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ERIE READER

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CANDIDATES ON INNOVATION

ERIE'S MAYORAL HOPEFULS WEIGH IN ON REDEVELOPMENT, INDUSTRY, AND THE FUTURE OF THE CITY

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHTS

A CLOSER LOOK AT EIGHT INNOVATIVE COMPANIES

NEW AMERICANS

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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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From the Editors

A new economy evolving toward innovation

Industry is what drives our national economy. It can be the very reason why cities spring into existence, or the reason they decay and crumble. The success or decline of a community is ultimately dependent upon its businesses.

We've seen that firsthand.

We've watched as the jobs left. We watched as careers capable of supporting a prosperous working class faded away. The promise of job creation became a rallying cry for two Republican presidential campaigns in a row. The second time around, it helped win the office. Erie became the face of that promise. With national reports from NPR, Frontline, CBSNews.com, and others, voices of our disaffected voters were given a megaphone.

Will that be a promise kept, or, as so often happens in the political world, one that's broken?

This conversation continues to fuel discussion on a local level as well, and for good reason. Nine candidates want to be your mayor, and each has his or her own plan. Some of these plans seem to have a little more thought behind them than others. In this issue, Ben Spегgen continues his coverage leading up to the May 16 primary election. We decided to go straight to the source. Reaching out to each and every mayoral candidate, we asked eight questions, all centering around business and innovation. Due to limited space, we were only able to print five of those eight sets of answers, but check out eriereader.com for the full transcripts. For a firsthand experience, be sure to attend the Erie mayoral debate on Thursday, May 4 at the Jefferson Educational Society, where C-SPAN host and Erie native Steve Scully will serve as moderator.

In the tradition of our annual industry, innovation, and entrepreneurship issue, you'll find a variety of business spotlights. Matt Swanseger and Nick Warren team up to highlight eight innovative businesses in the area. Ranging from multinational companies with decades of history to growing business that began in a garage, we've showcased a few of the many area employers that are worthy of praise. Maitham Basha-Agha takes a closer look at another thriving group of entrepreneurs, talking to three New Americans who own their own businesses. Tracy Geibel also helps track down four past 40 Under 40 honorees, to see how their businesses are doing now. If their advice reminds you of anyone you know, or if you know a business owner or leader in the community, remember that nominations for this year's 40 Under 40 class are currently welcome online at eriereader.com.

As the narrative of our local economy continues to shift, it's important that we have a goal in mind. If we continue to be complacent in the face of adversity, we lose. Having responsible leaders in place is absolutely crucial. We have the power to guide that economical shift. One of the small things we can do to help is to be informed voters. Make sure that the next elected leader of the city is someone with the right plans and vision to rebuild and serve Erie.

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Just a Thought

Changing the climate of isolation



By: Katie Chriest

When author and activist Bill McKibben spoke at Edinboro University in 2014, he highlighted the work of 350.org, a global nonprofit he founded. The 350 signifies parts per million of carbon in the air at which the earth could continue to sustain stable life as we've known it.

Today, we're over 405 ppm, says NASA. And counting.

Incredibly, 350.org, now active in over 188 countries, was started by McKibben and a few Middlebury College students in Vermont. They wanted to build a global climate movement – epitomized by the People's Climate March on April 29, which they've helped to create.

That they have galvanized people from far-flung places like Burundi and Papua New Guinea to join in campaigns, and entities like Syracuse University and the city of Ann Arbor, Michigan to commit to fossil fuel divestment, is incredible – and proves Margaret Mead's well-known quote: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

What struck me most while listening to McKibben, during his enthusiastic presentation to a full theater, was his confession that he'd really rather not be playing this role. He'd prefer sitting in a quiet room, typing away, then sending his ideas into the

world to do the work.

McKibben humbly classified himself as a typical writer: pretty introverted, solitude-loving – certainly not your usual "face of a movement."

But despite his inherent discomfort, everything he was witnessing compelled him to jump in, learn as he went, and trust others around him for support.

McKibben probably couldn't have ever imagined that those others would quickly comprise millions globally, ready to take to the streets whether dirt or paved; ready to represent the other side of the story: No, it's not okay that those who are poor, nonwhite, and "underdeveloped" are disproportionately subject to health-destroying pollution; No, it's not okay that fossil fuel magnates are in bed with political leaders (or are one and the same); No, it's not okay that renewable energy – which "creat[es] jobs 12 times faster than the rest of the economy," according to *Fortune* magazine this past January – is repeatedly suppressed.

And no, it's not okay that corporations who've polluted their surrounding communities can pay their way out of permanent, provable changes – as Erie Coke Corporation has been accused of doing with its release of carcinogenic benzene into Erie's air for decades.

On April 29, Erie's version of the People's Climate March will begin at the East Avenue boat ramp at 2 p.m., continue past Erie Coke, and end at

This message on a doorstep says it all: Action happens not by moving mountains, but rather one rock at a time.

Wayne Park on East Sixth Street with a rally of speakers and music until 4 p.m.

Incidentally, if you're feeling a little march weary by now, I'm with you. I'd really rather sit by the water, breathe deeply, and contemplate damselflies.

But those damsels – and all other sentient beings, including us – are in distress. Despite my love of alone time, this present climate crisis makes me feel *lonely*. Helpless. So, so tired.

And to paraphrase Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges speaking at Mercyhurst University in 2011: If you're at home, alone, posting on Facebook and signing online petitions – and never actually showing up – you're right where "they" want you.

So I'll be there, marching with you Erie area allies – you who'd also probably rather spend a Saturday afternoon relaxing in the soft loveliness of an Erie spring.

If you're feeling a little march weary by now, I'm with you. I'd really rather sit by the water, breathe deeply, and contemplate damselflies. But those damsels – and all other sentient beings, including us – are in distress.

And we'll join our fellows globally who'd likewise rather spend the fleeting moments of their lives enjoying the wonder of their natural surroundings. All of us acknowledging that our efforts might not amount to much measurable change – or they might. All of us recognizing that regardless of the outcome, we'd rather show up and be seen, so that next time a sense of isolation creeps in, picturing each other can be a source of solace.

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



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The Candidates on Innovation, Business, and the Future

With less than three weeks until polls open, Erie’s mayoral candidates weigh in on redevelopment, industry, and their plans for our city.



Republican candidate John Persinger (right) is an attorney at MacDonald, Illig, Jones, and Britton LLP, and a Harvard graduate.

MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

By: Ben Speggen

There’s a lot a mayor has control over – taxes, infrastructure, public safety. And there’s a lot a mayor does not have control of – schools, job creation, weather.

While a mayor exerts control over your property taxes, he or she can indirectly impact things like job creation by creating smart policy to incentivize businesses to stay – or to relocate to the city. He or she has the ability to create more policing for the region, and can also be a cheerleader for education, for instance, by boarding a bus and taking the first seat on the way to Harrisburg to advocate for fair funding and other state-level measures.

Any way you slice it, a city’s executive is seen as the go-to person in any crisis. Whether or not said crisis is directly under the mayor’s jurisdiction, citizens see the mayor as the person to address it – either through action or advocacy – in many ways similar to how wins and losses on the national level fall first at the feet of a president instead of a congressman.

Political pendulums swing back and forth based on which direction they’ve

been swinging in the past. After a long conservative agenda, voters tend to favor more centrist or liberal politics, fearing a stay on the right might result in pushing even further to the right. American democracy – by design – moves slowly and for the most part intentionally, even at the local level.

Whether or not voters look favorably on the overall impact of the three terms of current Erie Mayor Joe Sinnott, most would agree that his administration’s approach has been one of fiscal responsibility first. Compared to those he succeeded, he’s been terse with media, has offered fewer public appearances, and put a premium on viewing the role of mayor as a manager.

The Sinnott administration’s austerity measures did bring the city back from the brink of Act 47 – and history will likely record this as the great accomplishment of his time in office. But after 12 years of a finance-first approach, voters seem hungry for a mayor who

Democrat Lisa Austin is a co-founder of several organizations around the city, including All Aboard Erie, Innovation Erie, Preservation Erie, Made in Erie Training, the Made in Erie Marketplace, and Erie CPR, and a Yale University graduate.

will have more of a public persona – much like when they chose the fiscal austerity of Sinnott to the fiscally liberal approach of the Filippi administration he followed.

This issue hits throughout Erie on Wednesday, April 26, leaving 20 days for voters to decide who they think is best equipped to lead Erie forward into the third decade of the 2000s. When we first started mapping the coverage of this race in January, I asked Editors-in-Chief Brian Graham and Adam Welsh and Managing Editor Nick Warren to submit the top four things they cared most about when judging the quality, caliber, and capability of Erie’s next mayor. Each submitted his thoughts independently. I added my own, and those helped color and guide February 15’s feature: “What History Will Erie Elect to Make?”

Since then, we’ve offered a brief overview of the City Council race – which is twice as populated with candidates and matters just as much as the mayoral race – and resumed our mayoral

coverage April 12 with a look at why debates and forums matter in the run-up to the May 16 primary.

We’ve now come full circle and are back to those key concerns we identified: advocating for smart place-making, building up new initiatives like Erie’s Innovation District, and implementing *Erie Refocused*, amongst others.

