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**ERIE READER**

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The Erie Reader is the 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. 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 sales inquiries to 814.314.9364. For editorial inquiries, email contact@ErieReader.com.



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*"We just happen to be in a spot – and I'm not making it up – that's as good as it gets for fishing."*



ED BERNIK

## From the Editors

Closing the book on a wild year.

It's the holidays. These weeks find us up on the housetop, down the chimney, and back again. One minute you're scrambling to find last-minute gifts, and the next thing you know you're relaxing for a few days in a row, amidst opened presents and underactive houseguests. Soon, you're donning your best party attire and counting down until midnight, only to sleep the next day away, cursing the fact that you have to go back to work.

It's a different time for everyone, of course. Frantic, frazzled moments for some might be fulfilling, familial times for others. Parties may bring bliss or anxiety. The end of the calendar year is, without a doubt, an interesting time for all of us.

It's a time for toys and time for cheer. While our last issue included a list of present-day gifts made in Erie, Matt Swanseger plays the ghost of Christmas past as we look back to learn more about Marx Toys. The company, whose oldest and largest manufacturing plant was located in Erie (plus one in Girard), was a widely popular toymaker throughout the first half of the 20th century.

It's time to get reflective. The countdown of the clock isn't the only enumerated celebration around here. You'll be quick to note that this issue is filled with lists. Lisa Gensheimer gives us a rundown of some of the biggest issues Erie has faced this year. Our city is at a crossroads, one way leading to a bright, innovative future, and the other to potential disaster. We hope that our community's leaders (and future leaders) will learn from the mistakes of our past. In the words of Charles Buki, principal of Virginia consulting firm czb and author of Erie's comprehensive plan, we need to "stop doing stupid shit."

In the haze of a sometimes bleak outlook, there are things that make life a little easier. This issue also trumpets some of 2016's best media. Check out lists featuring our favorite albums (both national and local), movies, television shows, and video games.

We're also showcasing our city's best, well, *everything*. For the third year in a row, we're immensely proud to announce the winners of our Best of Erie awards. Over the last two months, we've collected votes online in 100 different categories (believe it or not, that big number is actually *quite* streamlined). We'd like to send out a sincere thank you to everyone who helped us by submitting nominees, sharing the contest online, and voting – and, a big congratulations to the winners.

As 2016 closes its doors, we look to the future. Tumultuous as everything has been this year, time marches on. This New Year's Eve, let's toast to the future, a better one for Erie, and for all of us.

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## Just a Thought

Getting in the swim



I feel your pain, kiddo. Apparently, someone just told this child that one mile equals 70 lengths.

The next day, I went back. And the next.

By day four, I felt something akin to flow. By day five, I was hooked. I've even begun to crave the feeling of propelling my body through water. (I also crave guacamole. Balance, right?)

I'm sharing all of this because we're nearing resolution time. And resolutions are so often catalyzed by underlying feelings of self-loathing, inadequacy, failure – you know, general not-good-enough-ness. So we resolve to try something new, but our motivation comes from the tired old stories we believe about ourselves. That we're bad. That we can't be trusted. That we must be punished.

Or, we try, and we really struggle at first. We're humiliated or overly-daunted, so we complete the circle

BRENDON CONNELLY ON FLICKR

during the exact same pain again sound just swell. Thankfully, a tooth-shattering bike wreck the next year cured me.

And I never got back into a pool. Until now.

I felt like swimming was in the cards for me. I'd even dream about it. I knew it'd be healthy, and was attracted to the water – like so many of us who live around here. But intuition told me I needed the water in ways that went deeper than living near it or paddling on it.

There's something so elemental and sacred about swimming. The way your body remembers, somehow, the nine months before you were born. The way you become weightless. The way your movements are slowed and graceful. The way you float.

These are what drew me into the pool at Fitness U recently, figuring it was time I gave lap swimming another try. I biked all the way through November, so I entered the pool with a modicum of confidence.

Which was shattered by the end of my first length. Not *lap*. Length.

My heart pounded, my lungs gasped, and I was the drunk-drowner once again. It was *so hard*. I pushed myself for 25 minutes, stopping to calm cardio craziness between each length, then dragged myself humbly (and ploddingly) through the rest of the day.

By: Katie Chriest

The last time I really swam was about 13 years ago. I'd gotten it in my head that it might be "fun" to do a couple of triathlons, figuring it couldn't be *that* hard – I already ran and biked some, and *everyone* can swim, right? I'm a Pisces! I love the water!

If you're a swimmer, I hope you're laughing at me right now.

I put off swim training, thinking I'd practice just enough to survive. Finally, about four weeks before my very first tri, I hit the Downtown YMCA pool.

Though that pool isn't even Olympic-sized, it became immediately evident that "survive" was the best I could hope for. It was *so hard*. My heart pounded, my lungs gasped, and I thrashed uncoordinatedly like someone drowning – maybe while drunk.

A bighearted lifeguard who took pity on me gave me a few tips, and I soon progressed to a sober-looking drowning person. But I dreaded the swim leg, especially after hearing about a woman whose nose was broken in that same tri by a fellow swimmer's kicking.

What fun!

Anyway, adequate training for the bike and run earned me a strong enough finish. I even caught that curious tri-finisher ailment that makes en-



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Resolutions are so often catalyzed by underlying feelings of self-loathing, inadequacy, failure – you know, general not-good-enough-ness.

of self-loathing by just giving up. Like I did. (I'm using goggles I bought in 2005, then *never opened*. How economical!)

This is the sort of thinking that begins personally but extends into a community. A region full of folks who don't much believe in themselves or their power to change becomes a region paralyzed by jading narratives.

My wish for all of us, dear *Reader* readers, is that – whether we make resolutions or not – we'll give ourselves the chance to try something new in 2017 – something we just might learn to love. Not because we're faulty; not because we *should*. We don't need more doggedly-determined, grindingly joyless thinking in these complicated times. We need the creativity and inspiration that only float up without being forced. We need to jump the hell in.

Katie Chriest can be contacted at [katie@ErieReader.com](mailto:katie@ErieReader.com).



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## My Wednesday Night

Erie welcomes its newest Syrian family.



**The Zahra family arrives in Erie after a long journey, including a 15-hour flight from Amman, Jordan to Chicago, then directly to Erie, their new home.**

MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

**By: Maitham Basha-Agha**

It was a cold night in Erie. The temperature was dropping and snow was in the forecast. It's the type of weather that makes you get out of the car and run to where the heat is.

Bassam Dabbah and I climbed from the car and ran inside Erie International Airport to wait for the arrival of a new Syrian family. Bassam is a Syrian translator for the Erie International Institute. This late-night routine of welcoming newcomers is part of his job. He's done it so many times he even knows the flight number and arrival time of the day's last plane.

"They have been dreaming about this day," he told me. "Coming to America is something very special, and I get to be the first person to welcome them."

Bassam has a good heart, and has prepared Syrian dishes for the family. "The journey has been tiring but this will be a happy moment for them," he continued. "They will be excited to see their new apartment, and this new city. Most importantly, they will feel safe here. Erie is their hope for a better life and many new opportunities."

A few minutes later, Bassam and I were joined by Bryan Prior, an in-training caseworker

who is just starting out with Erie's International Institute. He is an adjunct professor at Gannon and seems to be a do-it-by-the-book kind of guy, with the flight information in his hand. He explained to Bassam where the family would go the next day and what time they'd need to be picked up for their appointments.

When the flight from O'Hare International Airport landed in Erie, we all stood and watched for Erie's new family to disembark. I turned my camera and flash on while Bassam and Bryan watched for the newcomers. The family of seven soon came through the gate and walked toward Bassam. He greeted the family, shaking hands with all of the men and using the traditional Arabic greeting, "Assalamualai-

kum."

The family consisted of the father, Nazer Zahra, 51, his wife, Seba Hamoud Agha, 41, and children, Mohammed, 16, Basam, 14, Fatema, 11, Abdullelah, 7, and Rama, 6.

The youngest child was crying while everyone else seemed tired. They just wanted to rest from the 15-hour flight from Amman, Jordan, to Chicago, and then directly to Erie. We all walked to baggage claim, and the men collected the bags while the mother and the daughter patiently awaited what would come next.

In the van, I started to converse with the 16-year-old who sat in the front seat next to Bassam. I was curious to know what life was like in Syria. He didn't speak any English, and so I asked my questions in Arabic. At times it was hard for us to understand one another because of our different dialects. I am from Iraq; he is from Syria.

As he reflected back on his time in Syria, the young man took a deep breath, looking out at Erie's empty streets. He spoke of the day when the streets of Syria turned turbulent. One Friday, he went to the mosque with his friends for the Friday prayer, and when the prayer ended the turmoil really started for him.

As he was walking out of the mosque, he was greeted by pro-government stonethrowers. Syria had become a war zone and was no longer safe.

The family's house was bombed and escaping to the next town was their only solution. They took whatever they could and left for Nabik, Syria, which is about 50 miles away. After a year in Nabik, they had to flee again – this time to Jordan – as Nabik had become a target for the Syrian Army.

The family joined thousands of other Syrian refugees who were already residing in Jordan. Many had to stay in Jordan for years until their resettlement applications would be approved.

The Zahra family lived in Jordan for four years before coming to their resettlement location of Erie. This new Syrian family will undergo the procedures and orientation every newcomer goes through. For the next six months, they will register for school, social security cards, and the required medical care they'll need.

Bassam and I were glad to have a part in welcoming Erie's New American family. It was a Wednesday night well spent.

*Maitham Basha-Agha can be contacted at [Maitham@eriereader.com](mailto:Maitham@eriereader.com).*



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## 2016: The Year in Review

### Lions, leadership, and the quest for courage



ANDRE CARROTFLOWER VIA WIKIMEDIA

By: Lisa Gensheimer

If the nation's top Twitter hashtags were the Olympics, the election, and Pokémon Go, I'm guessing Erie's were Tall Ships, Roar on the Shore, Perry Palooza, and, oh yes, the election.

But as the world's largest rubber duck deflated and the last tall ship disappeared on the horizon, as the Presque Isle Lighthouse shuttered its doors for the season, the refurbished fountain in Perry Square donned its protective cover, and the super moon set over the rural countryside that turned Erie County red, we're left with some hefty challenges as we step over the threshold into 2017.

Here are five that will shape our community for generations.

#### Action on Erie's comprehensive plan(s)

**2016** brought the completion of the city of Erie's first comprehensive plan in decades, *Erie Refocused*, better known as the Buki Plan.

The tell-all strategic guide chronicles Erie's decline and presents the hard choices needed to reverse it. Taken together with the Erie Downtown Master Plan, Emerge 2040, and the new West Bayfront Neighborhood Plan, this plan addresses needs in a number of areas, including housing, transportation, land use, and economic development.

Will we make the leap for sweeping change or will we hesitate, stand still, and accept the status quo?

Two outsiders writing for *The Atlantic* urged in no uncertain terms, "Go for it!" Journalists James and Deborah Fallows, who came to Erie as part of their "City Makers: American Futures," project, tapped into the incredible momentum we're beginning to see as community groups and businesses like Erie Insurance come together in tough times to save our city.

"Erie has as active a civic-reform movement as you will find anywhere in the country, led by people in their 20s and 30s who believe they can create new businesses for themselves and new life for their town," wrote James Fallows in his first of five essays. "Erie is worse off in most ways than it was 50 years ago – but better off than five years ago, and headed toward better prospects five years from now, in the view of most people there."

Clearly, these writers didn't talk to the naysayers and instead focused on the features many of us who live here fail to see. Like Charles Buki, lead consultant on the comprehensive plan, they discovered our community already has the tools it needs for recovery. "Most of all," Buki said, "in the community itself we found willingness to do what's required, if asked, and *if mobilized.*"

Technology, healthcare, and insur-

ance are leading the way with a major vote of confidence this year. Velocity Network will move its headquarters to center city, Erie Insurance will invest \$135 million in a new office complex, and UPMC Hamot announced plans for a \$111 million patient tower, the largest expansion in its history.

That kind of optimism alone can supercharge our drive out of the doldrums. But given that we've already fallen behind in the Buki plan's benchmarks, there's no time to waste.

Onward, cowardly lions.

#### A call for leadership

I fear the 2016 presidential election will have devastating consequences for the environment, education, civil rights, our most vulnerable citizens, and our relationships around the globe; but as former House Speaker Tip O'Neill once said, "All politics is local."

He has a point. We have a real shot at building a better future in our corner of the world if we make a smart choice for mayor.

For the first time in 12 years, Erie voters have the opportunity to elect a transformational leader. Someone who will spend less time pushing pencils on the fifth floor of City Hall and more time rallying the resources for Erie's resurgence.

