next Girl," while "Hell or High Water" plays like a copyright-free "Jumpin Jack Flash." You could draw more parallels if you had the time (Tom Petty, the Doobie Brothers, etc.), or the inclination. The instrumentation is wonderful, including horn sections that drift into dixieland and ragtime. If this was Pope's first effort, it might seem more real, but the craftsmanship is undeniable. – Nick Warren

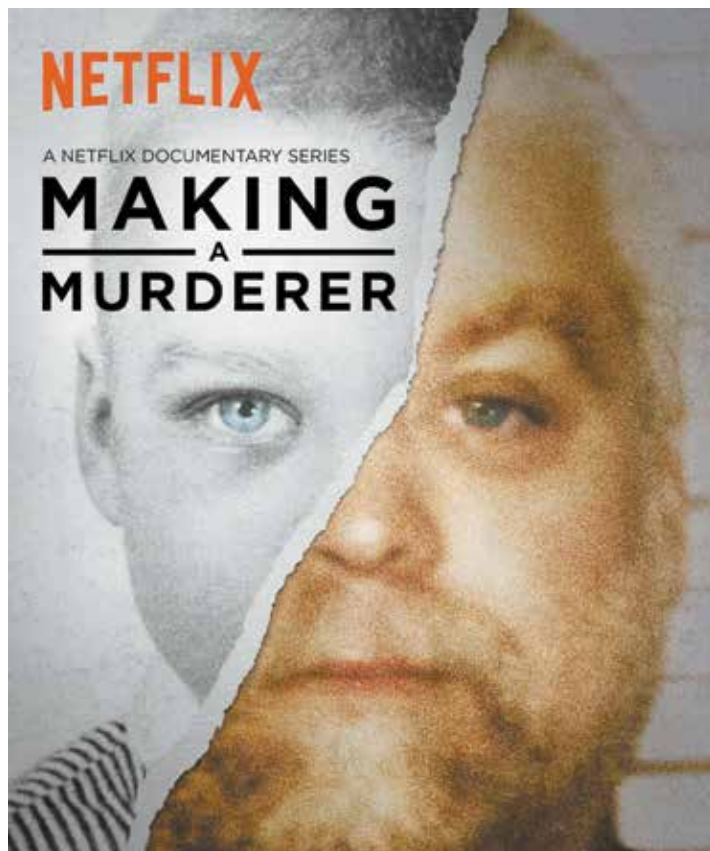


Sea Pinks

Soft Days
CF Records 4 Stars



Every track on *Soft Days* is a delightful, catchy, indie gem. The softer approach works for the trio. At the helm of the group is frontman Neil Brogan, the former drummer of post-punk band Girls Names. The musical similarities between the two bands are few, however. Sea Pinks are danceable, twee lightness. There's a 90s alternative vibe here that's so prevalent these days. At times, Brogan's voice sounds inexplicably Bostonian, recalling Evan Dando (the Lemonheads), Bill Janovitz (Buffalo Tom), and even Jay Mascis (Dinosaur Jr.). Dream pop of the 80s is audible here too, as well as 60s garage. Whatever decade it may belong to, the tone never takes itself too seriously. The sunnier attitude makes the album's simple pleasures even more enjoyable, like "Yr Horoscope." The guitars are strummed widely, and soaked with reverb. Uptempo tracks like "Ordinary Daze" and "Down Dog" become some of the more memorable highlights in the consistently joyous tracklisting. Bouncy tunes from this band have been coming out since 2010, to a relatively small audience. Maybe *Soft Days* has come at just the right time. – Nick Warren



[Cont. from page 12] used to serve justice, or misused to destroy lives or create injustice.

The HBO series *The Jinx*, is about the New York estate heir Robert Durst, whose wife went missing under dubious circumstances in 1982. He was arrested, after a multi-state manhunt, and convicted of dismemberment; but acquitted of the murder of his neighbor Morris Black in Texas in 2001. He was then arrested again in New Orleans in 2015 for the murder of writer Susan Berman, a longtime friend of his, which happened back in

Left: Making a Murderer is a Netflix documentary series about the wrongful imprisonment and subsequent murder trial of Wisconsin man Steven Avery.