We tossed all of our responses into the proverbial editorial blender and Nick Warren dished out the questions

In the Erie Reader’s perennial I2E issue – a look at innovation, entrepreneurship, and the economy – we’re featuring the candidates in their own words.

in the same serving size to each candidate. On the same day. With the same directions. All in fairness to the candidates.

In the *Erie Reader’s* perennial I2E issue – a look at innovation, entrepreneurship, and the economy – we’re



MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

featuring the candidates in their own words. Truncated for space, yes, but each insightful. Full responses are available online at ErieReader.com, which we encourage you to visit.

Their responses are telling. First, does a candidate jump off of the stump? Do they have a stump from which to jump? Can they pare their longer, more eloquent – or bloviating – responses to short, concise answers?

That is: When pressed, what comes out?

Below, in the order in which they appear on the ballot, you'll find what stood out to us. Which is to serve as amuse-bouches to full entrees, which you'll find unedited, unabridged, and ready for consumption online at ErieReader.com.

In the last issue before May 16's primary elections – which hits stands May 10 – you'll find our last look at the candidates. We'll dive deeper into these answers, focus on how the candidates perform in debates, and assess the field as it stands less than a week from the opening of the polls.

Erie Reader: To you, what is inno-

Democrat Joe Sember served as an Erie City Councilman and worked as a relationship manager at PNC Bank.

vation? What makes Erie innovative? What would make Erie more innovative?

DEMOCRATS

Ruby Jenkins-Husband: Innovation is transformational, new ideas, and advances in technology. What makes Erie innovative are plans for the Erie Downtown Innovation District.

Joe Sember: Innovate means to pioneer new approaches and technologies that move the Erie community forward and improve our lives. What makes Erie innovative now: shared work environments, incubators for start-ups, etc. What would make Erie more innovative: the establishment of the Innovation District, the creation of a community college, increase in design competition, seeking additional grant funding, and more.

Lisa Austin: Perry's and Dobbins' bold building of "a fleet in the wilderness" embodies the "all in" commitment and



MATHAM BASHA-AGHA

innovative risk-taking Erie must embrace. Erie has many untapped assets: varied industries, transportation options – and long-time residents, New Americans, college students, and im-

ported professionals. We must focus on becoming a digitally-progressive, physically-connected and walkable city, expanding projects like Innovation Erie and offering exciting networking

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One of these people will be Erie's next mayor. All nine candidates (left to right), Jay Breneman, Rubye Jenkins-Husband, John Persinger, Bob Merski, Joe Schember, Steve Franklin, Jon Whaley, Lisa Austin, and Almi Clerkin sit down for a forum at Mercyhurst's Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center on Monday, March 27.

MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

and funding opportunities like Pittsburgh's Sprout Foundation.

Almi Clerkin: Innovation is finding a new way of doing something, changing the rules and finding a new way to approach a situation. What makes Erie innovative is the creativity and ingenuity of the people who live here. We need to embrace that and support innovation and entrepreneurship. The development of the new Innovation District – and the financial investment in it – is promising.

Bob Merski: I would like to see Erie support and encourage pushing the limits of whatever our citizens do. Innovation often comes with risk and breaking the status quo. If we as a city cannot support those who are willing to take risks for big rewards, Erie won't be viewed as a place where new ideas flourish and are developed.

Steve Franklin: Innovation, to me, is a way to better people's lives via implementation of a new idea, device, or method – thinking "outside the box," as the saying goes. What makes Erie innovative is its ability to foster its continuing engagement in the many available initiatives that promote the needed partnerships so critical to regional objectives. Erie will become more innovative as it expands these efforts and realizes future successes, thereby encouraging even further innovation and success.

Jay Breneman: Innovation is our

ability to adapt, inspire, and renew. Erie is blessed to have a framework of innovation because of its historic role in American manufacturing. Erie has always been a community that has resolved to innovate, but over the past two decades, we've allowed lackluster political forces to stand in the way of progress. Erie has the entrepreneurial tools it needs to be a region of distinct innovation. Now it needs the political leadership to match.

REPUBLICANS

Jon Whaley: Innovation is finding a new/better/faster way to do something. Erie is not innovative. City Hall runs like it's 1970, downtown looks like it did when I came to Erie in 1985, and many people from Erie have never lived anywhere else, worked anywhere else, or demanded new ideas from elected officials. Erie needs to completely reinvent itself. Painful changes must occur. Erie must manage itself in new ways, adopt technology, and create an ecosystem that encourages change. The mayor must be the change agent.

John Persinger: Innovation is the process of creating new ideas and concepts. Erie is innovative because, despite our challenges, people are creating new ideas and concepts for

Democrat Jay Breneman was elected to Erie County Council in 2013, and served in the United States Army for seven years.

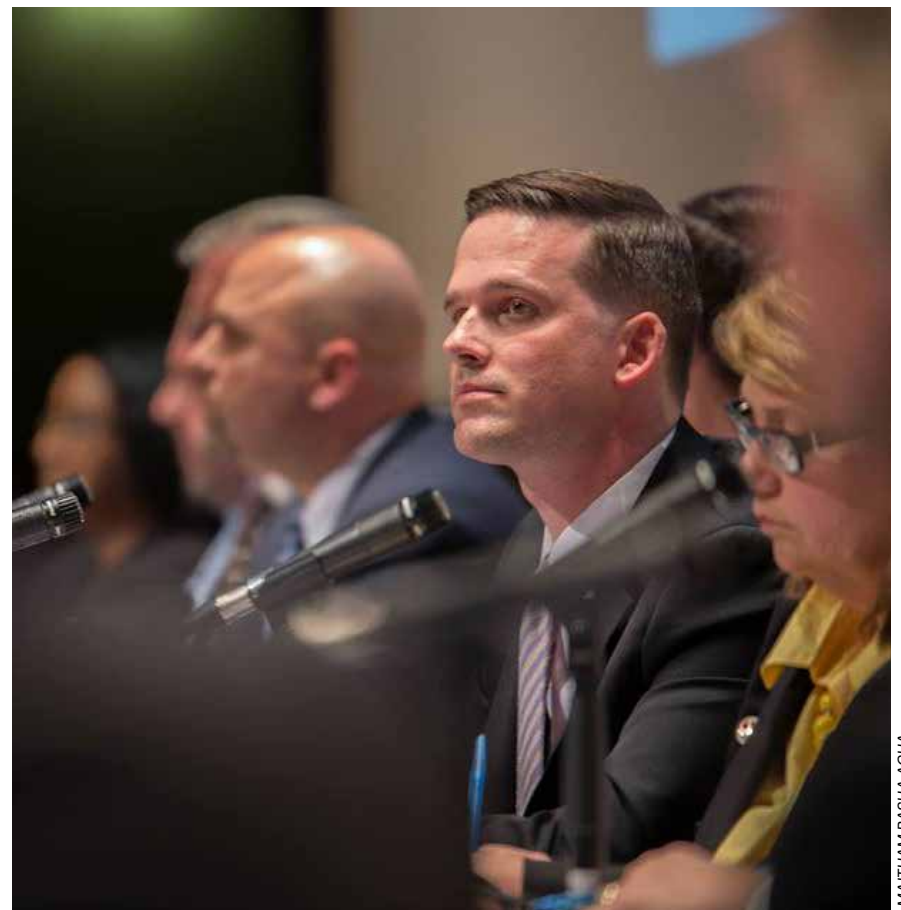
business, for how to live, and for how to play. Erie would be more innovative if it had a mayor that was a champion for the city's innovators and proactive in connecting local businesses and residents with opportunities and potential partners outside of the city's limits.

ER: With Erie being one of 38 municipalities in the county all vying for the same business, what will you do to both foster new growth and retain the businesses we have?

RJH: I would meet with new businesses and existing businesses in our city, to discuss business needs to retain and attract new businesses.

JS: Rather than compete, we need to work with the surrounding municipalities. We are one community. We need to build relationships with surrounding municipalities for the good of the region. We need to create a regional identity that fosters innovation and growth. I will be a champion for business leaders.

LA: To leverage Erie's density and businesses, people, and ideas, we will showcase assets online, through media, and in City Hall itself. We will consult with employers and prioritize policies to foster job growth. We will streamline the permitting process and



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Democrat Almi Clerkin has served as executive director of the Erie Playhouse since 2006.

flourishing, specifically in terms of current regulatory practices?

RJH: Reaching out to business owners, our conversation would include any obstacles, if any, that are holding back new businesses from flourishing.

JS: In addition to the obstacle of workforce preparedness, there is a need for review and revision of two regulatory practices: Zoning variances are difficult to get; we need to simplify and streamline this procedure for new projects that will benefit the city. And prioritize and expedite new major projects that include significant job creation. This would include consolidating multiple hearings.

LA: Lengthy delays in obtaining city permits result in costly extension of construction time, thus delaying income-generating activity. We must examine the form-based code adopted by Buffalo to encourage economic development and reinvestment in the city. In addition, we must take advantage of regional, state, and federal funding opportunities, such as the now-underutilized CRIZ program, to encourage urban economic development.