The May 16 primary will undoubtedly draw a wide range of applicants (yes, applicants – this is the city's top job, and you're in charge of hiring). As of this writing, three Democrats – Erie County Councilman Jay Breneman, 34, longtime community activist Lisa Austin, 60, and Executive Director of the Erie Playhouse Almi Clerkin, 53 – have formally announced their candidacies. Republican Al Zimmer, 73, a retired security guard, is also in the running.

Resist the urge to pigeonhole candidates with a tagline as ads so often do. Instead, look deeper and think critically before voting.

As the announcements roll out, hold each candidate up to the light. Who is best equipped to lead Erie's efforts to curb gun violence, stem poverty, restore blighted buildings, and reverse our declining tax base? Who has the courage to step outside the city's comfort zone, climb over the hurdles that hold us back, and point us to a sustain-

able future, using Erie Refocused as a guide?

I'm not going to speculate who will run or predict who will win. As we found out in 2016, anything can happen.

Whatever your politics, I'm sure you'll agree an informed, engaged citizenry is critical to our democracy. It's heartening to see neighbors embracing immigrants in our sanctuary city, and activists fighting not only for jobs, but for clean air and clean water. We're holding peace vigils, reclaiming streets from violence, creating meaningful public art, preserving cultural assets, and organizing acts of resistance against injustice.

So do what you must do. Pay attention. Read. Make your voice heard. And above all, vote.

#### C is for collaborate

If we learned anything from the 18-month standoff between the city and county over the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority (EMTA) charter renewal, it's that we have a long way to go in terms of regional collaboration. Despite many proposals from the county to forge a more equitable agreement for vital public transportation services, Mayor Joe Sinnott and company refused to even meet with county officials, let alone compromise.

Finally in October, with state and federal funding at risk, dwindling reserves, and under threat of takeover by a PennDOT-appointed third party, the city and county negotiated and approved a new, 10-year operating charter agreement. The agreement increases county representation on EMTA's board from three appointees to four and gives the city five appointees instead of its current six. The city will provide 55 percent of the state-required share of municipal funding; the county will contribute 45 percent.

A new rider advisory board could be the best idea yet. Maybe if riders had been consulted in the first place we would have had a deal a long time ago.

#### Fair and equitable education

Erie School District Superintendent Jay Badams grabbed headlines last May with his threat to close the city's four public high schools and bus students to wealthier, whiter county



**Declining districts like Erie continue to be at a disadvantage. City students aren't benefiting from the same quality education that county students receive.**

MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

schools to avoid insolvency. It was a bold move – and a necessary one. Badams' controversial budget proposal brought the county's other superintendents to the table, and galvanized support from students, parents, educators, and community members who took their collective cause to Harrisburg. Gov. Tom Wolf came to town for a firsthand look inside Erie schools, but made no promises.

An infusion of \$4 million in emergency funding was only a temporary fix. The state-mandated financial recovery plan awaiting Pennsylvania Department of Education approval will require \$31.8 million.

A revised education funding formula passed with bipartisan support last July, but it applies only to new basic education aid, doesn't shore up years of unfair distribution of resources, and puts declining districts like Erie at a disadvantage. City students aren't benefiting from the same quality education that county students receive.

Badams is right: Full funding of Erie schools is a moral issue.

This year's state budget didn't come close to restoring former Gov. Corbett's cuts to K-12 education. It's time for Gov. Wolf and the General Assembly to start looking at new revenue sources, not just corporate tax breaks, if we're serious about the long-term future of education in Pennsylvania.

Long after Badams leaves the building – he's a finalist for a position in Vermont – the tough work remains.

### Spike in heroin deaths

Each of these challenges in one way or another could mean life or death for our city, but this one is literal.

Chances are, you or someone you know suffered the heart-wrenching loss of a loved one to heroin or opioids this year. At least once a week, their faces appear in the local obituary pages, one more promising life cut short.

Erie County Coroner Lyell Cook said of the 541 deaths his office investigated so far in 2016, 84 were drug-related deaths, an increase of 19 percent over last year. Those with heroin and its synthetic sister fentanyl are to blame for 53 of them. The dangerous opioid fentanyl is showing up at an alarming pace in the coroner's lab reports. Fentanyl claimed 30 lives in 2016, compared with six in 2015.

Fentanyl, either prescribed for pain or illicitly obtained and cut into street drugs, often without a user's knowledge, is 400 to 700 times more powerful than pure morphine. "The first time you try it is usually your last," Cook said. "You're dead by the time you hit the ground."

Officials here and across the nation are calling heroin and opioid misuse one of the most serious public health crises of our time.

In November, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a landmark report confirming that addiction is a chronic disease of the brain. He challenged health care professionals, counselors, law enforcement, community groups, and elected

officials to come up with action plans that will make treatment more effective and more accessible.

"It's time to change how we view addiction," said Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, "not as a moral failing, but as a chronic illness that must be treated with skill, urgency, and compassion. The way we address this crisis is a test for America."

Better sharpen our pencils. A new Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Index launched in November, drawn from actual insurance claims, ranked mood and substance abuse disorders as the top two illnesses affecting Erie County residents' overall health. The threat is greater than high cholesterol, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper, who served on a national task force examining heroin and opioid abuse this year, uses every opportunity she can to speak publicly about what needs to be done.

"Some people ask, 'Should we be trying to save the lives of drug addicts?'" Dahlkemper said. "Would you not save someone who is in cardiac arrest because he has overeaten or smoked? Addiction is a disease. We all have to work at reducing the stigma. These people have value to their families and to our society."

Starting this year, many police departments began carrying naloxone, a lifesaving opioid overdose reversal drug, and hospital emergency rooms, beginning with UPMC Hamot, de-

ployed a "warm handoff" program aimed at getting overdose patients into substance abuse treatment right away. Vivitrol, an opioid blocker that lasts 30 days, is now being given to heroin addicts on their release from Erie County Prison, giving them time to get the support they need to begin recovery. Gov. Wolf named Erie's Esper Treatment Center one of 25 Centers of Excellence around the state. These efforts, and a new statewide prescription-monitoring program, are signs of progress, but don't go nearly far enough.

The Erie County Office of Drug and Alcohol Abuse and local treatment centers hosted a two-day collaborative forum in September to share best practices in community outreach, prevention, and treatment.

Two months later, barriers to treatment were discussed in at a public hearing conducted by Gary Tennis, secretary of the state Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs, at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center. A report for the General Assembly in 2017 will most certainly include requests for more funding.

At the hearing, addicts in various stages of recovery begged the panel for much-needed reforms. One young woman, a recovering addict who lost her children's father to a drug overdose, told of wanting desperately to get well after suffering relapses upon her release from 19 different facilities, calling cost and quality of care into question.

When it was his turn, David Crowe, executive director of the Crawford County Drug & Alcohol Commission, looked up in exasperation from his neatly typed testimony. "People are dying in record numbers," he said. "It comes down to this: Do our politicians have the courage to keep these people alive?"

The same could be asked of all our challenges: *Do we have the courage to do what's right?*

*Lisa Gensheimer is a writer and documentary producer who lives in North East, which, like other outlying communities, depends on a vibrant center city. She can be reached at [lisa@onmainstreet.com](mailto:lisa@onmainstreet.com)*



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- Located in Mid-Town Erie, this 48,410 square foot mixed use Property consists of Retail, Commercial and privately owned Residential condominium units. Constructed in 1875 and renovated in 2007, there have been over \$2,000,000 of recent improvements made to the Property.
- There are fifteen commercial units available For Sale on Floors 1, 2, 3 and the Lower Level of the Property totaling 27,200 square feet. The anchor tenant of the Property is the United States Postal Service ("USPS") downtown Erie branch. This offering represents the opportunity for a developer/investor to purchase this ideally located real estate asset with significant opportunity for value creation.
- Note: There are fourteen privately owned residential condominiums on Floors 4 and 5 of the Property which are not included within the proposed sale.
- For Lease: Shell space is currently available for \$7.00 per square foot plus \$2.70 common area maintenance fees.

### Property Description

- Register at <http://www.1401.summarysoft.com> for financials and bid submittal information.



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## News of the Weird

'Law-abiding' perverts are in the news, and it's not even about the election.

By: Chuck Shepherd

### LEAD STORY

Radical dentistry was on display in November in London's Science Gallery, where installations offered "art-science collaborations" including Taiwan artist Kuang-Yi Ku's "Fellatio Modification Project." Former dentist Ku, complaining that textbooks on mouths tragically under-regard their value in sex, created (the ordinary way) a custom retainer for the client's mouth but then added rubber "bumps" and "cones" and "ribs" and "ripples" that might be pleasing to a partner. [New Scientist, 11-7-2016]

### Suspicious Confirmed

Evolution, according to scientists, likely explains why some "prey" develop defense mechanisms to avoid "predators," i.e., the prey who fail to develop them are unable to procreate (because they're dead), but a team of scientists from Sweden and Australia recently concluded that something similar happens in a species of fish in which males mate basically by huge-appendaged rape. Growing nine generations of the species in the lab, the researchers concluded that the females who can avoid the "rapist" evolve larger brains than those who fall victim. (Researchers, loosely speaking, thus concluded that as males grow bigger penises, females grow bigger brains to outsmart them.) [National Post (Toronto), 11-24-2016]

### Recurring Themes

Whistleblower goes to jail; responsible industry executives make millions. Long-time Mississippi environmental activist Tennie White is 27 months into a 40-month sentence (for "falsifying" three \$150 tests in her laboratory), but high-ranking executives at the Kerr-McGee chemical conglomerate made millions on the case White helped expose: leakage of cancer-causing creosote into communities, including White's Columbus, Mississippi, neighborhood. A detailed investigation by TheIntercept.com in November noted the executives' brilliant response to the 25,000 creosote lawsuits nationwide: put all the liability into one outlying company (eventually going bankrupt) but selling off, highly profitably, the rest of the firm. [The Intercept, 11-25-2016]

Compelling Explanations Texas is among the most enthusiastic states for jailing low-income arrestees who cannot pay a money bail, especially during devastating family hardships, and the four Houston bail magistrates are particularly harsh, according to a recent report of the Texas Organizing Project. After hearing one financially overwhelmed woman beg sarcastically that \$1,000 bail is "nothing" next to her other bills, unsympathetic magistrate Joe Licata shrugged, "It's nothing to me, either. It's job security." [Houston Press, 11-16-2016]

Pervert Or Not (1) When police in Port Orange, Florida, arrested An-

thony Coiro, 76, in November, he admitted that he had a stash of "crazy" pornography, some featuring children. However, he adamantly insisted, "I'm not a pedophile. I'm just a pervert," adding, "a law-abiding pervert." He faces 52 counts. (2) In November in Osaka, Japan, an unnamed arrestee apparently had his sexual molestation charge (against a woman on a crowded train) dramatically downgraded. "Actually," the man indignantly told the judge, he is not a pervert but just a pickpocket (a lesser crime). The victim had testified that the man had brushed against her for "3 seconds" and not the "30" she originally told police. [The Smoking Gun, 11-10-2016] [Rocket News via Sankei West, 11-18-2016]

Weird Quantities Recently in the News (1) Price tag for one round of a 155mm projectile shot from the Navy's USS Zumwalt: \$800,000. (2) Trees killed in California by the now-5-year-old drought: 102,000,000. (3) Recent finding of "water" farthest from the Earth's surface: 621 miles down (one-third of the way to the Earth's "core"). (4) Odds that Statistics Lecturer Nicholas Kapoor (Fairfield University, Fairfield, Connecticut) said he played against in buying a \$15 Powerball ticket: 1 in 913,129 (but he won \$100,000!). (5) Speed police calculated Hector Faire, 19, reaching in an Oklahoma police chase: 208 mph (but they got him, anyway). (6) Different languages spoken by children in Buffalo, New York, public classrooms: 85. [Washington Post, 11-8-2016] [Los Angeles Times, 11-18-2016] [New Sci-

entist, 11-23-2016] [ABC News, 11-14-2016] [Fox News, 11-16-2016] [Buffalo News, 11-27-2016]

### Hardly Need a Breathalyzer

Michelle Keys, 35, among those joyously caught up in Iowa's upset win over highly ranked Michigan in football in November and celebrating that night in Iowa City, was slurring and incoherent and told police she was certain she was standing in Ames, Iowa (120 miles away), and had just watched the "Iowa State - Arizona" game (a matchup not played since 1968). (She registered .225) (2) A 38-year-old woman was arrested in Springwood, Australia, in November when police stopped her car at 3 a.m. at an intersection with a children's swing set wedged onto the roof of her SUV. (She had shortly before mistakenly driven through someone's back yard and through the swing set.) (.188.) [Deadspin, 11-13-2016] [Queensland police website, 11-22-2016]

### Perspective

"Sexually-based offenses," a TV show intones, are "particularly heinous," but to the small Delaware liberal arts Wesley College (according to the U.S. Department of Education) even an accusation of sexual misconduct is so heinous that there was no need even to interview the alleged wrongdoer before expelling him. (An informal meeting did occur, but only after the investigation was completed.) The expulsion occurred even though the victim herself had not originally

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## NEWS & VIEWS

accused that particular student. The expelled student's offense was to have helped set up video for a consensual sex encounter that was (without consent) live-streamed. (The Department of Education accepted a settlement in which Wesley agreed to revamp its code of student rights.) [Washington Post, 10-13-2016]

### Recent Alarming Headlines

"**M**an Mixing LSD and Cough Syrup Saves Dog From Imaginary Fire" (WNYT-TV, Albany, N.Y., 10-15-2016). (Panicked, he had first sought help from neighbors who were unper-suaded by the sight of a fireless fire.)