2000.

The story about his first wife Kathleen's disappearance became the basis of the script for the film *All Good Things*, directed by Andrew Jarecki and starring Ryan

Jarecki has created one of the most chilling and disarming documentary series I have ever watched.

Gosling as Robert Durst. After its debut in 2010, the real Durst saw the film, then called Jarecki and asked if he would be interested in doing a filmed interview with him. This opportunity was the first time anyone had a

chance to interview Durst. So Jarecki did, and has thus created one of the most chilling and disarming documentary series I have ever watched.

Where *Serial* had me on the edge of my seat trying to figure out just who killed Hae Min Lee, and *Making a Murderer* had me raging for what appears to be the wrongful imprisonment of Steven Avery twice in his lifetime, *The Jinx* had me stupefied.

Stories like these remind me that sometimes the most unbelievable stories are the ones that really happened.

John Lindvay can be contacted at jLindvay@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @Fightstrife.

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The Health of Nursing

Opportunities (and challenges) emerge as Erie responds to a need for nurses.



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the demand for registered nurses is expected to grow 16 percent by 2024. And BLS 2014 employment data states the average RN in Pa. earns an hourly mean wage of \$32.01 and an annual mean wage of \$66,570.

ly turn that upside down. It should really be our primary care offices that are the centerpiece of healthcare – to keep people healthy.”

Chadwick and her staff are relying more and more on health coaches that encourage patients to take preventative measures and to manage their medications more independently. She’s especially excited about their new infusion center, which allows patients with chronic illnesses to avoid overnight hospital visits. Instead, they now arrive for four- to six-hour visits in a room of their own – with a TV to watch and a meal to eat. By avoiding the psychological stress of the hospital environment, they encourage patients to check in more often – and more willingly. These changes are diversifying the hospital’s needs for employment as well, as job opportunities expand beyond conventional hospital settings.

Speaking of diversity, there’s a real need for more of it in our region. Chadwick, who is currently working on a dissertation about this topic at Gannon University, notes that “professional nursing in the state of Pennsylvania is about 92 percent white women, and by 2050 our country is going to be over 50 percent people of color. We need to have the profession of nursing reflecting the people we serve so that we can meet those individual cultural needs, family needs, and know what [our patients’] values are.” Multilingualism is becoming increasingly desirable in the field. In fact, Saint Vincent already employs a

By: Dan Schank

I decided to write this article in early November. After a day spent reading gloomy stories about the impending layoffs at General Electric, I randomly clicked on a text by James Ledbetter in *The New Yorker* titled “Why is the U.S. perpetually short of nurses?” I quickly learned that “there will be a national shortage of 300,000 to 1 million RN [Registered Nurse] jobs” in the U.S. by 2020, according to a frightening study conducted by the *American Journal of Medical Quality* in 2012.

Oddly enough, the article left me feeling hopeful about our future. In a region with an aging population, a growing need for solid full-time work, and multiple nearby universities, I suspected that Erie could be uniquely well-equipped to respond to this crisis.

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, 15.8 per-

cent of the population in Erie County was 65 or older in 2014. The Erie County Department of Health recently found that “the median age in Erie County increased to a new high of 38.6 years in 2010, up from 36.2 years in 2000, and 32.9 years in 1990.” These numbers are rising, in part, because the elderly in our community are living longer lives. As an influx of baby boomers enter their twilight years, they’ll need more health care than ever. And we’ll have to hire people to provide it to them.

To learn more about the local scale of our nursing crisis, I spoke to Maureen Chadwick, the chief nursing officer at Saint Vincent Hospital. She confirmed many of my suspicions: “I think we have a perfect storm brewing across the country. And I don’t think that Erie is really any different. We’ve got a contingent of baby boomers – a little over 21 percent of my nurses are over

the age of 56, and I don’t think that’s unique to Saint Vincent. It’s a challenge and an opportunity because there is a lot of intellectual capital that’s getting ready to retire, but it’s certainly a huge opportunity for anyone who is interested in the profession of nursing.”

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), that “huge opportunity” is projected to grow by 16 percent for RNs by 2024. Better still, they typically make decent money. According to BLS employment data tallied in 2014, the average RN in the state of Pennsylvania earns an hourly mean wage of \$32.01 and an annual mean wage of \$66,570.