AC: It has less to do with regulatory

practices and more to do with the perception of our city and the comparatively high taxes. We have to compete with Millcreek, Harborcreek, and other municipalities where taxes are lower, and that are perceived to be safer. Business attracts business. As more businesses see the value in a commercial hub in the city, growth will happen organically.

BM: Pennsylvania's Corporate Net Income Tax rate is the highest not only in the Northeast U.S., but also in the Great Lakes region. Erie is wedged between two states that have a significantly lower CNI rate, or in the case of Ohio, none at all. I would lobby to at least bring down the CNI rate to a level more in line with the region.

JB: Erie's convoluted LERTA (Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance) program, matched by a hands-off attitude from City Hall, and a general practice by its political class to fail in getting its own act together, all contribute to a lack in confidence in Erie's market by area investors.

JW: As the only business owner running for mayor, I have firsthand experience here. I don't think any regulatory practices are holding any business back. Those are excuses. Those are empty words, spoken by politicians who have never created one job. I pay

address outdated zoning issues. Working through the Erie Council of Governments, County Planning, and municipal – and business – leaders, we will leverage the findings of Destination Erie/Emerge 2040 to improve services and foster sustainable growth – as a region.

AC: We can make Erie business-friendly by providing employers with a trained workforce to fill their jobs. That's why I support the community college initiative, and it should be located in the city. Infrastructure, like fiber internet connections, smart parking meters, better lighting, and security cameras in the city all make Erie more business-friendly.

BM: Far too often, Erie rolls out the red carpet for out-of-town investors while doing nothing for local businesses who want to expand. That is why I continue to host local business roundtables to hear their concerns and find positive solutions to their problems.

SF: Ensure that all new businesses, as well as established businesses, are educated in developing a business growth strategy that brings the most results from the least amount of risk and effort, consisting of sound business principles.

JB: Erie is our region's urban core and should be the center of regional innovation, as well as the reason that many manufacturers choose the city or one

of our neighboring municipalities. I will support the Innovation District, our local universities and industries that conduct research and development, and my administration will target state and federal funds to strengthen infrastructure, while working to restore confidence in municipal leadership.

JW: Small-business growth will save Erie and must be nurtured. I will be Erie's No. 1 salesman and cheerleader. I will staff City Hall with competent, talented, and experienced leaders. We will offer loans, grants, advice, and help to all businesses. Retain and recruit. We will innovate and create opportunity, like Milwaukee did with its water research park – we will never again be beaten like that.

JP: Invest in education – we have to have a good, quality, public school system in the city; clean up Erie – we have to get rid of the blighted properties and the drug-fueled violence; and fight for Erie's future – we have to have a mayor who is willing to travel to D.C. and Harrisburg to collaborate with federal and state officials.

ER: What current obstacles, if any, are holding back new businesses from

Democrat and former Erie City Police Chief Steve Franklin talks to Republican candidate Jon Whaley, businessman and former aide to Mayor Joe Sinnott.



MATTHAM BASHA-AGHA

healthcare for my employees; that's the cost of doing business. Now, if you can't get a building permit online, can't get an inspection on time, and can't get help from the city, that's the problem.

JP: From a local perspective, the combined city and Erie School District taxes discourage businesses from investing in the city, their business, and their employees, which stifles these businesses' ability to innovate and grow.

ER: In regards to Erie's younger population (i.e. 20-40), what would you and your administration do to ensure that Erie is seen as a place to stay – or relocate to – in the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation?

RJH: Job innovations and advances in technology would attract Erie's younger population to stay, and/or relocate. I will support job innovations, creations, and advances in technology.

JS: I will: Create a task force of 20- to 40-year-olds (comprised of both current residents and those who have left) to recommend strategies for brain gain; encourage building of more single bedroom, 600-square-foot apartment complexes in downtown Erie; create walking and bike paths; create a bike

share system. The Innovation District will also provide great jobs for millennials.

LA: Erie can attract/retain a younger population by leveraging the "wealth of cities" to increase density, encouraging culture, shopping, and nightlife. We must promote and celebrate diversity and prioritize walkability and good transit. Let's establish a "welcoming center" for new visitors and residents and engage them as volunteers or interns.

AC: We need to support the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation not just by being a place where people want to work – we need to be a place where people want to live and play, too. We've got to have housing that meets the needs – and price range – of young professionals, and we need to make home ownership a possibility for people who are just starting their career and family so that young people establish roots in the city.

BM: As part of my jobs and economic development plan, I would like to host a "Holiday Opportunity Fair" where employers can market themselves to individuals returning back to Erie for the holidays to visit family. We should



MATTHAM BASHA-AGHA

seize upon that opportunity to market our city as a place for young families and potential entrepreneurs to come here and thrive, with the added bonus of being close to family and longtime friends.

SF: Aggressively pursue every opportunity to provide support services and partnerships that will advance each and every effort to develop entrepreneurship, especially for the younger population that represent the future of our region with their dreams and visions.

JB: Erie's young people, like myself, want a jungle-gym of opportunity, not an escalator where we wait our turn. My administration will work with our educational institutions, nonprofits, and our private industries, to create opportunities for our young people to be involved in solving the social and economic needs of today in a meaningful – and perhaps financially rewarding – way. Entrepreneurs are problem-solvers, risk-takers, and hard workers, and it's a mindset that anyone can adopt if provided the encouragement and support to experience it.

Democratic candidates Bob Merski (top right) and Rubye Jenkins-Husband (bottom) both served terms on Erie City Council.



MATTHAM BASHA-AGHA

JW: We need to eradicate the status quo, business-as-usual thought processes at City Hall. We need a true "business incubator" with free rent, free Wi-Fi, and grants to business plan contest winners. Encourage people to try. To fail. I will visit classes at Gannon and Mercyhurst to tell this story. Erie was founded and grown by entrepreneurs like Zurn and Behrend and we need to foster that mindset.

JP: I will work to create a vibrant downtown, a place with plenty of affordable and desirable options for Erie's younger population to live, work, and play.

ER: What do you find to be the biggest challenges in implementing *Erie Refocused*? If you disagree with the plan, please tell us why.

RJH: I find the biggest challenges to be investments needed to finance the improvement plan. However, there are challenges that we can achieve through workable action plans. I would provide the leadership to accomplish the action plan goals.

JS: *Erie Refocused* gives us great direction. Before implementation we need three things: Obtain community input on the proposed plan and initiatives with forums throughout the city; develop a plan to finance the \$60 million per year cost of implementation

over the next 10 years; create a compassionate plan for relocating services for the underprivileged to provide them with better services in a centralized, convenient location outside of our core. We can learn much from other communities, such as Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, who are further along in implementing similar plans.

LA: The principals for decision-making laid out in the Buki plan echo the advocacy and action that Civitas has undertaken over the past decade. To ensure implementation of “the Buki plan,” we will endeavor to partner with all stakeholders to gain financial partners and overcome distrust by residents who have not been engaged or consulted in the process of gathering data, reviewing *Erie Refocused*, or in creating the Action Plan.

AC: The biggest challenge to any type of progress in Erie for the last decade has been failure of collaboration between the right stakeholders.

We have to have the right stakeholders involved, including residents. The second challenge is funding. In some ways, the order in which pieces of the plan are implemented will be tied to what funding is available. And the third challenge is that we don’t have a city planning department or city planner. In a city that’s been so focused on developing plans, it’s pretty remarkable that we don’t have a planner.

BM: While I think *Erie Refocused* is a great guiding document, and I have implemented parts of my platform to align with the plan, I have maintained all along that the price tag of implementation is the biggest challenge. We need to consider the cost to the taxpayers along with the potential benefits of the plan before we move forward.

SF: In agreeing with the plan, I find that *Erie Refocused* is the premium plan for revitalization of the Erie community but must be tempered with sound financial engagement and best

practice applications as we implement it. It will be through this carefully crafted implementation that we will be able to succeed where past plans have either faltered or failed to come to fruition due to unsound management practices.

JB: The biggest challenge is a City Hall led by short-sighted officials bent on isolation. I will change that.

JW: The Buki “plan” is not a plan. It is a book report, a state-of-the-city report, and it has some basic, down-to-earth good ideas. But I agree with almost everything Charles Buki and his team have said about Erie and its “leaders.” I like the idea of 17 sub-sections of Erie, pride in your neighborhood – a distinctive identity for each. The number one idea in the plan for each area is better code enforcement, street signs, and the like. Basic stuff that should already be done.

JP: The biggest challenge is funding. The Buki plan identifies \$600 million of investment, without citing specifics or

explaining where this money will come from. I will identify the exact costs and potential funding sources to implement the Buki plan.

For the full responses to these questions and more, visit eriereader.com

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- Rubye Jenkins-Husband: facebook.com/electrubyemayor/
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- Lisa Austin: austinforerie.com/
- Almi Clerkin: almiforerie.com/
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- Jon Whaley: jonwhaley.com/
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Ben Spегgen can be reached at bSpегgen@ErieReader.com and you can follow him on Twitter @BenSpегgen. Nick Warren also contributed to this feature and can be contacted at nick@eriereader.com.