"Santa Claus Speaks Out Against North Pole Ban of Marijuana Sales" (KTUU-TV, Anchorage) (Cannabis is legal in Alaska unless towns ban it, and the legally-named Mr. Claus needs it for cancer pain.)

"Dog On Loose Causes Sheep To Have Sex With Their Sisters in Walton On The Hill" (The wild dog has wrecked a planned mating program, leaving female sheep to canoodle with each other) (Surrey Mirror, Redhill, England, 9-22-2016)

### Least Competent Artists

**A**pparently the plan by a 33-year-old unlicensed, un-car-registered driver in Perth, Australia, in November to keep from being stopped by police was to print "POLICE" in large, "offi-

cial"-looking letters on the sides of her white Hyundai, using a blue dry-erase board marker. (She was, of course, quickly stopped by police.) [Yahoo News (Australia), 11-21-2016]

**A**woman in a quiet north Minneapolis neighborhood told reporters she became fearful after seeing a large swastika spraypainted on a garage door down a nearby alley (just after election day!). (Problem: The base "X" of the correct design has "hooks" that should always extend to the right, clockwise; three of the Minneapolis "artist's" awkwardly hook left.) [City Pages (Minneapolis), 11-29-2016]

### The Passing Parade

**I**n November, a court in Christchurch, New Zealand, ordered the local police to "undo" the 493 bottles' worth of liquor they had recently poured down the city's drain after raiding an unlicensed bar. The court said the police must pay a pumping company to recall the hooch because of environmental regulations. (2) In November, the Littleton, Colorado, city government, faced with the need to "blot" sticky tar on 120 streets whose potholes it was filling, bypassed expensive "detackifiers" in favor of stuffing toilet paper over the tar, causing the streets to have a trick-or-treat look. [The Press (Christchurch), 11-4-2016] [Denver Post, 11-3-2016]

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WAS THAT FOR REAL?

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# Spotlight on Erie

December 21, 2016 – January 3, 2017

**Friday, Dec. 23**

## Christmas Spirits Give Way to Big City Hangover



Before Christmas hits, treat yourself to some of Erie's finest musicians performing what they do best. Big City Hangover will be joined by Stephen Trohoske's Art Groupies for the Kings Rook Club's "Christmas Bash."

Despite Big City Hangover's relatively short existence, the band shares a long history. The show's organizer, Ryan Bartosek, was eager to emphasize that "Big City Hangover is an exciting, new, funky local band headed by Scotty Cravener and Rich Krouse. Both have been active parts of the local music scene for decades, Cravener as part of two of Erie's most popular bands ever, Plato's Cave and Chocolate Starfish." Kenny Cornelius and Doug Welser round out the rhythm section.

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Despite Big City Hangover's relatively short existence, the band shares a long history.

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Explaining why this show in particular is special, Bartosek explained that "the guys in Big City Hangover have been busy with family, work, and life and haven't been overly active on the local scene in quite awhile. That they've gotten a new original band together is very exciting and will not disappoint."

The Art Groupies will start the night off, led by bassist Stephen Trohoske. With a rotating stable of members, the band plays custom arrangements of postpunk and new wave tunes as well as original compositions. The band's stellar lineup will consist of Trohoske, drummer Ken "Stix" Thompson, saxophonist Allen Zurcher, bassist Tony Grey, and guitarist Eric Brewer.

Trohoske looks at both groups fondly, noting that "between both bands, a lot of us go back pretty far together. It's definitely going to be a party along those lines. We're going to have old friends stopping in. We're going to have celebrations of different life events going on with people. And I think it's going to excel from there." – Nick Warren

10 p.m. // 1921 Peach St. // [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](https://facebook.com/kingsrookclub)

**Friday, Dec. 30**

## Indie Blues Take Over the Kings Rook Club



Adam McKillip, Oliver Burdo, and Addison Moon are braving the Erie weather to brighten up our after-holiday lull.

Addison Moon has been fascinated with songwriting since an early age, releasing her first album, *Eleanor Evermore*, at only 17. She is currently working on her degree and new EP, set to be released in 2017.

Vocalist and guitarist Oliver Burdo has been strumming and songwriting for nearly eight years, playing local venues all around northwestern Pennsylvania and into New York. His band, St. Vith, is releasing their EP, *Windfall*, this spring. Burdo is excited for his first performance at the Rook.

Adam McKillip is no stranger to the Kings Rook Club. His love of guitar and mandolin shines brightly in his music, both in his solo act and with the band, Smilo & the Ghost.

This lineup is sure to make anyone feel the music – mixing up the good summertime vibes we've come to expect from these Great Blue Heron performers in the groovy Kings Rook scene. – Ella Julian

10 p.m. // 1921 Peach St. // [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](https://facebook.com/kingsrookclub)

**Friday, Dec. 30**

## Groove Out of 2016 with The Division Street Machine



A more intimate live experience of The Division Street Machine will be a perfect period to the long sentence that was 2016. This gig, at Presque Isle Downs & Casino's Brew Brothers, will be an excellent introduction for those new to the band's sound, ideal for long-time fans who want to get up close to the music, and a fun evening out for all. And The Division Street Machine's members – Jeremy Jaeger, Scott Kuhn, Doug Russell, and Tom Kitchen – are anticipating this show will be a great one, as Jaeger calls Brew Brothers "one of our favorite venues."

The four-piece from North East aims for universal appeal, and Jaeger highlights how the band composes material together. He says that in both live performance and songwriting, "We

---

The Division Street Machine will tone their usual volume down a notch to enhance the more friendly atmosphere. But they'll keep their bluesy, groovy vibe running.

---

try not to stick to any single genre," an approach that "allows us to play songs that most anyone can enjoy." At Brew Brothers, the quartet will play recently-written material with cover songs "peppered in," but they'll have a unique, personal twist on these familiar tunes, Jaeger adds. The Division Street Machine will tone their usual volume down a notch to enhance the more friendly atmosphere. But they'll keep their bluesy, groovy vibe running, as Kitchen will play a modified cajon (box drum), and Jaeger will play a hollow-body guitar similar to BB King's "Lucille." Jaeger says these instruments

will make "for a really neat feel that you can dance to, but can also groove to over dinner." In other words, bring an appetite not only for the music but for some of the menu offerings.

As for sounds that will satiate the hungriest of music fans, attendees will hear solid, multilayered rocky blues – check out the band's original tune "Thank You." The band has also covered BB King's "The Thrill is Gone" in the past, so keep your ears peeled for more in that vein, too. – Miriam Lamey

5 p.m. // Brew Brothers at Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. // free // 860.8999

**Friday, Dec. 30**

## Tiger Maple String Band Warms up Winter at Sprague's



A late December evening in wintry northwestern Pennsylvania is a fine time to catch some music – especially the kind of stuff that's rooted in both present and past, with its ties close to the heartstrings.

Tiger Maple String Band, a talented group of some of the region's finest progenitors of Appalachian string music traditions, are just the folks to provide that. And Sprague Farm & Brew Works, just outside of Cambridge Springs in northern Crawford County, is just the place to experience it. The Edinboro-based quintet will play Sprague's on Friday, Dec. 30 from 6 to 9 p.m.

TMSB are a staple act of the region's live acoustic music scene, especially during the summer's various open-air, family-friendly, laid-back musical gatherings. So getting the chance to catch them at such a cool location in December – with Sprague's fine offerings and ruggedly beautiful atmosphere as accompaniment – should definitely help to warm the winter's chill. – Ryan Smith

6 to 9 p.m. // 22043 U.S. Highways 6 & 19 // [facebook.com/TigerMapleStringBand](https://facebook.com/TigerMapleStringBand)

## Almost '17

Your guide to everything New Year's Eve

By: Matt Swanseger

With 2017 on the horizon, many will contend 2016 has already (conclusively) dropped the ball. But in the event you're not convinced, you can await visual confirmation at a myriad of local venues.

### NYE with Tropicdelic at the Kings Rook Club

Nip the negative vibes in the bud with Ohio's Tropicdelic. Along with special guest Of Good Nature, this Kent-based collective is sure to light the joint up with their funky, reggae-infused jams. Head upstairs after the show with Trop lead vocalist James Strips, who joins the Cleveland hip-hop-pers for their after-party. Don't drink and drive, but do drink and canned food drive – nonperishable food donors receive discounts on select Tropicdelic merchandise.

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. // 1921 Peach St. // 456.6439 // \$10

### NYE Birthday Bash at the Erie Playhouse

One hundred years of Broadway and still not a bad (liver) spot in

the house. Erie's premiere community theatre celebrates its centennial this season, but remains very much young at heart through the powerful elixir that is song-and-dance. Audiences will be able to chase it with champagne, not to mention chocolates and birthday cake.

7:30 p.m. // 13 W. 10th St. // [erieplayhouse.org/shows/2016-17/new-years-eve-birthday-bash](http://erieplayhouse.org/shows/2016-17/new-years-eve-birthday-bash) // \$39.90

### NYE Extravaganza with Dale Jones and Jodi White at Jr.'s Last Laugh

The best way to get over 2016 may be to laugh it off entirely. Comedians Dale Jones and Jodi White – who just happen to be married to each other – will headline two shows at Jr.'s, with the second followed by an after-party featuring the Breeze Band. Jones is noted for the manic energy he exudes onstage and his knack for improvisation and physical comedy. White's more measured, down-to-earth style should prove the ideal complement to the zany Jones.

6 p.m. (show only) or 9 p.m. (show + after-party) // 1402 State St. // [jrslasstlaugh.net/nye-2016-dale-jones-jodi-white-breeze-band](http://jrslasstlaugh.net/nye-2016-dale-jones-jodi-white-breeze-band)



PIXEL BAY

// 461.0911 // \$20 (early show), \$37.50 (late show + after-party)

### Boogie on the Bay the Gatsby Way

You could spend NYE alone, staring longingly out over the bay, bemoaning affections unrequited. Or you could

affect the dress and manner of a more gregarious Gatsby, schmoozing with other gentry at the West Egg of Erie's West Side (the Bayfront Convention Center). An optional hotel package will be offered for couples – just try to make sure your plus-one isn't already wedded

## MUSIC

### Old Fashioned Christmas Caroling

Dec. 22 — 11:30 a.m.  
[LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.](http://lifeworkserie.org)

### Gem City Jazz Ensemble: Holiday Concert

Dec. 22 — 7 to 8 p.m.  
[Pennsylvania Soldiers' & Sailors' Home, 560 E. 3rd St. gemicitybands.org.](http://gemicitybands.org)

### Tyler Smilo

Dec. 23 — 6 p.m.  
[The Cork 1794, 17 W. Main St. cork1794.com.](http://thecork1794.com)

### Friday Night Jazz

Dec. 23, 30 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
[Anchor In at Oasis Pub, 3122 W. Lake Rd. jazzerie.com.](http://jazzerie.com)

### Rick & The Roadhouse Rockers, Immoral, Tazz and Readlined

Dec. 23 — 6 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
[Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/pg/sherlocksparkplace.](http://sherlocksparkplace.com)

### Rook Xmas: Big City Hangover and Art Groupies

Dec. 23 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
[Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.](http://kingsrookclub.com)

### The Division Street Machine

Dec. 30 — 5 to 7 p.m.  
[Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. facebook.com/pg/DivisionStreetMachine.](http://presqueisledowns.com)

### Alex Kates

Dec. 30 — 6 p.m.  
[The Cork 1794, 17 W. Main St. cork1794.com.](http://thecork1794.com)

### Tiger Maple String Band

Dec. 30 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
[Sprague Farm & Brew Works, 22043 US Hwy 6 & 19 facebook.com/TigerMapleStringBand.](http://spraguefarm.com)

### Acoustic Jukebox, Tear from Grace, Amavasya and Storms Within

Dec. 30 — 6 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
[Sherlocks, 508 State](http://sherlocks.com)

[St. facebook.com/pg/sherlocksparkplace.](http://sherlocksparkplace.com)

### Adam McKillip, Oliver Burdo, and Addison Moon

Dec. 30 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
[Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.](http://kingsrookclub.com)