At the local level, Chadwick is thankful that Erie has “a really strong feeder system into local and regional facilities” because Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Gannon University, Mercyhurst University, and Penn State Behrend all offer nursing programs. Unlike

many smaller communities, hospitals like Saint Vincent actively train many of these students and provide local opportunities for clinical rotations.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) is also increasing (and diversifying) the need for work in the health care sector. Since its passage in 2010, about 16.4 million previously uninsured Americans now have coverage, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Gallup recently found that the uninsured rate in Pennsylvania dropped from 11 percent in 2013 to 10.3 percent in the span of a single year.

Chadwick notes that there is a growing “paradigm shift” in our thinking about health care, where we are working harder to keep people out of the emergency room, rather than scrambling to solve problems when they end up there: “The hospital has always been the centerpiece of the health-care system. We want to total-



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full-time Spanish interpreter. Obviously nursing isn't for everyone. As Ledbetter argues in *The New Yorker*, "nursing is very demanding, and the education required is rigorous, in terms of both its duration and the level of specialized knowledge required." Once schooling is finished, nurses can anticipate long, unconventional hours spent dealing with people who feel terrible and occasionally fear for their lives. So what kind of person excels in this environment?

To answer this question, I spoke to Ashley Welsh, an RN at Saint Vincent Consultants in Cardiovascular Diseases, LLC (as well as the wife of one of my editors at the *Reader*). Welsh claims that good nurses are "hard working, not lazy. They have a positive attitude and a sense of humor. They're flexible – that's huge – and they have a basic willingness to be a team player."

Welsh decided to go to nursing school around the age of thirty, following a very positive experience during the birth of her daughter. During labor, she was treated with care and professionalism. Afterward, she thought to herself: "I could do what she just did for me today." Eventually she graduated from Mercyhurst, took advantage of a scholarship opportunity in cardiology, and began working "on the floor" as an RN at Saint Vincent about nine years ago.

Welsh jokes that her early days at the hospital were like "a more intense version of waiting tables" because of the amount of juggling they required: "You're trying to learn what meds you're passing, or why the IV is beeping, or why the doctor ordered this test." These shifts forced her to "prioritize who needs [her] first, who can wait, and what needs to be done next."

The field can be very demanding, especially when nurses have to account for too many people. In a recent *New York Times* op-ed, journalist Alexandra Robbins notes that "dozens of studies have found that the more patients assigned to a nurse, the higher the patients' risk of death, in-

In a region with an aging population, a growing need for solid full-time work, and multiple nearby universities, Erie could be uniquely well-equipped to respond to this nationwide nursing crisis.

fections, complications, falls, failure-to-rescue rates, and readmission to the hospital — and the longer their hospital stay. According to one study, for every 100 surgical patients who die in hospitals where nurses are assigned four pa-

tients, 131 would die if they were assigned eight."

I asked Welsh about her workload during the years she spent on the floor before transitioning to an office setting. She remembered that staffing problems often made her shifts more stressful: "Four patients at a time is manageable. It's safe. You would have five patients at a time during the day, maybe six. At night, you could have more ... If you have proper staff at all times, it would be manageable. But unfortunately, sometimes you come in and you don't have a secretary, or a nurse's aide or a charge nurse." As a veteran in the field, she also laments the lack of financial incentives for experienced nurses: "It's those nurses with all of the experience that you want taking care of you. And that you want training new nurses." Still, Welsh finds her work extremely rewarding. When I ask her

what she likes best about her job, she notes its flexibility: "By being a nurse, you can choose to work in so many different fields ... You can do labor and delivery, or work at a nursing home. You can work in a cardiology office, a hospital, or in mental health – there are so many options for you to choose from."

She particularly values the "second chance" that nursing afforded her when she decided to change careers, and hopes that it might allow others to do the same in our region. She finds that "patients who really need your help and are really appreciative of it" can make her work especially rewarding. As we conclude our chat on an optimistic note, I ask Welsh if she has any final thoughts?

"I just need a raise. That's all. Put that in there."

Dan Schank can be contacted at dSchank@ErieReader.com.

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