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The Future of Farming in the City

Erie's urban farming initiative up for final vetting at May 3rd public hearing



LINDA

By: Carrie Sachse

It was just over a year ago when I first approached the Erie Redevelopment Authority about the possibility of buying some vacant lots in the city for the purpose of urban farming. I stayed up late the night before, drafting a long list of things I hoped would persuade Scott Henry (the ERAs then-executive director) to let me farm in the city.

The list looked something like this: Increasing access to fresh food in the city will help to eliminate our food deserts. More generally, food produced and sold in the city will serve as a partial antidote to what many city residents consider an insufficient number of grocery stores. The vacant city land most likely to be repurposed for food production is currently in demand by no one, so putting that land to use will be great for both the city's tax rolls and those neighborhoods struggling with disinvestment.

The list went on, but my overly-impassioned plea was probably more than Scott Henry needed to hear. My reasoning made sense to him, but as head of the ERA I think he was less interested in the nuances of local food politics than he was with just getting some of the ERA-controlled land back into private hands. He agreed to look into current zoning regulations, and promised to get back to me.

Fast forward a year, and thanks especially to Scott Henry, City Councilman Dave Brennan, and City Zoning Officer Matthew Puz, the urban farming initiative has made considerable

strides. While the necessary zoning changes have not yet been implemented, we're finally in the home stretch.

In the interest of transparency I'll admit that this initiative is a means to an end for me: I want to grow food commercially. Small-scale, specialty, intensive production, close to both my home and the city residents and businesses I plan to target as customers, is what I'm after. The political process that I've helped nudge along over the course of the last year is in some ways just hoop-jumping to clear the way for what I want to do.

But the initiative is also much larger than that. I wholeheartedly believe that a widespread urban farming/local food movement could be transformative for Erie. After all, for a manufacturing town that has historically taken great pride in local production, the extent to which we've outsourced our food supply is shocking.

As Rubye Jenkins-Husband pointed out at the recent mayoral candidates' forum at the Blasco Library, "We love food in this town." And we do. But we also *need* it. It's something for which – unlike Hammermill paper or GE trains – every single household, regardless of income level, has a line item in their budget.

By clearing the political way for commercial urban food production, City Hall would actually be clearing the way for a more autonomous local food system, and a more robust local economy as a whole. One in which the money we all spend on our daily bread, so to speak, has the potential

An urban farm in Chicago helps to provide fresh produce to the inner city. With food deserts an escalating concern in the city of Erie, there is an increased need for zoning changes to allow urban farming, soon to be determined by City Council.

to stay right here in the Erie market – supporting small businesses and the jobs they create. Does California really need or deserve our hard-earned dollars for their underripe tomatoes? Does the supposed convenience of California-grown produce really outweigh our need for local jobs?

I for one don't think so.

There are so many pieces to a strong local food system – it's much more than just eating our own tomatoes in August and September. Especially in a town as snowy as Erie, *preserving* local food, so that we can still eat locally come February, is critical.

And while things like the proposed food hub at the new EMTA facility, and true farmers' markets in locations throughout the city would go a long way in connecting producers and consumers, access issues will still abound. How, for example, can we incentivize the purchase of locally produced food for people on food stamps? How can we increase the public's understanding of not only the importance of sourcing food locally, but how to go about eating more seasonally?

But first things first: On May 3, at City Hall at 9:30 a.m., City Council is holding a public hearing on the proposed zoning changes, which would allow for commercial urban farming in certain, more-vacant parts of Erie. Those who can't attend the May 3rd hearing are encouraged to email expressions of their support to Erie City Council President Cas Kwitowski at ckwitowski@erie.pa.us, or call the City of Erie Clerk's office at 870.1291.

If we want to dig into the broader work of building a stronger local food economy, it is absolutely critical that supporters of this initiative make their voices heard.

Carrie Sachse is a local-foods advocate and aspiring urban farmer. She can be contacted at c.b.sachse@gmail.com.

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News of the Weird

Even a \$150,000 bowl of ice cream won't help you stop a fan blade with your tongue

By: Chuck Shepherd

Training Day

A June 2016 police raid on David Jessen's Fresno County (California) farmhouse caused a \$150,000 mess when sheriff's deputies and Clovis Police Department officers "rescued" it from a trespassing homeless man with the massive destruction leading to Jessen's lawsuit announced in March. The misdemeanor helped himself to an ice cream bar, some milk and half a tomato, but was otherwise "unarmed"; however, by the time the police standoff ended, the "crime scene" included more than 50 cop cars, a SWAT team (and backups), two helicopters, standby ambulances, a police robot, and a crisis negotiation team. Windows, walls and wrought-iron doors were destroyed; tear gas and a "flash bomb" were employed. (Jessen suspects that the farmhouse's isolation enticed police to decide that it presented an excellent training opportunity.) [TechDirt, 3-13-2017]

Compelling Explanations

"Pro-choice" activist Jessica Farrar, a Texas state legislator, introduced a bill in March to create consistency between the state's rigorous regulation of women's reproductive functions and those of men (regulation which, by the way, in either case she calls "invasive" and "unnecessary"). Because Texas's anti-abortion laws highlight "procreation" as a crucial government interest, she

believes male use of erectile-dysfunction drugs should be regulated as abortion is. Under her bill, individual use of Viagra or similar drugs must be preceded by "counseling" similar to that required by abortion laws, and since male masturbation involves the "wasting" of precious sperm cells, it, too, would require "beforehand" counseling. [Texas Tribune, 3-12-2017]

Jason Sexton told KFSM-TV in Fort Smith, Arkansas, in April that he alone had been digging the massive hole neighbors noticed, now 34 feet deep and with separate tunnels extending off of the main hole. Police had come to check it out, since it was on another person's private property (and not the city's, which Sexton had assumed). He said he had been digging off and on for three years to get an answer to whether "the Spanish" had been in Fort Smith centuries ago, mining iron, and, if so, the site should therefore be a lucrative tourist destination. Sexton said he felt he had to give his explanation: "Nobody in their right mind," he said, "would dig a hole (this big) for no reason." [KFSM-TV, 4-13-2017]

Crime Report

At a time of growing awareness that some people seem almost addicted to their cellphones and instant 24/7 communication, police in Brookfield, Wisconsin, released surveillance photos of a woman in the act of robbing banks on March 25 and 27 while standing at teller counters and talking on the phone during the

entire episodes. Acting on a tip from the photos, police arrested Sarah Kraus, 33, on March 28. [Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 3-29-2017]

College activist Pablo Gomez Jr., 22, was arrested in Berkeley, California, in March and charged with the brutal stabbing death of an elementary school teacher. Gomez, a senior at University of California, Berkeley, is well-known on campus for insisting on a gender identity for which (as an example) the pronoun "he" is an inappropriate reference. (Hence, "they" was charged with what is so far the only homicide in Berkeley this year.) [San Jose Mercury News, 3-27-2017]

Paul Perry Jr., 39, sound asleep behind the wheel of his car, with motor running, at 6 a.m. on April 2, was in no position to talk his way out of a DUI ticket, but did offer a gentle challenge to the Youngstown, Ohio, police officer. Several times, according to the police report, Perry offered to "thumb wrestle" the officer to get out of the ticket. From the report: "Perry was advised officers would not thumb-wrestle him." [Youngstown Vindicator, 4-4-2017]

Wait, What? A father, 43, and his son, 22, argued on April 9 about who would walk the dog at their home on Chicago's South Side. They apparently thought to settle the issue with a gunfight, and police, who recovered the two weapons, said both men received multiple wounds. The son was killed, and the father was in critical condition. [WLS-TV (Chicago), 4-10-2017]

Leading Economic Indicators

The eight elite Ivy League universities are better thought of as "hedge fund(s) with classes," according to a March report by the activist Open The Books, and thus there is little reason for taxpayers to have given them the more than \$41 billion in grants and entitlements they received over a recent six-year period. The schools are already legendary for their \$119 billion "endowments" (based on donations from alumni and aggressive investment). Those endowments are enough, according to Open The Books, that (assuming donations continue to arrive at the same pace) schools could provide free tuition to every student in the eight schools in perpetuity. (Even if no new donations are made, the eight schools could provide such free tuition for 51 years.) [Fox News, 3-29-2017]

Ironies

Federico Musto was suspected recently by Wired.com of audaciously inventing academic credentials to help land his job as CEO of the company Arduino (a circuit-board manufacturer popular in the computer industry among coders creating, among other things, robots and motion detectors). Arduino's work is "open source" creating hardware that others, by design, can exploit and modify for their own loftier projects. It might thus be said that Musto's claimed academic "accomplishments" (his so-called

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MBA from New York University and claimed Ph.D from MIT) are themselves the product of his having "open-sourced" his own, previously modest curriculum vitae. [Wired.com, 4-16-2017]

Bright Ideas

In January, local government and sexual-assault critics unveiled a consciousness-raising exhibit on Mexico City's trains: a plastic seat onto which is subtly molded contours of a male body, except with genitals sharply exposed. (Men supposedly have been spotted absent-mindedly lowering themselves onto the seat only to leap up in shock.) A note on the floor by the body read (in Spanish): "It's uncomfortable to sit here, but that's nothing compared to the sexual violence suffered by women on their commute." [New York Times, 3-31-2017]