### Cosmic Rhythm New Year's Eve Party

Dec. 31 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
[Sandbar, 2835 W. 8th St. facebook.com/cosmicrhythmband.](http://sandbar.com)

### I-90's and DJ Dave Langer

Dec. 31 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
[Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com/pg/sherlocksparkplace.](http://sherlocksparkplace.com)

### Lights Out: Tribute to Frankie Valli

Dec. 31 — 10 p.m.  
[Presque Isle Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.](http://presqueisledowns.com)

### Tropicdelic, Of Good Nature and Hough Crowd

Dec. 31 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
[Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.](http://kingsrookclub.com)

## DANCE

### Starry Night, Black and White Dance

Dec. 30 — 7 to 10 p.m.  
[St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2216 Peach St. facebook.com/Stardust-Ballroom-Dance-Club-of-Erie-597514403606573.](http://stardust-ballroom.com)

## FOOD & DRINK

### Christmas Graham Cracker Houses

Dec. 21 — 1 p.m.  
[LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.](http://lifeworkserie.org)

### Festivus

Dec. 23 — 5 to 10 p.m.  
[Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St. eriealeworks.com.](http://eriealeworks.com)

### Feast of the Seven Fishes

Dec. 24 — 5:30 & 7:30 p.m.  
[Riverside: The Inn at Cambridge Springs,](http://theriversideinn.com)

[1 Fountain Ave. theriversideinn.com.](http://theriversideinn.com)

### Holiday Week at the Wineries

Dec. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31  
[Various Locations, lakeeriewinecountry.org.](http://lakeeriewinecountry.org)

### Mind, Body, Beer, Yoga

Dec. 27 — 7:30 to 10:30 p.m.  
[Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St. eriealeworks.com.](http://eriealeworks.com)

### New Year's Eve at Riverside

Dec. 31  
[Riverside: The Inn at Cambridge Springs, 1 Fountain Ave. theriversideinn.com.](http://theriversideinn.com)

### Brew Year's Eve

Dec. 31 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
[The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. brewerie.com.](http://brewerie.com)

## FILM

### Walking With Dinosaurs: Prehistoric Planet

Ongoing through Mar. 3, 2017 — 11 a.m. & 1 & 3 p.m.

[Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trencpi.org.](http://trencpi.org)

### Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West

Ongoing through Mar. 3, 2017 — noon & 4 p.m.  
[Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trencpi.org.](http://trencpi.org)

### Journey to Space

Ongoing through Mar. 3, 2017 — 2 & 5 p.m.  
[Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trencpi.org.](http://trencpi.org)

### Don't Open Till Christmas (1984)

Dec. 22 — 8 to 10 p.m.  
[Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.](http://eriemoviehouse.com)

### It's a Wonderful Life (1946)

Dec. 23 — 8 to 11 p.m.  
[Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse.](http://eriemoviehouse.com)

### American Empire (1942)

Dec. 29 — 8 to 10 p.m.

to another (see: *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald).

9 p.m. to 1 a.m. // Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier // 452.4857 // \$45 (individual ticket w/ open bar), \$199 (two tickets + overnight stay at the Bayfront Sheraton), proceeds benefit Warner Theatre restoration fund

**NYE at the Babylon Club**

Even with the relaxation of U.S.-Cuba travel restrictions, one can still expect to pay out the Castro for a New Year's Eve flight to Havana. Skip the layovers and smuggle yourself down to

Skip the layovers and smuggle yourself down to the Warner Theatre for a classy reconstruction of island nightlife.

the Warner Theatre for a classy reconstruction of island nightlife, courtesy of organizers Rebecca Styn, Rob Mahrt, and Rob and Megan Mastro. You and your fellow gringos can enjoy an open bar, Cuban-style hors d'oeuvres, a cigar bar, and a *muy caliente* set from DJ Phil. You don't need a fiery dictator to

tell you this is the right thing to do. You have your heart for that.

8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // [newyearserie.eventbrite.com](http://newyearserie.eventbrite.com) // \$80 per gringo, proceeds benefit Warner Theatre restoration fund

**NYE at the Baldwin-Reynolds House Museum**

Do New Year's justice with an evening at the historic home of former U.S. Supreme Court appointee Henry Baldwin. Good thing the "Mount Vernon of Meadville" was the first in the region to receive indoor plumbing, because Voodoo Brewery is going to keep the suds flowing all night. Revel in the majesty of its black walnut woodwork. Indulge in hors d'oeuvres courtesy of the Venango Valley Inn and Golf Course. Enrobe yourself in the sonorous swaddle of live jazz. All of this is well within your jurisdiction.

9 p.m. to midnight // 639 Terrace St., Meadville // [baldwinreynolds.org](http://baldwinreynolds.org) // \$30, proceeds benefit Crawford County Historical Society

**BEST OF THE REST**

**We're on the Highway to Hell, so might as well embrace it as Hells Billies rocks the Erepa Grotto/Saga Club.**

8 p.m. to 1 a.m. // 3828 Washington Ave. // [hellsbillies.com](http://hellsbillies.com) // \$20 (admission, draft beer, moonshine at midnight)

**The Riverside Inn in Cambridge Springs plays the New Year's Eve game with their annual murder mystery dinner parties.**

3 p.m. to 1 a.m. // 1 Fountain Ave., Cambridge Springs // call 398.4645 to reserve your spot

**Nothing preserves the spirit like a good jam, and many a good jam will be had at the Sandbar as Cosmic Rhythm and Doug Phillips (acoustic Grateful Dead tribute) headline.**

9 p.m. to 1 a.m. // 2835 W. 8th St. // [cosmicrhythmband.com](http://cosmicrhythmband.com)

**2016, we barley knew thee. Nor did we want to, so have a few brews and hors d'oeuvres, too, at the Millcreek Brewing New Year's Eve Bash.**

9 p.m. to 1 a.m. // 4102 W. Lake Rd. // [millcreekbrew.com](http://millcreekbrew.com) // \$50 per person or \$90 per couple (all-you-can-drink wells and MBC drafts, hors d'oeuvres, and champagne)

Matt Swanseger can be reached at [mwsanseger@eriereader.com](mailto:mwsanseger@eriereader.com). You can follow him on Twitter @SwazzySwagga.

Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. [facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse](https://www.facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse).

**VISUAL ARTS**

**Dark Garden**

Ongoing through Jan 8, 2017  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

**Jose Picayo Polaroids: A Retrospective**

Ongoing through Jan. 8, 2017  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

**Noreen Finn, Recent Paintings**

Ongoing through Jan. 10, 2017  
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St. [glassgrowersgallery.com](http://glassgrowersgallery.com).

**Mood Swing Review: A solo exhibition by Ron Bayuzick**

Ongoing through Feb. 11, 2017  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

**Sergei Isupov: Hidden Messages**

Ongoing through April 2, 2017  
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. [erieartmuseum.org](http://erieartmuseum.org).

**THEATRE**

**A Christmas Carol Reading**

Dec. 23 — 7 p.m.  
Riverside: The Inn at Cambridge Springs, 1 Fountain Ave. [theriversideinn.com](http://theriversideinn.com).

**New Year's Eve Birthday Bash**

Dec. 31 — 7:30 p.m.  
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10 St. [erieplayhouse.org](http://erieplayhouse.org).

**COMMUNITY**

**Tinker the T-Rex Comes to the TREC**

Ongoing through Feb 24, 2017 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

**Read to a Therapy Dog**

Dec. 21 — 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Edinboro Branch Library, 413 Plum St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

**Christmas Trivia Night**

Dec. 21 — 7 p.m.  
Molly Brannigans Irish Pub, 506 State St. [mollybrannigans.com](http://mollybrannigans.com).

**Presque Isle After Dark: Sidewalk Trail and Others**

Dec. 21 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.  
Presque Isle Lighthouse parking lot in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

**Questions for the Pharmacist: Wise Words for Wellness**

Dec. 22 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

**Live Nativity**

Dec. 22, 23 — 6 to 8 p.m.  
Fairview United Methodist Church, 4601 Avonia Rd. [wearefumc.org](http://wearefumc.org).

**Poetry Slam**

Dec. 22 — 6 to 9:30 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. [facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions](https://www.facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions).

**Misfit Box of Love**

Dec. 22 — 7 to 10 p.m.  
Wayne Park Baptist Temple, 923 E. 6th St. [facebook.com/thebox814](https://www.facebook.com/thebox814).

**Molly's Ugly Sweater**

**Christmas Party**

Dec. 22 — 8 to 11 p.m.  
Molly Brannigans Irish Pub, 506 State St. [mollybrannigans.com](http://mollybrannigans.com).

**Erie BayHawks vs. Santa Cruz**

Dec. 23 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

**Woven**

Dec. 24 — noon & 2 & 4 p.m.  
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [christmasathewarner.com](http://christmasathewarner.com).

**Christmas Eve Services**

Dec. 24 — 4 & 8 p.m.  
Wayside Presbyterian Church, 1208 Asbury Rd. [wayside-erie.org](http://wayside-erie.org).

**Christmas Day Holy Eucharist**

Dec. 25 — 8 to 8:45 & 10 to 11:15 a.m.  
Cathedral of St. Paul, 134 W. 7th St. [cathedralofstpaul.org](http://cathedralofstpaul.org).

**Teen Makers**

Dec. 27 — 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.  
Teen Space in Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).



ERIE

2570 W. 26th St.  
Erie, PA 16506  
814-835-4351

FAIRVIEW

4230 Franklin Rd.  
Fairview, PA 16415  
814-474-5508



FAIRVIEW

4230 Franklin Rd.  
Fairview, PA 16415  
814-474-5277



ERIE

2650 W. 26th St.  
Erie, PA 16506  
814-833-7300

FAIRVIEW

7687 W. Ridge Rd.  
Fairview, PA 16415  
814-474-3260



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#VISITEDINBOROPA



## Five Festive Kids' Activities for Winter Break



Families celebrate the Noon Year with a balloon drop at the ExpERIENCE Children's Museum last year.

### ARTLORE STUDIO'S WINTER ART CAMP

Calling all creative kids: Artlore Studio will offer a Kids' Art Camp during the week of Dec. 26–30 with two sessions: the first from 9 a.m. to noon, the second from 1 to 4 p.m. All budding artists will have the chance to explore different media and express themselves through painting, collage, fabric art, and more. This year, the studio will also host an art show, where kids can show off and sell their work. "Kids love the fact that they actually learn the art forms; it's not a paint by numbers camp," say Artist/Owner Lena Logvina and Owner Stephen Trohoske. "Kids of all levels and interests seem to welcome the challenge and enjoy a friendly, nonjudgmental environment." Attendees will learn new skills and have the opportunity to "unleash their imagination and create beautiful works of art," the duo add. Only eight spaces are available per session, and cost is \$120.

out the evening in the Nature Center for refreshments – free hot chocolate and s'mores will be available to members – and the opportunity to make themed children's crafts. Be sure to check out the center's holiday train display. The cost is \$6, and free for children ages three and under.

6 p.m. on Dec. 27–30 // Asbury Woods, 44105 Asbury Rd. // 835.5356

9 a.m. or 1 p.m. from Dec. 26–30 // Artlore Studio, 3402 W. Lake Rd. // 572.8876

Visions of sugarplums and a week off from school are certainly dancing through many children's heads by now. However, when the presents are unwrapped, some parents still have to work, and others don't celebrate the holidays, so what's a young'un to do during the week leading up to New Year's Day? Fortunately, there's plenty happening, and we've rounded up five fantastically festive ideas for Erie area kids. – Miriam Lamey

### ASBURY WOODS' WINTER WONDERLAND

Take a crisp evening stroll along Asbury Woods' boardwalk and "ooh" and "aaah" over the twinkling lights and displays which will frame the path from Dec. 27–30. Starting at 6 p.m., tiptoe through the woods, then stop by the new Otto Behrend Celebration Garden to enjoy the musical light show – a new attraction this year. Round

6 p.m. on Dec. 27–30 // Asbury Woods, 44105 Asbury Rd. // 835.5356

### TOM RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER, OUTSIDE THE WINDOW: SNOWFLAKES

Ever heard little voices wonder how snowflakes are made? At Outside the Window: Snowflakes on Dec. 28, children ages three to five (with an accompanying adult) will explore the mystery and beauty surrounding these chilly white phenomena, which come together for snowball-creating, fort-building, and angel-making. Young scientists will read a story about snowflakes and create a snowflake-themed craft. The number of participants is capped at 15 and the event costs \$3 per child.

10:30 a.m. on Dec. 28 // Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. // 835.1384

### TOM RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER, DISCOVER-E: WILD ANIMAL TRACKS

The snow might be covering the ground – and look a bit samey – but that means a blank canvas for tracking wild animals. On Dec. 29, a park educator will show children ages nine to 12 how to discover and identify the tracks animals leave here in the winter. The group will meet indoors and proceed outside for a short walk where it is highly likely a wild animal track or two will be spotted. The event closes with the chance to engage in some

themed arts and crafts. Class size is limited to 20 children, and the cost is \$3 per child. Register by Dec. 23 to secure a spot.

11 a.m. on Dec. 29 // Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. // 833.7424

### EXPERIENCE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM'S NOON YEAR'S EVE

New Year's Eve parties for adults only? Not so, thanks to the ExpERIENCE Children's Museum's creative solution: NOON Year's Eve. For about 10 years, the facility has hosted an earlier party so families can celebrate together, albeit by ringing in the noon year at 12 p.m. And what's a mere 12 hours? Kids too little to stay awake won't miss out on the party. This year, the event will include the opportunity to make a firework craft, and there will be party hats and noisemakers for all. Additionally, families will be able to toast the noon year with apple juice, enjoy cookies, and have a blast with a balloon drop when the clock strikes noon. The event costs \$2 per person for members and \$9 for non-members. Happy Noon Year!

10 a.m. on Dec. 31 // ExpERIENCE Children's Museum, 420 French St. // 453.3743

#### Winter Wonderland

Dec. 27, 28, 29, 30 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. [asburywoods.org](http://asburywoods.org).

#### Erie BayHawks vs. Maine

Dec. 27 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

#### Health Chats

Dec. 28 — 10:30 a.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [lifeworkserie.org](http://lifeworkserie.org).

#### Outside the Window:

#### Snowflakes

Dec 28 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

#### DiscoverE: Wild Animal Tracks

Dec 29 — 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

#### Erie BayHawks vs. Canton

Dec. 30 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

#### Noon Year's Eve

Dec. 31 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
Experience Children's Museum, 420 French St. [eriechildrensmuseum.org](http://eriechildrensmuseum.org).

#### New Year's Eve Extravaganza with Dale Jones and Jodi White

Dec. 31 — 6 & 9 p.m.  
Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club, 1402 State St. [jrslastlaugh.net](http://jrslastlaugh.net).

#### Erie Otters vs. Hamilton

Dec. 31 — 6:30 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

#### New Year's Eve Party: A Night in Havana

Dec. 31 — 8:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [facebook.com/events/1627268610907194](http://facebook.com/events/1627268610907194).

#### New Year's at the Baldwin

Dec. 31 — 9 p.m. to midnight  
The Baldwin-Reynolds House Museum, 639 Terrace St. [baldwinreynolds.org](http://baldwinreynolds.org).

#### Boogie On The Bay New Year's Eve Party

Dec. 31 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras

[Piererieevents.com](http://Piererieevents.com).

#### New Year's Eve Bash

Dec. 31 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
Ambassador Center, 7794 Peach St. [ambassadorerie.com](http://ambassadorerie.com).

#### New Year's Eve Candy Fun Land

Dec. 31 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
Splash Lagoon, 8091 Peach St. [splashlagoon.com](http://splashlagoon.com).

#### New Year's Eve

Dec. 31 — 9:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.  
Peek'n Peak Resort, 1405 Olde Rd. [pknpk.com](http://pknpk.com).

#### First Day Walk 2016-2017

Dec. 31 — 11 p.m. to 12:30 a.m.  
Stull Center in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. [events.dcnr.pa.gov](http://events.dcnr.pa.gov).

#### Vinyasa Yoga

Jan. 3 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
Lincoln Community Center Library, 1255 Manchester Rd. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

#### Erie Otters vs. Niagara

Jan. 4 — 7 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

## Top Albums of 2016

From cathartic masterpieces to hypnotic monuments, here are the best records of the year.

By: Nick Warren

This year brought no shortage of impressive music. Along with the undeniable top seeds, there were reservoirs of overlooked gems to expand your listening. Here are the favorites, the most listened to, the easiest recommendations: the top albums of 2016.

### 1. MITSKI – PUBERTY 2



Smashing all expectations set by her previous works, Mitski Miyawaki released one of the most artful, cathartic records ever. Blending diary-like lyrics and experimental indie rock sounds, *Puberty 2* transcends the sum of its parts. Explorations of racial and sexual identity are pursued with grace and measured tension. Miyawaki's voice pierces down to the listener's emotional core, painting a coming-of-age tableau that's endlessly listenable.

### 2. DAVID BOWIE – BLACKSTAR

A darkly brilliant pre-mortem gift from one of music's legendary figures, *Black-*



*star* is truly beautiful. David Bowie's final album, released days before the singer's death, is able to stand as one of his best – no easy task, considering his influential output. Fusing jazz and electronica with Bowie's inimitable sound, the album reaches into the ethereal, waltzing through space and illuminating the shadowy corners of the artist's mind.

### 3. BEYONCÉ – LEMONADE



A genre-blending concept album isn't exactly what you'd expect from one of the world's most popular musicians. Beyoncé has used her high profile to her advantage, creating a dramatic subtext behind her

story of betrayal. The video release features spoken word poetry and thought-provoking imagery exploring a black woman's identity in America. Presenting some of the best pop music on the planet, it's the album's ambition that raises it to true art.

### 4. SAVAGES – ADORE LIFE

Raw and immediate, *Savages* capture an urgent, seething fury. *Adore Life* is dark and brooding, a love letter to 1980s post punk from the female London quartet. Textures come at you from every side, all led to the charge by the charismatic presence of frontwoman Jehnny Beth. Throbbing, caustic rhythms generate sonic lightning storms. It's an epic sound, heavy and authoritative, with shimmering delicate edges gracing the album's lead core.



### 5. CAR SEAT HEADREST – TEENS OF DENIAL



Delivering exponentially on the promise of 2015's *Teens of Style*, *Car Seat Headrest*

frontman Will Toledo has made an entirely fantastic album. Illustrating rich, suburban period pieces like a mush-mouthed Bob Dylan, Toledo weaves together inventive, often humorous lyrics with unlikely precision. The songs are anthemic and memorable, slacker prose that elevates the genre with every palm-muted stream-of-consciousness singalong.

### 6. ANGEL OLSEN – MY WOMAN

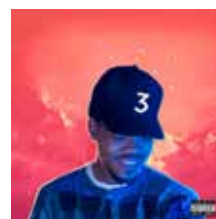
The retro recipe Angel Olsen has cooked up is absolute perfection. The singer shows her range, transitioning from delicate coos to searing howls. The album begins lightheartedly, gradually gaining intensity. Filled with



lush instrumentation and hummable hooks, *My Woman* has an undeniable beauty, each of its gloriously fragile notes taking their ideal shape. It's an instantly lovable record, sculpted in the sincere image of its creator.

### 7. CHANCE THE RAPPER – COLORING BOOK

A masterful blend of hip hop and gospel, *Coloring Book* proves to be a strong follow-up to 2013's *Acidrap*. The uplifting power of the album is infectious, imbuing openhearted listeners with the promise of hope. Layers of harmonious tones build upon one another to produce rich backdrops. Along with an impressive slew of guests, Chance crafts a mixtape of epic proportions, an empowering, positive hip hop tour de force.



### 8. TWO STEPS ON THE WATER – GOD FORBID ANYONE LOOK ME IN THE EYE



Forthright and earnest, *Two Steps on the Water* have captured a passionate moment. A hidden treasure, this album is the debut full-length from the Australian trio. Sharing her experiences as a transgendered individual, June Jones weaves her stories into a folk-punk masterpiece. Sparsely recorded acoustic guitars are paired with strings, forging a direct emotional connection between artist and listener which proves to be the album's greatest strength.

### 9. BASIA BULAT – GOOD ADVICE

Vivid, resonant, and irrefutably catchy, *Good Advice* is an underrated album that elicits endless plays. For her fourth studio recording, Ontario's Basia Bulat finds herself moving further away



from the unadorned autoharp folk of her early work. There's a vulnerable honesty invested in every airy word Bulat sings. The result is a full, Motown-inspired indie pop sound. It's an effervescent, smile-inducing intoxicant that goes straight to your head.

### 10. KING GIZZARD AND THE LIZARD WIZARD – NONAGON INFINITY



A hypnotic, endlessly-looping force of nature, *Nonagon Infinity* is utterly spell-binding. This

kinetic monument of stoner-rock psychedelia hits the listener immediately. In their ninth album since 2012, the prolific Australian septet continues to explore new sounds, smelting a metallurgy of mind-expanding garage energy. The record is destined to be a cult classic, burning like an astral Möbius strip, connecting back upon itself in a frenzied opus.

The honorable mentions, a subsequent 10:

ANDERSON .PAAK – MALIBU

FRANKIE COSMOS – NEXT THING

KANYE WEST – LIFE OF PABLO

WHITNEY – LIGHT UPON THE LAKE

BON IVER – 22, A MILLION

MARTHA – BLISTERS ON THE PIT OF MY HEART

A TRIBE CALLED QUEST – WE GOT IT FROM HERE ... THANK YOU 4 YOUR SERVICE

AMERICAN WRESTLERS – GOODBYE, TERRIBLE YOUTH

CYMBALS EAT GUITARS – PRETTY YEARS

JAMES BLAKE – THE COLOUR IN ANYTHING

Nick Warren can be contacted at [nick@ErieReader.com](mailto:nick@ErieReader.com).

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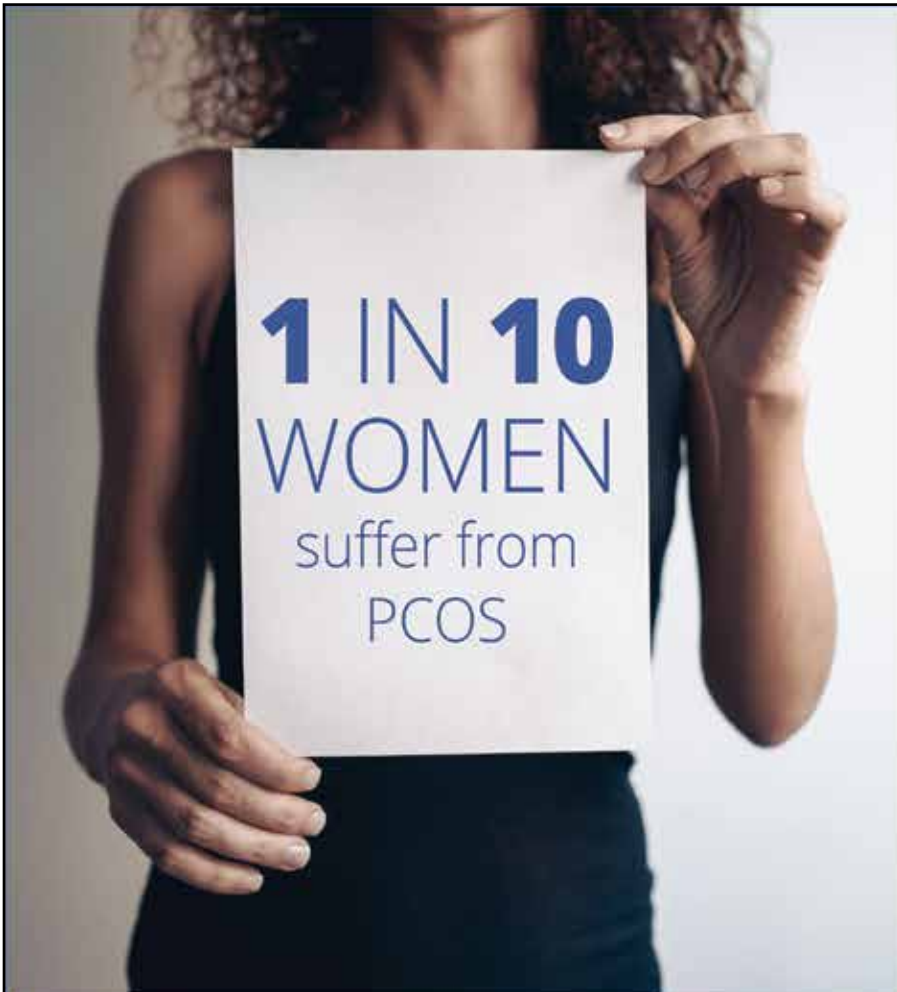
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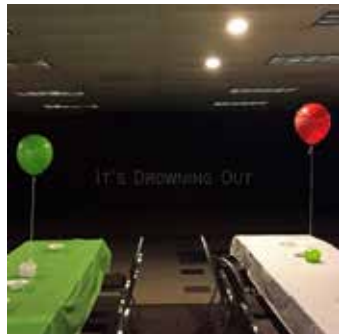
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## The Top Three Albums from Erie Artists in 2016

There's still a steady supply of great local music these days. Once again, plenty of fantastic EPs were released: *The Dean's List* by hip hop quartet The Dean, the ethereal dream pop of *Hypnausea* by Flower Crown, the youthful rock of First to Eleven's *Out of Time*, emcee C. Brown's evocative *The Feels*, and last year's late entry *Get Livid* by Lake Effect Hardcore flame-keepers Livid Life, just to name a few. Some artists went with lengthier offerings, and here are three of the best full-lengths from around the area.