The Foreign Press

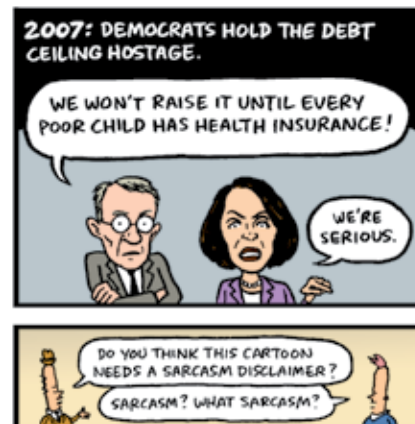
Village police in Bangladesh arrested Yasin Byapari, 45, in January on the complaint of his wife after she had learned that she was not, as he had told her, his second spouse, but rather the 25th of his 28. (Police found him at the home of No. 27.) The accuser said she had,

through sleuthing, tracked down 17 of her "competitors." (2) A male schoolteacher reported in February that he had been kidnapped by four women near Lupane, Zimbabwe, drugged with a beverage and sexually assaulted, in what appears to be a return of the "sperm bandits" said to operate in the area; previously, police set up roadblocks and arrested three women with 31 condoms full of semen. [BDNews24 (Dhaka), 1-24-2017] [Daily Mail (London) via MyNewsGH (Ghana), 3-1-2017]

The Passing Parade

In same-day competition in March, perennial Guinness Book records jockeys Zoe L'Amore and Ashrita Furman squared off over the record for stopping blades on an electric table fan the most times in one minute using only their tongues. On Italian TV, L'Amore stopped blades 32 times, but Furman, at a different venue, later stopped 35. (2) Norway unseated Denmark as the world's "happiest" country, according to the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network. (There was no word on whether Denmark was unhappy about losing the top spot.) [UPI News, 3-31-2017] [Reuters, 3-20-2017]

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2013

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2015

Education

2016



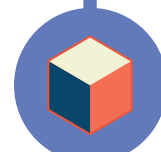
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Three Businesses Owned by New Americans

Local refugees and immigrants show a true entrepreneurial spirit.



MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

By: Maitham Basha-Agha

Kadim Muhsin, 53, is the owner of two New Sara's Markets, one on 12th and Reed streets, and one on 12th and Wallace streets. Both markets offer a complete variety of Middle Eastern food, from Halal meat to pita bread to fresh produce, attracting customers of many ethnic backgrounds. On a recent visit, I conversed with customers from Syria, Iraq, Congo, and Somalia. I even met students from Allegheny College who were buying items to take back to school.

In order to run a successful business in Erie, Muhsin stated, "You have to have passion and determination. Some businesses will fail, but with the right attitude, you can make it in Erie."

Muhsin's determination in running a successful business goes back to his younger days in Iraq. He was a medical lecturer at a private hospital but found this was not adequate to support his family, so he opened his own private clinic. For eight years, he taught students the science of medicine and also treated the sick.

In 1997, he had to give all that up and fight for his life. Saddam Hussein's regime was after doctors, lawyers, and anyone who opposed the regime. Muhsin's two brothers were killed, and he was interrogated multiple times. He knew his time was running out. He gathered whatever he could and escaped to Jordan with his wife and three children.

Muhsin and his family arrived in America in August of 2011, two weeks prior to the 9/11 attack.

He knew the process of starting over was going to be difficult.

Becoming a doctor in America was on top of his list. Through the Multicultural Resource Center (formally known as The Hispanic-American Council), he was advised about where to go and what to do.

For four years, he studied for his doctoral board exam while working multiple jobs to make ends meet for his family.

In 2008, he successfully completed his board exam and applied to numerous hospitals throughout the U.S. for residency. Although he had extensive medical experience in Iraq and many interviews, the denial letters seemed endless, so he had no choice but to change career plans. He opted to go into business and ended up purchasing New Sara's Market.

His two stores are very successful. The continual arrival of refugees in Erie has meant more and more customers for his business. Now he is looking to expand and add a Halal sandwich shop to one of his stores.

(top) Kadim Muhsin, an Iraqi refugee and former doctor, looks over produce at one of his two New Sara's Market locations. (right) A Bhutanese refugee since age 11, Gyan Ghising now stands proudly in front of his business, My Way Bar and Grill on East Lake Road in Lawrence Park.

Muhsin sounded very optimistic about Erie: "It provides many resources for new arrivals to help them with job placement and provides them with training on how to start a business."

This New American business owner also mentioned that local government could do more to make the general public aware of ethnic markets available to everybody. Immigrants already know about these businesses by word of mouth.

The New Sara's Markets are only one of many businesses in Erie operated by New Americans, bringing a sense of diversity to the city. We need to welcome them, help them, and invest in them.

"To be an entrepreneur you must be able to run a functional and stable business." That's what Gyan Ghising replied when I asked him what entrepreneurship means to him. Ghising is the owner of My Way Bar and Grill on East Lake Road.

Ghising's life as a refugee started at age 11 when his country of Bhutan became a war zone. Many had to flee, including Ghising, his two younger brothers, and his parents.

They arrived in Nepal without a plan or a place to live. They had to survive in the woods using tree branches to make a place to sleep. "It was rough;

people died from starvation and disease. We didn't have anything, not even water," Ghising recalled.

With the help of the Red Cross and international journalists, their situation came to light. The United Nations became aware of the issue and refugee camps were built, where Ghising spent the next 20 years of his life. During those years, he received permission to go out of the camp to seek employment, but he had a better idea.

On a recent visit, I conversed with customers from Syria, Iraq, Congo, and Somalia. I even met students from Allegheny College who were buying items to take back to school.

Instead, he collaborated with locals and opened up a private boarding school outside of the camp.

In 2011, he and his family were resettled in Erie; but without his parents or his two brothers, who didn't want to go through the lengthy and stressful resettlement process.

After 26 days here, Ghising received his first job as a cashier at a lower east side gas station. Through this position, he learned customer service and



MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

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MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

about local lifestyles and customs. He knew right away that in order to survive in America he must work. With a night shift at the gas station, he took on a second job as an interpreter during the day. Through the next five years, he worked many different jobs – at times three at once just to make ends meet and to save. He got little sleep and had little time for his children.

In 2016, he became the owner of My Way Bar and Grill. He wanted to have a place where people could enjoy entertainment; and to appeal to customers from everywhere – not just the Bhutanese community.

Running his own business can be tough, and he emphasized that strongly. Building a clientele could be challenging, given My Way Bar and Grill's proximity to downtown. But it has the potential to grow.

Elhafiz Abdalla, 61, is an immigrant from Sudan and a Muslim imam. He moved to Erie in 2001 from Morgantown, West Virginia, after completing a master's degree in forestry. The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections offered him a position as a Chaplain at SCI Albion. He took the position without hesitation due to its pay and the opportunity for self-growth. This position allowed him not only to educate the inmates about their faith, but also to inspire and advise them on their long-term life decisions. One former inmate is now a successful businessman in Delaware.

After several years of governmental work, Abdalla chose to retire but con-

An immigrant from Sudan, Elhafiz Abdalla is the owner of Lake Erie International Market on Brown Avenue.

tinue to live in the city of Erie, which he has described as a receptive and welcoming community. He became the imam of a local mosque and was invited to speak in churches and at events to educate people about the Muslim faith.

In October of 2016, he became the owner of Lake Erie International Market on Brown Avenue, a small corner store that provides a variety of international food. He knew right away he took on a big risk because the store is far from its customers, most of whom come from the east side. The loss of population among immigrants in Erie has affected his daily business, as many New Americans have moved on to other states like Minnesota and Michigan. With two kids in college and one nearing college age, he hopes his business will be enough to cover college tuition for all three.

Despite the challenges he faces, Abdalla is optimistic for a bright future for his business and the Erie community. Even though the population has dipped below the 100,000 mark, the arrival of recent Syrian refugees promises to make up for that loss. However, Abdalla sees the need for a strong effort to keep new refugees in the area.

Maitham Basha-Agha can be contacted at Maitham@eriereader.com.

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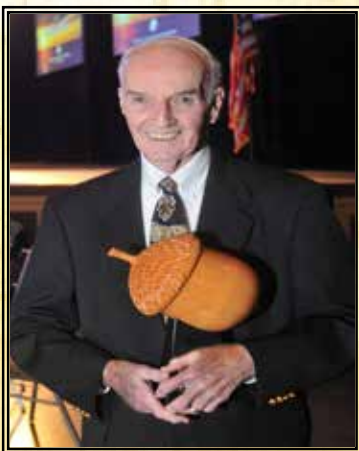
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Photo Credit: A local student tie-dyes at Erie Arts & Culture's booth during JUMP! Back to School Expo 2016

Following Up with 40 Under 40

Business advice from a few of our past honorees



NICK WARREN

By: Tracy Geibel

Ever wonder what happens to those inducted into *Erie Reader's 40 under 40* classes? Here are four alumni still succeeding in their own endeavors and striving to make Erie a better place for all.