### Maddock – *It's Drowning Out*



A shockingly mature album from a young Erie trio, *It's Drowning Out* has an unmistakable energy about it. The raw, lo-fi recording perfectly packages the band's danceable indie rock sound. Andrew Henderson's lyrics are artfully clever, with plenty for

listeners to unpack. The album remains diverse while existing comfortably within a unified sound. Noises pop and chirp and tempos rise and fall, altogether making it one of strongest local releases in some time.

### One If By Land – *Nobody Wants to Leave*



Genuine punk rock is something the world is losing all too quickly. One If By Land's *Nobody Wants to Leave* stands heartfelt and urgent, pleading with listeners to hold on to the best times of their lives. The impassioned songwriting of Fred Oakman (ex-frontman of Signal

Home and the Twirpentes) remains as strong as ever, filled with emotional singalong choruses and expert musicianship that sounds great every single time it's played.

### Bigg Wash – *Infinity Gems*



*Infinity Gems* stands on the outer limits of inventiveness. Bigg Wash (secret identity: Abdullah Washington) weaves together spoken word poetry and narrative sketches to craft a remarkable album. The rhythmic meter of Wash's voice adds musicality to an often unaccompanied

vocal delivery. Creative, theatrical, and ambitious, the album is an impressive example of our area's eclectic pool of local talent. – Nick Warren

## The Top Five Movies of 2016

It was a wild year, full of surprises – and the films released reflect that.

By: Forest Taylor

### 1. EMBRACE OF THE SERPENT

I've always been fascinated by films that explore the jungle, while simultaneously delving into the depths of madness and humans' dark, primal natures. Ciro Guerra's masterful *Embrace of the Serpent* can be ranked with *Apocalypse Now* and *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* as among the best in that sub-genre. The film follows 40 years in the life of an Amazonian shaman, who may be the last of his people, as he leads two expeditions to retrieve a sacred plant. It brilliantly examines the conflict between the modern and the primitive as we encounter evil rubber barons, religious madmen, and a surrealist finale that seeks to bridge the gap between the natural and spiritual worlds. *Embrace of the Serpent* is a powerful and thought-provoking film and my pick for best film of the year.

### 2. MOONLIGHT

Barry Jenkins' decade-hopping coming-of-age love story is a beautifully shot and impressively acted film that ultimately seeks to resolve Jeffrey Lebowsky's unanswerable question: "What makes a man?" *Moonlight* takes us through three periods of a young man's life as he struggles with his sexuality, and his place in a world where any deviation from the rigid criteria for masculinity is met with emotional and physical violence. Although ostensibly a story about a gay black man, it easily transcends race and sexuality, becoming something that any man can relate to. In a society where any expression of emotion or affection is ridiculed as "effeminate" or – worse yet – "gay," the film's protagonist cuts himself off from human attachments. His emotional isolation increases until it all bursts out in one of the most powerful final scenes of the year. Crying at the end of a movie has never felt more liberating.

### 3. CERTAIN WOMEN

This year, Hollywood gave us some of the most iconic superheroes battling it out in massive special effects extravaganzas. However, it was



the image of a lonely young woman frantically driving to a small town in search of a friend she might never see again that kept me more on the edge of my seat than any other film. Kelly Reichardt's film is all about small gestures that have a big impact. Telling three unconnected but interlocking sto-

ries set in rural Montana, *Certain Women* introduces us to a group of sometimes desperate people looking for understanding and connection in an increasingly impersonal world. Once again, Reichardt (*Wendy and Lucy*, *Night Moves*) proves that she is a master at telling low-key stories in dreary Americana. Throw in some incredible performances, including a career-best by Kristen Stewart and an amazing debut by Lily Gladstone, and *Certain Women* becomes one of the most exciting films of the year.

### 4. HELL OR HIGH WATER

The only true document about life in post-recession small-town America to come out this year, David Mackenzie's *Hell or High Water* is also a gripping suspense film and character study. It



sometimes feels more like a Western or a Depression-era gangster film than anything set in modern times. But as we travel from town to town in rural Texas, it's obvious that this film couldn't take place in any other time. As we see the crumbling buildings and desperate people whom the rest of the country seems to have forgotten, our sympathies align more and more with the small-time bank robber protagonists. Like in the aforementioned genres, the criminals become the last outpost of real individuality; a cry for recognition in a bleak world that is quietly fading away.

### 5. THE WITCH

Easily the best horror film in over a decade, *The Witch* was able to create an atmosphere and overwhelming sense of dread that I thought was long abandoned in American horror cinema. The story about a family of Puritans trying to survive on their own in colonial America is scary enough. We watch as this family struggles just to make it to the next day in a world where the slightest mistake could mean life or death. Throw in an ancient supernatural evil to torment them in progressively horrific ways, and the story becomes unbearable. I don't say this very often, but this film made me very uneasy – like the movie itself was evil. All I can say is check out this film. It will stick with you long after it's over.

**HONORABLE MENTIONS: CEMETERY OF SPLENDOR, ARRIVAL, THE NICE GUYS, SING STREET, HARDCORE HENRY**

Forest Taylor can be contacted at [forebore1982@gmail.com](mailto:forebore1982@gmail.com).

## Three Reasons TV Was Worth Watching in 2016

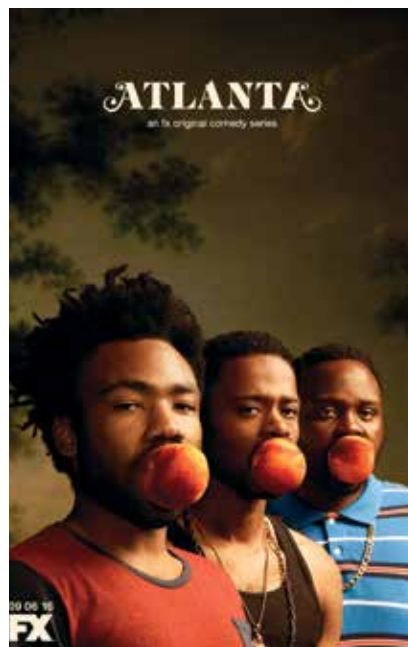
Melancholy rappers, Soviet double agents, and old news from the nineties

By: Dan Schank

If you were watching television in 2016, you were more likely than ever to see a diverse variety of interesting faces.

African-American life took center stage in multiple ways, ranging from the comic realism of *Insecure* to the soapy delights of *Empire*. Female-focused shows expanded dramatically, via the gritty realism of British cop drama *Happy Valley*, the stoner antics of *Broad City*, and the feminist outrage of *Full Frontal With Samantha Bee*. A South African immigrant hosted *The Daily Show* and *Game of Thrones* finally cooled down on its rape problem. It was enough to make you forget the election.

People say we're in the midst of a TV renaissance, and they're absolutely right. Accordingly, I won't offer any "best-of-the-year" declarations. Instead, here are three shows that really thrilled me.



1. Nothing better encapsulates TV's current momentum than FX's *Atlanta*. In fact, it often feels like an upgrade on shows I already like. A less antagonistic *Louie*. *Masters of None* with better acting. *Transparent*, minus the cast of infuriating narcissists.

But the thing that really grips me about the show is its easy, naturalistic tone. On paper, *Atlanta* sounds like pure wish fulfillment – a single father (played by real-life rapper Donald Glover) tries to make it as a manager

for his cousin, an emcee called "Paper Boi" whose latest mixtape is generating underground cred.

*Atlanta* is as much about boredom as it is about bling. It addresses themes like poverty, race, and incarceration with the same warmth and introspection it affords to a sleepy conversation in a bedroom.

But *Atlanta* is as much about boredom as it is about bling. It addresses themes like poverty, race, and incarceration with the same warmth and introspection it affords to a sleepy conversation in a bedroom. And its lack of contrivance is pretty unprecedented.

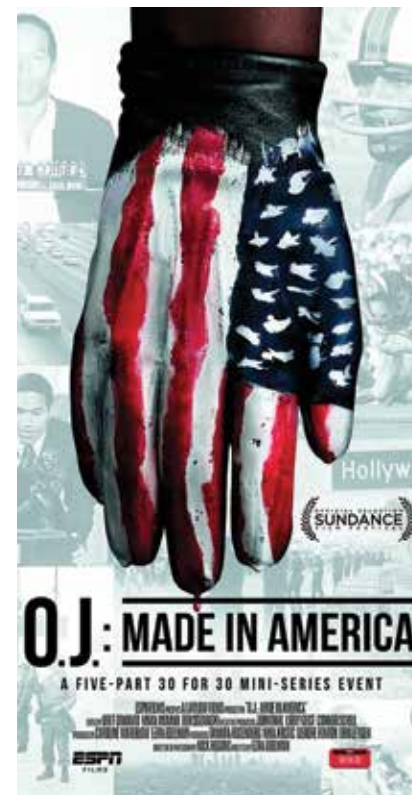
2. Like its spiritual predecessor, AMC's *Breaking Bad*, FX's *The Americans* begins with a hokey premise and leans into it with alarming gusto. In the



early 1980s, just prior to Gorbachev's perestroika, we follow a typical suburban couple who also happen to be Soviet spies. But instead of 007 theatrics, we get a somber meditation on loyalty, ideology, and family dynamics.

*The Americans* gets more thrilling

with each passing year, as its narrative becomes increasingly claustrophobic. In its fourth and strongest season, almost nothing positive happens to any of its characters. Endearing allies are betrayed, children learn uncomfortable truths, and major characters



are executed. But there's no empty sadism. Each tragedy feels complex, meaningful, and surprisingly resonant.

3. If you had told me last December that 2016's biggest revelation would be a five-part ESPN documentary about O.J. Simpson, I'd have never believed you. I willfully ignored the O.J. trial in the 90s. But *O.J.: Made in America* offers an incredibly detailed look at our criminal justice system, urban crime, race, misogyny, and life in Los Angeles. The stuff you'd expect is there, too – the car chase, the glove, the murder, even the 2,000-yard season.

Its investigative inquiry outperforms true-crime darlings like *Making a Murderer* or *The Jinx*. And as a sociopolitical think piece, it rivals the best documentaries of Spike Lee, Errol Morris, or Alex Gibney. Stylistically, it looks a bit like *SportsCenter*. But in terms of substance, it can't be beat.

Dan Schank can be contacted at [dschank@eriereader.com](mailto:dschank@eriereader.com).

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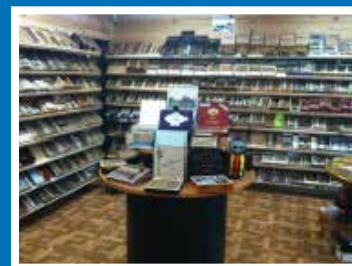
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# The Bane of Toyland

Erie is still missing its Marx.



ERIE HISTORY AND MEMORABILIA

By: Matt Swansenger

**S**anta Claus is, as ever, coming to town. But for many years, it was as if he never left.

From 1933-1975, the Erie factories of Louis Marx & Company pumped out millions of toys on Santa's behalf. It was a long and fruitful partnership, but perhaps one that could not be allowed to last – not after Marx's coronation as the “Toy King” in a 1955 issue of *Time* magazine, a clear affront to Mr. Kringle's authority. Like most usurpers, the Brooklyn native was savvy, charismatic, and opportunistic; he was the

consummate salesman. While St. Nick was sitting on his assets at his North Pole tax haven, Marx was actively and openly promoting his.

Louis A. Marx was groomed for his takeover of the toy world as a young man in the 1910s. He was contracted as a market researcher and middleman for several prominent companies of the period, most notably New York City's F.J. Strauss. He purchased two Strauss prototypes in 1921 (a windup minstrel and monkey), exercised just enough artistic license to make the toys “new” (and/or avoid prosecution), and proceeded to sell over eight million

units of each. At the age of 24, with no production facilities of his own, Marx was a self-made millionaire.

### HASHTAG: TINNING

Marx built his empire from sheets of lithographed, tinplated steel, which were cut, pressed, and folded into a stunning array of shapes and forms. Tiny clockwork mechanisms brought these toys to life with the turn of a key – monkeys climbed (Zippo), dogs back-flipped (Flippo), and vehicles propelled themselves forward, backward, or even curved left or right (sans turn signals, obviously). They were easily (mis)identified by the Marx insignia, the letters “M-A-R” superimposed over a circumscribed “X.” People often either missed the X's or ignored them completely (whether they'd begun dating or not), which resulted in a cult following for the alternate-universe “MAR” Toys Company.