I checked in recently with Chip Wachter of Kidder Wachter Architecture and Design, Nicole Lavery of the Sight Center of NWPB and Lavery Brewing Company, Jason Lavery, also of Lavery Brewing, and 1201 chef Dan Kern at Noosa, his newly opened restaurant in North East.

Tracy Geibel: What's new with you and your business since you were featured in *Erie Reader's 40 under 40*?

Chip Wachter: I was honored to be included in the list in 2013. I am an architect, a resident of the city of Erie with my wife and two young sons, and have been a partner with Kidder Wachter Architecture & Design since 2005. Our firm is located in the 202-year-old former Dickson Tavern that we acquired, ren-

ovated, and moved our office into in 2012. We are fortunate to have assisted with the development, design, and construction of many projects throughout Erie.

I've obtained a license to buy and sell real estate, and my business partners Jeff Kidder, Mike Jefferys, Kim Jefferys, and I founded two new businesses: Kidder Wachter Jefferys Construction, and Kidder Wachter Jefferys Engineering.

Our architectural firm, Kidder Wachter Architecture & Design, has been busy assisting clients with many projects in the Erie area. As planners, we created a development plan for Erie Events at Bayfront Place. As developers, we bought the former Rothrock Building four years ago with the intent of turning around a blighted property that was contributing to the decline of its neighborhood. Velocity Network purchased the building from us and our companies are responsible for the design and construction of the proposed renovations.

Nicole Lavery: I've been

quite busy. At the Sight Center, we began a new cross-country skiing training for children and young adults with visual impairments and blindness at Wilderness Lodge, and we just held our first annual beeping Easter egg hunt for children with vision loss and their families. It was quite a success.

At the brewery, we recently returned from Washington, D.C., where Jason (Lavery) and I attended the Craft Brewers Conference, which is our national guild's conference. We did a ton of networking and got a lot of great new ideas that we'll implement at the brewery; and we're planning an expansion this fall, with a new brew-house and nine new tanks to continue making our quality innovative ales.

(top) Chef Dan Kern sits at the edge of the bar at Noosa, his newly opened restaurant in North East, Pa., at the former site of the Crazy Parrot next to the North East Marina. (right) Husband and wife Jason and Dr. Nikki Lavery are both founders of Lavery Brewing Company, with Nikki also known for her work at the Sight Center of NWPB.

Jason Lavery: Continued growth and expansion. We completely revamped our menu this past February by hiring Chef Joe Perino. He has weekly and daily specials. So far, he has blown our minds with Fresh Dough Margherita Pizza, Shrimp Tempura Tacos, Miso Ramen, and so much more.

New beers continue to come out and they're always getting better. We focus on quality ingredients and brewing consistency. We have four main core values that we try to work on every day: The Endless Pursuit of Quality, Spread the Love of Beer and Brewing, Be Contributing Members of Our Community, Be Good People (both to teammates and to customers).

Dan Kern: I was in the first round, and I've opened two businesses since 2013. One is in Westfield, New York, Bird, and obviously in North East, at Noosa. It was a great opportunity. 1201 is coming upon its 10-year anniversary, which is awesome. I guess

the biggest accomplishment for me is ending the cycle of the "revolving kitchen door," where people work for me for three years, and then they're either too talented, or can't learn anything more from me and they have to leave and I start over again, three years behind, and keep switching. It was something where I knew I couldn't be in three places at one time, and why can't I build people up to the same opportunity that I had, 10 years ago?

TG: What makes Erie an opportunity-rich city for beginning and growing a business?

CW: There are relatively low barriers of entry here, but the market is also relatively small. Erie can be a good laboratory to test new entrepreneurial models.

NL: Erie is a city where people are fiercely loyal to a cause. Our patrons are 100 percent the reason that we are able to stay in business and grow, and if it weren't for their support, we wouldn't be in business at all. There are also a lot of great opportuni-



JENNIFER WHITE / ACACIA STUDIOS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A partner in the Kidder Wachter Architecture & Design firm, Mercyhurst Prep grad and Syracuse University alum Chip Wachter is an architect, as well as a licensed real estate agent.

have a place like this on the lake and still have a functioning restaurant where people can make money. It's not like we're bankrolled by some million dollar investor. This is real, and I don't think opportunities like that come along in other cities.

TG: What challenges have you faced since you were featured? And how did you overcome those obstacles?

CW: Challenge: We were concerned about the development of Erie's waterfront.

Solution: We spent over a year creating a master plan to develop Erie's waterfront pro bono, presented it for public discussion, and it was featured in the *Erie Reader*. Later on, Erie Events retained our firm to assist with creating the development plan for Bayfront Place.

Challenge: We were concerned about abandoned buildings in downtown Erie that contributed to the decline of Erie's core neighborhoods.

Solution: We decided to develop properties ourselves. Jeff Kidder and I acquired the former Dickson Tavern and Rothrock Buildings, developed a new purpose for them, renovated them, and saved these buildings. Properties that may have been demolished now house businesses that have created jobs, are patronizing other businesses downtown, and are paying property taxes.

NL: Owning a business is a challenge in itself. It's 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I own the brewery with my husband, too, so sometimes it's really hard to turn it off. We have to create some true boundaries so that we can give each other, and our kids, the quality time needed

so we don't get overwhelmed with business.

Another challenge has been determining when to grow, how to grow, and how big to grow. The brewery business is one of the fastest-growing manufacturers, which has both good and bad points, some being over-saturation. This also goes back to the quality time thing, as the bigger you get the more work you put in. There are only two of us, though we also have an awesome team of managers, a chef, an assistant brewer, and several great bartenders at the brewery.

JL: My wife Nicole and I bought out our business partner in October of 2016 so there has been some role re-defining in our brewery. We are stronger because of it.

DK: The challenge is always to be thinking a step ahead of what you need to be doing, and not to be in a reactionary state of mind. You can't be waiting until there are zero people in the restaurant and ask "well what do I need to do differently?" You can come in here enough times and realize that it's something that I put my heart, soul, and passion into, and they begin to trust you and you can start to stretch more. But at the same time, even when you have that successful formula, I think you have to keep looking ahead and ask "what can I change about this?" Even if you love it and it's comfortable for you, you need to pioneer those new avenues, just to remain new. There's a bit on our menu, that I read in this little tea house in Japan that's along the lines of "keep changing to remain unchanged."

TG: What advice do you offer to young Erie professionals?

CW: Listen to your clients.

NL: Don't be afraid to think big! Erie is only going to grow with innovators and dreamers.

JL: Know your market. Know your business. Focus on quality in all things. Make sure you have more money than you think you need.

DK: If you have the passion and the endurance to do it, this is the place to do it. Don't offer yourself excuses. A lot of people say "I want to do this, but there's this obstacle." Figure it out. Do it. There are so many talented people in Erie, especially artist-wise. Musicians, fine artists, food, whatever it is, the community is there to ask for help to get somewhere to do something. If you have that mindset, it's like the "Mamba Mentality," I'm a huge Kobe fan [laughs], it's no excuses. Get it done. There's a lot of places where even if you had that mindset and did everything you can, there really is something that's prohibitive, like "you don't have a million dollars to open this restaurant," or you don't have this or you don't have that. Erie doesn't have those restrictions, it's cool.

TG: What's your favorite book?

CW: I don't have a favorite book, but a book I am currently reading is *Zero to One, Notes on Startups or How to Build the Future*, by Peter Thiel.

NL: I have recently been reading *Business for Punks: Break all the Rules the Brew-Dog Way*. But I also love historical fiction books, and we listened to *Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown on the way to and from D.C.

JL: *Fight Club* by Chuck Palahniuk.

DK: I would say either the original *Jurassic Park*, or *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, which is very short easy reading, and I'm a cook so that's good for my brain. Or *Goodnight Moon*, that was one of my favorites when I was a kid.

Tracy Geibel can be contacted at tgeibel@eriereader.com.

ties for businesses to obtain SBA loans as well as advice for how to start a business. Gannon has their Small Business Development Center, the Economic Development Corporation of Erie County offers assistance, and recently a new coffee and consultation event happened at Radius CoWork that we attended.

JL: I'm from here, was educated here, and chose to start my family here. We want to be on the ground floor of the Erie revitalization that is dawning. Twenty years from now, it would nice to be thought of as one of the original businesses that believed in Erie and chose to build here.

DK: I definitely think that's true! I was in Denver, for instance, and there were five new restaurants a week opening. And here, I think because it doesn't have the saturation of a big city, people give you a much better shot. They give you a little chance to shine.

TG: How has your Erie location specifically helped you and your business to grow?

CW: Living, working, and investing in the city of Erie has been a significant element to our success and growth. Our businesses are locally

owned and located in downtown Erie, in properties we restored. We are stakeholders in the city of Erie and ultimately bound to its success or failure.

We believe in Erie. We know that Erie has its challenges, but it is in these challenges that we find opportunity. Given the decision of fight for Erie or flight from Erie, we choose to fight.