As it was on the small scale, so it was too on the large scale – Marx knew exactly what keys to turn to get children wound up and did so without breaking their parents' budgets. He attained the rights to popular franchises (e.g. Disney) and advertised in the catalogs of America's largest retailers (e.g. Sears). If parents were the end buyers and children were the agents, the Sears Catalogue was the best place to showcase one's portfolio. One of Marx's early triumphs, a rebranded whistling yo-yo called the Lumar, sold over 100 million

units through Sears distribution. That financial windfall was instrumental in the company's expansion during the boon of – you guessed it – the Great Depression.

The machinery for the Marx uprising was housed in facilities in Erie (the one-time Carter Toys on West 19th Street); the plainly-named Buildings A, B, and C on West 12th Street, Girard (the former Girard Model Works); West Virginia (the decommissioned Fokker Aircraft Plant); and overseas (Britain and France). The Carter Toys building (C.E. Carter was one of Marx's first contractors), located between Cascade and Raspberry streets, cranked out so many tin simians throughout the 1920s that it became known as “The Monkey Works.” The plants on 12th Street were acquired from the Eriez Stove and Manufacturing Co. in 1936. Altogether, Marx's domestic workforce numbered 8,000.

### BOOM YEARS

Come the '40s, Marx Toys were the bomb – literally. Preempted by war shortages, Marx began the transition to plastics, but not before one last blast of heavy metal. Incendiary devices were

(Top) Employees of the Louis Marx Toy Company help assemble items at the Girard plant in 1937. (Bottom) The Marx Melody Makers (left) and Rock'em Sock'em Robots on display at The Marx Toy Museum in Moundsville, West Virginia, which closed on June 30 of 2016.



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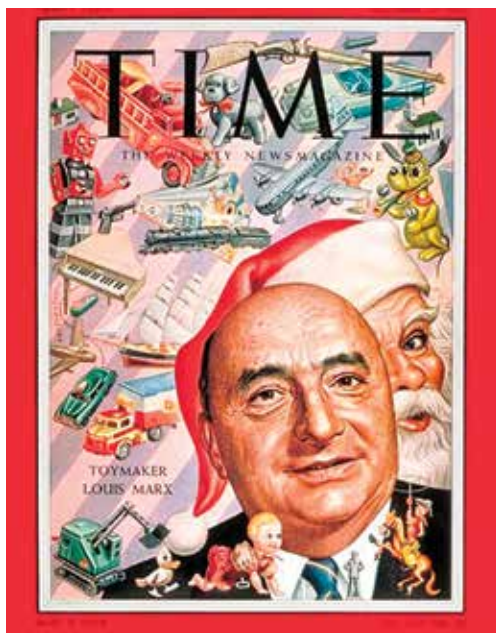
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(Top) Toymaker Louis Marx appears on the Dec. 12, 1955 cover of TIME Magazine, joined by Santa Claus. (Right) An original 1975 Green Machine on display at The Marx Toy Museum in Moundsville, West Virginia.

in vogue with the big kids at the time (when aren't they?), and Marx was not going to be the one to crush their dreams. His assembly lines produced a limited run of munitions, bazookas, and detonators as the United States redoubled its efforts to emerge from WWII victorious. Another release that bears mentioning was the atomic bomb; Marx allegedly contributed to the infamous Manhattan Project, which reshaped the course of history. Suddenly, all the big kids had to have one.

As for the little guys, they were content with the plethora of polyethylene playsets Marx put out postwar. These playsets depicted scenes from history, movies, and TV, and often featured conflicting factions – for example, a Western diorama pitting Native Americans against pale-skinned interlopers. With their elaborate detailing (sometimes over 100 pieces) and a price point rarely exceeding \$7, they were a much better value than your average choking hazard. In fact, collectors still get choked up thinking about them.

#### **DON'T HATE THE PLAYTHING, HATE THE (ELECTRONIC) GAME**

The 1960s were somewhat of a last hurrah for the aging Marx, who celebrated his 70th birthday during the decade. A man who long had his finger on the pulse of America's children gradually lost it. It now flowed through the circuits of silicon microchips.

Electronic components opened another realm of possibilities in Toyland, and the same items that once fascinated the juvenile imagination now bored it. Whereas Baby Boomers embraced Marx Toys, Gen X was not as easily impressed. Furthermore, Marx did not

advertise as aggressively as his competitors on television, the proverbial window to kids' souls. Companies like Mattel were flexing their multi-jointed appendages, while Marx was thought to be lying on the mat.

Nonetheless, he did have a few punches left in him before he tapped out. Rock Em' Sock Em' Robots (1964) were an instant hit, capitalizing on the popularity of both boxing (badass) and robots (even more badass). Users controlled one of two pugilists, Red Rocker and Blue Bomber, with buttons attached to the base of the "ring." A match was won when a robot's head was dislodged from its shoulders (virtual decapitation ... cute). Marx capped off the decade with the Big Wheel (1969), a plastic tricycle equipped with a "quick-stop racing brake" and a "handy saddlebag" to stow whatever provisions your little rebel needed to survive those first few nervous hours after running away from home.

Unsurprisingly, Marx's sale to Quaker Oats in 1972 ushered its demise – because Quakers (humility, piousness, *maybe* the occasional buggy

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The 1960s were somewhat of a last hurrah for the aging Marx, who celebrated his 70th birthday during the decade. A man who long had his finger on the pulse of America's children gradually lost it. It now flowed through the circuits of silicon microchips.

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race) and oatmeal (wake-up calls, blandness, *maybe* the occasional explosion in the microwave) are not typically synonymous with fun. By 1975, the proof was in the porridge. The company changed hands once more in 1976, going to the British company Dundee-Combex. They failed to resuscitate the brand and Marx was dismantled for good in 1980.

Erie's Marx Toy Museum closed in 2008, and one in Moundsville, West Virginia, just closed this past June.

The last vestiges of the company now belong to collectors around the world and here in northwestern Pennsylvania, who remember when Marx Toys pumped vital life into the Erie economy and excitement into many, many Christmas mornings.

*Sources consulted for this piece include: collectorsweekly.com/toys/marx; marxmuseum.com/home/marxhistory.html; historyandmemorabilia.org/2014/10/marxs-toy-company.html; and roadsideamerica.com/story/17533.*

*Matt Swanseger can be reached at mswanseger@eriereader.com. You can follow him on Twitter @SwazzySwagga.*

## Vintage Marxmanship vs. The Most Fire Toys of 2016



JEFF LANGDON

**THEN:** Marx Merrymakers (1931), a classic windup toy, features a four-piece "mouse" band gathered around a piano wherein the clockwork mechanism is contained. Their sound may be a bit tinny (ha!), but all that matters is that the music brings them together.

**NOW:** Why share the spotlight when you can have it all to yourself? Clip your smartphone (you're at least in 6th grade, right?) to the SelfieMic Music Set and create your own music videos where YOU'RE the star. Upload! Share! Your 1,873 besties can't wait to care!

**THEN:** The Cold War loomed large in the turbulent '60s, and not even your daughter's dollhouse was immune from its influence. Certain specimens from Marx Toys included fallout bomb shelters, a quaint reminder of America's Red Scare hysteria.

**NOW:** The Barbie Hello Dreamhouse is soooo fetch. It is equipped with an elevator, flatscreen TV, glam chandelier, and even Barbie's own laptop for exchanging compromising photos and sensationalist articles with her friends! Quaint bomb shelter not included (but probably should be).

**THEN:** Doggone Millennials never work an honest day in their lives. With over 100 variations of service station and construction playsets introduced from the 1930s to the 1970s, Marx showed young whippersnappers what it meant to get their hands dirty.

**NOW:** Legos remain the toy of choice for prospective architects, engineers, mechanics, and urban planners (the "City" line). If you can envision it, you can build it. Think the former GAF site would be better served as a ninja training academy or space-pirate watering hole? Your call, (Nick Scott) Junior.

**THEN:** The Big Green Machine (1975) was the nimbler, more extreme successor to the iconic Big Wheel. Its stick-shift steering allowed for sick stunts and spinouts, and elevated parental anxiety.

**NOW:** Who's mommy's favorite liability? You are?! Good, let's strap a motor to you. The Power Wheels 12-volt Wild Thing accelerates to dizzying speeds of up 5 mph, and can turn on a dime. Of course, a supervising adult can tame the engine if it gets too wild out there.

#### **Honorable mention**

*Sorry, but all my friends ran out of batteries:* Who can control the Great Garloo (1961)? You can! This motorized mutant would do your bidding right out of the box. Compare that with Hatchimals (2016), which you have to nurture and train all the way from eggdom to adulthood. Yawn. – Matt Swanseger

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*Thank you, Erie*


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## Best of Erie 2016

The winners and finalists in 100 different categories

There are so many great things happening in and around Erie. Every unique restaurant, business, and artist helps to make our community what it is. Directly from your suggestions, we assembled our nominees. From there, you helped spread the word, gathering hundreds of thousands of votes along the way. Some races were neck-and-neck, with new leaders every other day. There were plenty of familiar favorites, with more than a handful of surprises thrown in. Below are a few of your favorite things. We're profoundly proud to announce the winners (italicized in bold) and top three finalists in 100 different categories for the 2016 Best of Erie.

### GOODS AND SERVICES

#### Best Car Dealership

***Bianchi Honda***

New Motors  
Humes Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram

#### Best Thrift Store

***Salvation Army***

Goodwill  
Erie City Mission Thrifty Shopper

#### Best Vintage Clothing/Consignment Shop

***Sassy Peacock***

Pointe Foure  
Salvation Army

#### Best Antique Shop

***Oregon Antique Boutique***

Romantique Boutique  
Walker House

#### Best Jewelry Store

***Dahlkemper's Jewelry Connection***

Glass Growers Gallery  
Relish Studio & Gallery

#### Best Place to Buy Furniture

***John V Schultz***

Arthur F Schultz  
Fred's Furniture

#### Best Comics and Collectibles Shop

***Books Galore***

Action Toy Man  
Above & Beyond Comics

#### Best Smoke/Vapor Shop

***Smoker Friendly***

Hippie and the Hound Vapor Store and Lounge  
Erie Vapor Cabana

#### Best Chocolate/Candy Purveyor

***Romolo Chocolates***

Stefanelli's Candies  
Pulakos Chocolates

#### Best Bakery

***Art's Bakery***

Ye Ole Sweet Shoppe  
Icing on the Lake

#### Best Deli

***Teresa's Italian Deli***

Tickle's Deli  
Bello's Market

#### Best Winery

***Mazza Vineyards***

6 Mile Cellars  
Arrowhead Winery

#### Best Place to Get a Six Pack

***U Pick Six***

Wegmans  
Six Pack House of Beer

#### Best Health Food Store

***Whole Foods Co-op***

Chicory Hill Herbs  
Dietary Foods

#### Best Tattoo Parlor

***Ink Assassins***

Wayward Tattoo  
Midtown Tattoo

#### Best Tattoo Artist

***Jess Scutella***

Eerie Eric  
Jen Minor

#### Best Place to Get Pierced

***Ink Assassins***

Sacred Piercing  
Buddha's Body Art

#### Best Place to Adopt a Pet

***The ANNA Shelter***

The Humane Society of NWPA  
Orphan Angels

#### Best Bank

***Erie Federal Credit Union***

Widget Financial  
Marquette Savings Bank

#### Best Spa

***Coventina Day Spa***

Panache Salon and Spa  
The Spa at LECOM Medical Fitness & Wellness Center

#### Best Beauty Salon

***Panache Salon and Spa***

Moxi Hair Salon  
Innovations Hair Studio

#### Best Barbershop

***Uncle Nick's Barbershop***

Heads of State  
Poor Richard's Cuts

#### Best Bike Shop

***John Adams Cycling and Fitness***

Competitive Gear  
AR Adams Schwinn

#### Best Web Developer

***Epic Web Studios***

Firefly Web Studios  
NMT Marketing

#### Best Locally Made Product

***Romolo Chocolates***

Iron Empire Clothing  
Stefanelli's Candies

#### Best New Business (Within Last Two Years)

***The Juice Jar***

Iron Empire Clothing  
The Que Abides

#### Best Dog Groomer

***Paws 'n Claws Groomers***

Mudpuppies  
TLC Groomers

### CULTURE & NIGHTLIFE

#### Best Local Festival

***Erie Art Museum Blues & Jazz Festival***

Panegyri Greek Festival  
The Gathering at Chaffee's

#### Best Art Event

***Arts & Drafts Fest***

Erie Art Museum's Spring Show  
Gallery Night

#### Best Museum

***Erie Art Museum***

ExpERIENCE Children's Museum  
Erie Maritime Museum

#### Best Performing Arts Space

***Warner Theatre***

Erie Playhouse  
PACA

#### Best Local Act (Band/Musician)

***Jakes Blues***

Eric Brewer & Friends  
Whiskey Road

#### Best Local Artist

***Fran Schanz***

Theresa Musatto  
Noreen Finn

#### Best Art Gallery

***Erie Art Museum***

Glass Growers Gallery  
Artlore Studio

#### Best Music Venue

***Coconut Joe's***

Kings Rook Club  
Basement Transmissions

#### Best Local Sculptor

***Evan Everhart***

Patrick Catalde  
Brian Pardini

#### Best Local Photographer

***Sarah Peach***

Robert Frank  
Eric Smyklo

#### Best Up-and-Coming Band/Musician (Last Two Years)

***First to Eleven***

Pine Diary  
Clever Norman

#### Best Local Singer

***Jess Royer***

Brenna Bone  
Roy Hollis Jr.