NL: We love our location. We are currently downtown, but off the beaten path. We have a great off-street parking lot and our building has tons of character. Some have called it cozy, other have described it like a speakeasy. This location helps us when downtown events are happening such as Otters games, Seawolves games, and events like Roar on the Shore and Celebrate Erie.

JL: Being downtown has its challenges, mostly space for our brewery, but we have embraced our location and utilize it to our strengths. We had a couple of outdoor fests in our huge parking lot. Erieites are also a thirsty bunch and we are selling more beer through our pub than ever.

DK: It's much more affordable than a big city. We can



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Open for Business

Eight innovative companies influencing our region

By: Matt Swanseger and Nick Warren

All sorts of innovative businesses are thriving in the Erie area. Here, we highlight a small sliver of the many locally owned and operated employers that make up our regional economic mosaic. Some have been around for decades, while others just recently broke ground. Two are among the top 50 employers in Erie County. Four were founded in the last decade. And each one is making a positive impact on our region. Let's take a closer look.

Green Lighting LED



LED lighting is unique in its directionality. Whereas incandescent and fluorescent light bulbs scatter their energy in all directions and inevitably burn out, LEDs (light-emitting diodes) put forth a more concentrated effort, often long outlasting their counterparts. It is an apt parallel for Green Lighting LED, a business that shines today because of a singular focus and the supporting structure to convert concept into execution.

"Erie is a great environment for entrepreneurs," says Vice President of Sales Josh Gehly, whose father Joel founded the company in 2007, "essentially [out of] a closet."

Gehly credits resources such as the Erie Technology Incubator at Gannon University for illuminating Green's path to success.

Gehly credits resources such as the Erie Technology Incubator at Gannon University for illuminating Green's path to success. The ETI helps promising tech startups manage the heat in the critical early stages of business development, offering guidance, mentorship, and funding. A poorly-engineered LED degrades quickly because it does not regulate heat effectively; so too do fledgling companies who do not find a way to control their costs. The resources the Erie community provided helped dissipate that heat, allowing the Gehlys to operate more efficiently.

Today, Green Lighting LED manufactures a full line of LED lights and fixtures, shipping to all parts of North

America. Their small size has proven an asset, not a hindrance, as it affords them a greater degree of flexibility. Among their recent projects were two large custom orders for the U.S. Air Force, a subsidiary of their most loyal customer: the U.S. government.

"We've definitely had to find our niches. We are pilot fish in a world of sharks in a big ocean. We have to focus on aspects the big boys leave behind," says Gehly.

The pilot fish, a carnivore that coexists peacefully with sharks in the wild, feeds on the little details the larger predators forget about. It's a great analogue for how small business can not only sustain itself, but also thrive.

Erie Brewing Company



To call the American craft brewing industry a late-bloomer would be a tremendous understatement. Despite being at least 40 years old, it didn't hit its growth spurt until about a decade ago. Since 2006, the number of American microbreweries has climbed from 370 to 3,132 (a modest 846 percent increase) and the number of brewpubs has risen from 989 to 1,916 (194 percent), according to the American Brewers Association. In that time frame, the Brewerie (2006), Lavery's (2009), Erie Ale Works (2014), and Millcreek Brewing (2015) have begun operation.

A new 20,000 square foot building on the outskirts of the Penn State Behrend campus in Harborcreek will house the brewery, a brewpub, and a John's Wildwood Pizzeria.

Predating them all, however, is Erie Brewing Company, established in 1993 as Hopper's Brewpub in Union Station. That first year, 1,040 barrels were enough to quench locals' curiosity. Today, the brewery produces 6,500 barrels annually and distributes in six states. Given this prolific growth, EBC's production facility (9,900 sq. ft.) no longer fits its business – imagine

a high school senior trying to squeeze into the same clothes he or she wore as a freshman. It has become awkward and uncomfortable for the size of ownership's aspirations (the Lowther family acquired the company in 2012).

This summer, Erie Brewing Company is finally going to college. A new 20,000 square foot building in Knowledge Park on the outskirts of the Penn State Behrend campus in Harborcreek will house the brewery, a brewpub, and a John's Wildwood Pizzeria (a longtime favorite of Edinboro students). At last, EBC can stretch out, spread its wings, and maybe even get into a little experimentation.

"We're a distribution-only company; we kind of had to focus on what sells, what [could] be sent out to the market, whereas now with the new facility, we can do a lot of crazy one-off things we couldn't do before," said brewmaster Shaun Carney in an interview with youerie.com.

While it may seem the craft brewing industry has come to a head, there remains plenty of untapped potential.

American Turned Products



Perhaps no company in North America is more smitten with the idea of a close shave than American Turned Products (with all apologies to Gillette), an industry leader in metalworking that strives tirelessly to keep its cutting-edge sharper than its competitors. They not only welcome the challenge of machining complex parts within extremely close (near unforgiving) tolerances, they have the industrial muscle to back it up – 95,000 square feet of manufacturing space between the Erie and Fairview facilities.

Within those facilities are some of the most sophisticated machines in the world, according to CEO Scott Eighmy, whose father Jerry founded the company in 1984. "All of our equipment is designed to be flexible to allow us to serve diverse markets. We can supply parts for any number of different industries and be competitive."

Foremost among ATP's clientele is the automotive industry, but they serve the medical, electronics, and refrigeration industries as well. CNC (computer nu-

merical control) machines – automated, programmable lathes – perform most of the duties at the shop, fashioning rotating hunks of metal into a variety of intricate shapes. ATP also employs the electrical discharge machining process for more delicate pieces (generating electrical currents to melt away bits of

“All of our equipment is designed to be flexible to allow us to serve diverse markets. We can supply parts for any number of different industries and be competitive.”

them) and centerless grinding (feeding pieces between two large wheels – one stationary and one moving) for high-volume production.

ATP takes pride not only in its versatility, but also its precision. Its quality control practices are exhaustive to ensure the defects per million parts shipped hovers right around zero – in other words, the best man can get.

LECOM



When it comes to community, the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine favors a holistic approach. The LECOM juggernaut encompasses broad swaths of West Grandview Boulevard (main campus), Peach Street (Medical Associates of Erie, LECOM Senior Living, the John M. and Silvia Ferretti Medical Fitness & Wellness Center, Coffee Culture, etc.), and the Bayfront area (the Presque Isle Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, Lifeworks, the school of graduate studies) – and that’s just in Erie alone (Corry Memorial Hospital serves the rural areas of Erie County). Factor in its Greensburg, Pennsylvania (within Se-

ton Hill University) and Bradenton, Florida campuses, along with 41 teaching hospitals/office sites situated in seven states (the Lake Erie Consortium for Osteo-

pathic Medical Training), and it adds up to a whole lot of resources for its 4,000-plus enrollees and 9,000-plus alumni.

LECOM was established in 1992 by Millcreek Community Hospital physicians and administrators, who saw the need to bring more healthcare practitioners aboard. That relationship has ridden a cresting wave ever since, with *U.S. News & World Report* declaring it a top 5 school for graduating primary care physicians. It is now the nation’s largest (and second most affordable) medical college and the only academic health center (defined as the integration of health profession school, patient care operation, and research enterprise) in the osteopathic profession, which centers on promoting the body’s innate ability to heal itself and how wholesale changes to lifestyle can prevent disease and lead to better health.

As the inner workings of the body differ from individual to individual, so too does the machinery of each mind. LECOM allows each student to tailor the curriculum to how he or she best learns, with five pathways to attaining the osteopathic medicine doctorate. Among the most innovative of these is the Problem-Based Learning Pathway, in which medical case studies provide the foundation in the biochemical and clinical sciences. It’s a sort of inside-out approach that offers real context from the onset, and is also the basis of LECOM’s recently founded School of Dental Medicine (its last-year students serving community needs). Meanwhile, LECOM’s School of Pharmacy is one of very few in the nation with online distance learning and accelerated degree options.

That is not to mention the post-baccalaureate program (an extra year of preparation for aspiring med students at over 100 participating institutions, including Gannon, Mercyhurst, and Edinboro) and the numerous postgraduate degrees LECOM has introduced in recent years – including the MS in Biomedical Sciences (for researchers) and the PhD in Anatomy Education. LECOM is many parts working together to comprise one cohesive whole.

The Plastek Group



At this moment, you’re within arm’s reach of something plastic. With varying nuances in shape and

function, every bit of plastic has to be meticulously designed and produced. Since they’ve manufactured countless pieces for consumer use, chances are you’ve come in contact with something that The Plastek Group has made. Take deodorant for example: The company produces an estimated three million stick packages *per day*, every day of the year. They also play an important role in food and beverage goods, plus cosmetics and pharmaceutical packaging.

Erie has long been a top center for plastics. For decades, The Plastek Group has stood at the forefront of

For decades, The Plastek Group has stood at the forefront of this relatively under-appreciated market.

this relatively under-appreciated market. Founded in 1956 as the Triangle Tool Company, Plastek is now one of the top 50 plastics injection molding companies in North America. They’re also one of the top 20 largest employers in Erie County, providing more jobs than either Mercyhurst University or Wegmans.