#### Best Local Musician

***Eric Brewer***

Stephen Trohoske  
Ron Yarosz

#### Best MC

***Bill Page***

C.Brown  
Butchie Knight

#### Best Local Graphic Designer

***Alice DeGeorge***

Starlight Events by Design  
Amber Smith

#### Best Neighborhood Bar

***Plymouth Tavern***

U Pick 6  
Jekyll & Hyde's Gastropub

#### Best Night Club

***Coconut Joe's***

Docksider  
Sunflower Club

#### Best New Bar/Club (Within Last Two Years)

***Cloud 9 Wine Bar***

Resolution  
Erie Arena Sports Bar

#### Best Dance Company

***Mercyhurst Dance Company***

Dance Elite Performance Company  
Dafmark Dance Theatre and Academy

#### Best College Bar

***Plymouth Tavern***

Cornerstone Bar and Grill  
Coconut Joe's

#### Best Sports Bar

***Odis 12 Bar & Grille***

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and suddenly there was with an angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying  
*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men*  
men  
Luke 2  
13-14

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## BEST OF ERIE

Sluggers Sports Bar and Grill  
Coach's Sports Bar & Grill

Best Lounge  
**Cloud 9 Wine Bar**  
Jekyll & Hyde's Gastropub  
Kings Rook Club

### FOOD & DRINK

Best Restaurant  
**Pineapple Eddie's**  
1201 Kitchen  
New York Lunch

Best Sandwich Shop  
**Picasso's**  
Tickle's Deli  
Whole Foods Co-op

Best New Restaurant (Within Last Two Years)  
**Chopstix**  
Millcreek Brewing Company  
Federal Hill Smokehouse

Best Place to Get Seafood  
**Smuggler's Wharf**  
Joe Root's  
1201 Kitchen

Best Romantic Restaurant  
**1201 Kitchen**  
Cloud 9 Wine Bar  
Colao's Ristorante

Best Chef  
**Dan Kern (1201 Kitchen)**  
Bertrand Artigues (Cloud 9 Wine Bar)  
Adam Williams (1201 Kitchen)

Best Bar Food  
**Odis 12 Bar & Grille**  
Calamari's Squid Row  
Avonia Tavern

Best Local Coffee Shop  
**Brickhouse Coffee**  
Brew Ha Ha  
Out of the Grey

Best Food Truck  
**The Que Abides**  
Odis 12 Food Truck  
Ernie's

Best Breakfast  
**The Breakfast Place**  
Summerhouse Cafe  
Dominick's

Best Patio  
**The Sloppy Duck**  
Plymouth Tavern  
Calamari's Squid Row

Best Brunch  
**Summerhouse Cafe**

Voodoo Brewery  
The Juice Jar

Best Place to Get Ice Cream  
**Whippy Dip**  
Creamland  
Connie's Ice Cream

Best Local Brewery  
**The Brewerrie at Union Station**  
Lavery Brewing Co.  
Sprague Farm and Brew Works

Best Locally Made Beer  
**Apparition Amber Ale (Brewerie)**  
Dulachan (Lavery)  
Rustbelt (Sprague Farm)

Best Place to Get Vegan/Vegetarian Food  
**Whole Foods Co-op**  
The Juice Jar  
Like My Thai

Best Place to Order a Steak  
**Firebirds Wood Fired Grill**  
LongHorn Steakhouse  
Outback Steakhouse

Best Place to Get Barbecue  
**Three B Saloon**  
Federal Hill Smokehouse  
Famous Dave's

Best Burger  
**Max & Erma's**  
The Brewerrie at Union Station  
Voodoo Brewing

Best Pizza  
**Stevos**  
Virgil's  
Brooklyn Pizza

Best Wings  
**Odis 12 Bar & Grille**  
Park Tavern  
One Way Inn

Best Sushi  
**Chopstix**  
1201 Kitchen  
Sushi and Asian Cuisine

Best Asian Restaurant  
**Chopstix**  
Golden Wok  
Like My Thai

Best Italian Restaurant  
**Mi Scuzi**  
Calao's Ristorante  
La Bella

Best Mexican Restaurant  
**El Canelo**  
Torrero's  
Chipotle

Best Mediterranean/Middle

## BEST OF ERIE

Eastern Restaurant

**Casablanca**

Petra

Habibi

Best Late-Nite Menu

**Panos**

Jekyll and Hyde's Gastropub

Kings Rook Club (Sakura)

Best Dessert

**Icing on the Lake**

Cloud 9 Wine Bar

Alkeme

Best Thai Restaurant

**Like My Thai**

Khao Thai

Thai Eatery

Best Indian Restaurant

**Tandoori Hut**

MK Indian Cuisine

### PEOPLE & PLACES

Best Radio Station

**Happi 92.7**

WERG 90.5

Star 104

Best Radio Personality

**Craig Warvel**

Mojo McKay

Shari McBride

Best TV Personality

**Sean Lafferty**

Dave Belmondo

Jill McCormick

Best Yoga Studio

**YogaErie**

Art of Yoga

Plasha

Best Politician

**Ryan Bizzarro**

Sean Wiley

Jay Breneman

Best Poet

**Monica Igras**

Marisa Moks-Unger

Luchetta Manus

Best Filmmaker

**John C. Lyons**

Len Kabasinski

Menagerie Studio

Best Place to Work

**Wegmans**

Erie Insurance

UPMC Hamot

Best Tourist Attraction

**Presque Isle State Park**

Waldameer Park

Erie Zoo

Best Local Actor

**Mark Tanenbaum**

Michael Haas

Morgan Gore

Best Local Actress

**Kelly Rodland**

Adele Crotty Gross

Jessica Flock

Best Non-Profit/Charity

**The ANNA Shelter**

Sisters of St. Joseph Network

Erie Art Museum

Best Landmark

**US Brig Niagara**

Dobbin's Landing

Presque Isle Lighthouse

Best Bartender

**Meghann Legler**

Amanda Schaffner

Brian Matson

Best Place to get Lectured to

**Tom Ridge Environmental Center**

Erie County Public Library

Jefferson Educational Society

Best University

**Penn State Behrend**

Edinboro University

Mercyhurst University

Best Fitness Club

**LECOM Medical Fitness & Wellness Center**

Real Fitness

Joe's Gym

Best Athletic Competition

**Beast on the Bay**

ERC Turkey Trot

Edinboro Highland Games

Best Bowling Alley

**Greengarden Lanes**

Eastway Lanes

Rolling Meadows

Best Team to Root for

**Erie Otters**

Erie Seawolves

Erie Bayhawks

Best Golf Course

**Whispering Woods Golf Club**

Lawrence Park Golf Course

Beechwood Golf Course

Best Local Entrepreneur(s)

**RJ & Jamie Messenger**

Emily George

Matt Silva

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DEC 24 / 5pm



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# Erie Faces Erie

**David Lefebre**

professional angler

**Ed Bernik**

photographer

*"We just happen to be in a spot – and I'm not making it up – that's as good as it gets for fishing."*

**Ed Bernik:** What do you feel America's fascination with fishing is?

**Dave Lefebre:** I think it's just clean fun. I don't know the statistics, but it's probably the number one pastime. It blows everything else out of the water. Worldwide, it's extremely popular, not just in our country. The cool thing about this region is that we have a lot of different species that are top-of-the-line game fish. Many people come here just to target specific species, and four or five that we have here are world class.

**EB:** You have this new reality TV series beginning in January. How did that come about?

**DL:** Since I started doing the fishing thing – about 16 years now – I've been approached by different producers about doing a show. I've always thought it would be cool, but was focused on fishing professionally and trying to win money. I'm one of those scatterbrained squirrels who has to focus on one thing, 100 percent in one direction. That's the main reason I never followed up on it. After talking to a lot of friends in the industry who've had shows for 30-plus years, and some of the newer TV guys – all on national shows – I didn't want to do it that way. It required too much time, too much travel. You can't just fish in your backyard, so to

speak; you have to go where the producers want you to go, and they're traveling all over the country to the best fisheries in the world.

But this past winter, my life was changing. I switched tours from the FLW Tour to the Bass Master tour. That's like switching from an AFC football team to a NFC team. Like a West Coast passing offense to a Pittsburgh running offense: It's night and day. Also, my kids are getting older – 10 and 14 now – and I want to be home more. My wife and kids traveled with me for 15 years. We had to take two vehicles, she'd homeschool, and that was our life. We were never home. Now that they're in school, we're going to be home a lot more.

So I called Lilly Broadcasting to investigate what things like airtime cost. I asked some of the old-timers who started their TV shows 30-plus years ago what they would do today. They all said, "Try to travel less, to do cable and local." That made me think, "Man, that could be a fit." I got offers from the Outdoor channel to have a national show tomorrow, but I want to first see how it works locally.

**EB:** Local could become nationally syndicated.

**DL:** We just happen to be in a spot – and I'm not making it up – that's as good as it gets for fishing. We're next to Canada on a Great Lake surrounded by other big cities. It seems like the perfect place to focus on the community and the things we have going on here.

**EB:** Historically, Pennsylvania is superior in the development of American fly-fishing techniques. So many books have been written by Pennsylvania anglers like Joe Humphries, George Harvey, Vince Marinaro, Art Flick, etc. Pennsylvania is very wealthy in outdoor experiences to tap into.

**DL:** I haven't tapped into that much of it, which is cool. We're going to do it live in realtime. I was so focused on being a bass pro since I was 12 years old, any free minute I had was training, focused on bass fishing. This year, I'm doing stuff while filming that I've never done. Like fly fishing: never held a fly rod,



never fished for steelhead – and we did it.

**EB:** Will you be doing other things besides fishing?

**DL:** We're going to do everything! It's not a fishing show. It obviously has to center around it: That's what I'm known for. But there are already shows in the can where I never even caught a fish or made a cast. I'm a technical guy, but we're not looking to attract people who just fish, or who want to know exactly what lure I'm using, knot I'm tying, or where I'm fishing. We're catching some fish, but we're interested in people who want some fun and entertainment.

**EB:** In a previous life, you were actually a touring musician. What motivated you to stop touring?

**DL:** I've never tasted alcohol in my life. I'm not a drinker, not a partier, I just love music. I played in church with my family – everyone in my family is a musician. I started drumming at the 32nd and Liberty First Assembly of God when I was eight, taking the job over from a 35-year-old drummer, and have drummed ever since. I just loved it. That was my reason for wanting to tour and do that for a living.

It was always a tossup between music and fishing, but

then I got a taste of the other parts of music, which I don't think you can avoid. When you're in a band, you get those outside influences – ones I'm not interested in. I wanted to play, get better, and be around better musicians. Being away from my wife, the temptations, and all the other crap that goes with it made me realize I couldn't focus on two different things. I was pushing my fishing career at the same time, trying to figure out which way to go. I had to experience the band thing, but it wasn't what I wanted to do, so I went 100 percent the other way.

**EB:** If you couldn't competitively fish anymore, what would you pursue as a vocation?

**DL:** Probably a TV show. It's what I'm thinking about for the future, once I can't do tournaments to my standards. When I feel like I'm slowing down and can't compete with the new young kids, this is one thing I want to do: to be home and enjoy my family.

**EB:** How would you advise someone who wanted to become a pro angler?

**DL:** It's no different than anything: practice, get better, dedicate yourself. And one of my big things is to surround yourself with positive people who be-

lieve in you. I've had some naysayers in my life who almost put a stop to what I was doing. People who drag you down need to go bye-bye.

**EB:** Most people who have a passion for anything come to realize that there are many facets to achieving your goal. You have to become good at what you do, and put yourself into a position to be businesslike about it.

**DL:** In our sport, it's a little different than, say, golf, where you can practice putting in your house. We have so many uncontrollable variables that don't exist in other sports. We can't see the fish. You could be casting better than anybody in the world, but if there's not a fish there, you're not going to catch him. There are so many aspects to training. You have to spend time on the water and learn behaviors (conditions, weather). It's pretty intricate. And at the same time, there's the luck element. Even when you hook one, it could get off. You didn't do anything wrong. It's the hardest thing in the world to prepare for. You need a backup plan and a break. I got one early on.

*Dave Lefebre: davelefebvre.com*

*Ed Bernik: bernikphotography.com*



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