The business is headed by Chairman of the Board Joseph J. Prischak. From humble beginnings in the molding department of Erie Resistor, Prischak managed the formal launch of Plastek in 1971. Prischak helped to oversee Penn State Behrend’s plastics engineering technology program, a four-year degree. In addition to his lifelong work at Plastek, Prischak founded the nonprofit Africa 6000, an organization that helps bring clean, safe water to places in need all over the African continent.

In 1983, the company purchased Erie’s Spectrum Molding and Engineering. Expansion continued throughout the decades, as new locations were launched for the Erie company. With five locations in Erie, including corporate headquarters, Plastek has grown to include facilities in Hamlet, North Carolina, Queretaro, Mexico, Indaiatuba, São Paulo, Brazil, and Mansfield in the United Kingdom.

For over 60 years, The Plastek Group has been an integral part of the Erie community. With far-reaching production and innovative designs, the company sets a powerful example for business around the region and around the globe.

MenajErie Studio

Within a few short years, Jessica Yochim is moving in’ on up. Beginning in her parent’s garage, she helped build MenajErie, a thriving video production company that now boasts a handful of full-time employees, and a brand new collaborative studio.

After graduating from Penn State University in 2012, Yochim found herself at a crossroads. Moving back to her hometown of Erie, she wondered what would become of her recently acquired film degree. She detailed the early days, explaining, “Little by little, I started making personal connections and attending networking events so that people knew who I was and what I had to offer. I reached out to organizations that help businesses get started.”

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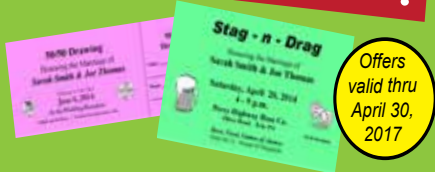
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Erie Art Museum

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INVISIBLE HAND

LOVESONG (2017)
Neglected by her husband, Sarah embarks on an impromptu road trip with her daughter and her best friend, Mindy. Along the way, the dynamic between the two friends intensifies before circumstances force them apart. Years later, Sarah attempts to rebuild their intimate connection in the days before Mindy's wedding.



Showing 5/3 • 7pm

filmsocietynwpa.org



BUSTER'S MAL HEART (2017)

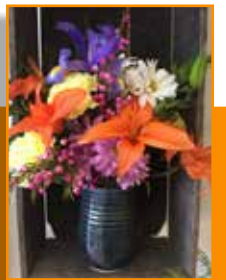
With filmmaker Skype Q&A

Rami Malek (Emmy-nominee, "Mr. Robot") stars as Jonah, a troubled man on the run from fate. Malek exposes the depths of Jonah's soul in this smart thriller, peppered with dark humor and laden with interlocking mystery.

Showing 5/10 • 7pm

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MENAJERIE STUDIO

With camera in hand, she began her business. A year later she was joined by Nick Taylor, a self-taught cinematographer with an accounting degree who is now Yochim's husband. The pairing was a success, eventually leading to the addition of Nick's sister, Leah Taylor, and most recently, her Edinboro schoolmate Greg Happ. "At first, I was hesitant to work with close friends or family," Yochim admitted, "but I soon real-

They recently opened the doors to their Creator Studio, a rentable space featuring a 25-foot white cyclorama "infinity" wall, a full lighting setup, and an audio production space designed for podcasting and recording.

ized that those are the people I can rely on the most." MenajErie moved from the garage, to the newlyweds' attic, then to Radius CoWork until they settled on a space a few floors above, in the Renaissance Centre. They recently opened the doors to their Creator Studio, a rentable space featuring a 25-foot white cyclorama "infinity" wall, a full lighting setup, and an audio production space designed for podcasting and recording. Making a name for themselves in the area thanks to their national-level commercial videography and photography, MenajErie offers plenty to hear and see.

Hoffman United

It's not often that you see a 19-year-old college freshman combating blight, but that's just what Cathedral Prep graduate Paul Hoffman is achieving with his company, Hoffman United. He's also turned over more than half a million dollars in revenue along the way.

Witnessing thousands of abandoned houses and distressed residential properties, Hoffman formed a plan to reverse the wave of blight that threatens the city of Erie. Armed with an interconnected combination of services, Hoffman United is poised for a workable solution to this problem.

The company offers real estate development, construction, and property management, seeking to improve blighted properties throughout the city. Hoffman may be a young man, but he's a man on a mission, saying that "through every battle, every defeat, and



HOFFMAN UNITED

every victory, my entrepreneurial vision has remained the same: to create a long-lasting legacy in the Erie community, the nation, and the world." He emphasizes, "We started with conviction instead of rational thinking because rational thinking said it was impossible, but nothing is impossible and anything can be built as long as you truly believe in yourself."

Through their development branch, the business targets locations with issues. Neglected, damaged, or decaying properties are renovated, transforming them into livable, safe, and vibrant housing. Acquiring abandoned buildings and residential properties, Hoffman works with community leaders to secure these sites

Witnessing thousands of abandoned houses and distressed residential properties, Hoffman formed a plan to reverse the wave of blight that threatens the city of Erie.

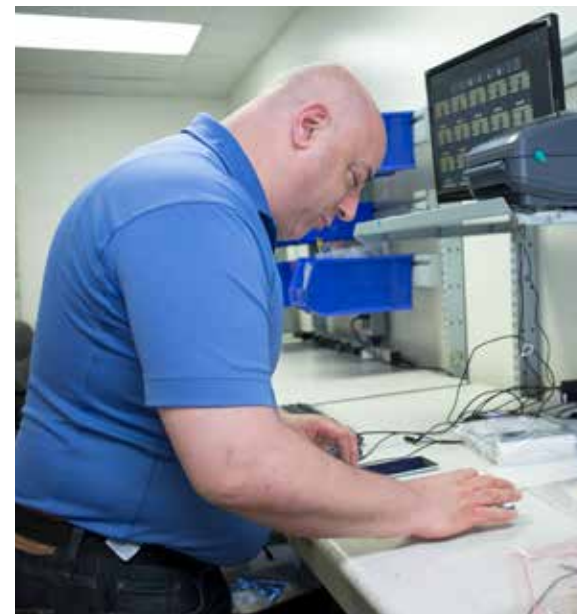
for renovation.

Construction plays an important role in Hoffman's plan, as well. The company offers roofing, additions, remodels, painting, patios, retaining walls, and other full-service general contracting projects. Currently employing two construction crews, Hoffman United has the tools to fully rehabilitate the properties they acquire.

After the properties are identified, secured, and renovated, the property management arm of the company takes over. With services ranging from leasing to maintenance, the company makes sure that these houses become homes.

MaxBack

If you have any electronic gadgets collecting dust, you might want to check out MaxBack. While most businesses seek your money in exchange for their products, MaxBack is finding success with a different approach. Customers can make money by selling their slightly used phones, tablets, and wearables, and other high-end electronics. Through the buyback of in-demand items, users are able to earn hundreds of dollars by sending a single item in. President Sean Michaels



MAXBACK

clarifies it simply, illustrating that "MaxBack.com provides a convenient, hassle-free solution for individuals and businesses looking to sell used smartphones and other electronic devices." Describing the online experience, he elaborates that "sellers can visit MaxBack.com for an instant quote. The entire process from shipping the device until receiving payment typically takes under a week."

Beginning as the side operation of a billion-dollar corporation, MaxBack is now an independent entity headquartered in Erie. In 1997, Michaels helped to found FundingFactory (then known as ETCEP), an innovative company that, in a similar style, paid participants for their used printer cartridges. The company championed recycling and elimination of e-waste, later expanding to Environmental Reclamation Services. The business was bought by the Chicago-based corporation, Clover Technologies. In 2010, Michaels, along with a team of Erie employees, began MaxBack. Michaels then engaged in a buyback of his own, pur-

Beginning as the side operation of a billion-dollar corporation, MaxBack is now an independent entity headquartered in Erie.

chasing the company himself in 2016.

With his own visions for the business, Michaels intends to widen the scope of what the company accepts, and has plans to partner with local animal shelter Because You Care, with a fundraiser known as TechFurFunds.

With a new Erie location, the company is forging an independent path, with renewed energy and a fresh road ahead.

Matt Swanseger can be reached at mawnseger@eriereader.com. You can follow him on Twitter @SwazySwagga. Nick Warren can be reached at nick@eriereader.com. You can follow him on most social media outlets as @newwavecrashing

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THURS 04/27

PAINT & ROCK

FRI 04/28

TK BLUES CO.

SAT 04/29

AQUEOUS

[DOWNSTAIRS]

ZACK ORR DJ SET

[UPSTAIRS]

FRI 05/05

WAVE TRAILS

+ NEW MORNING SUNRISE

+ ONE IF BY LAND

SAT 05/06

JIM DONOVAN & SUN KING WARRIORS

+ SMACKDAB

[DOWNSTAIRS]

FRI 05/12

TROPIDELIC

+ OGEE WAWA

SAT 05/13

THE RUSTY HAYWHACKERS

FRI 05/19

TROHOSKE'S

ART GROUPIES

SAT 05/20

ANGER IS A GIFT:

RATM TRIBUTE

[DOWNSTAIRS]

BROKE BOLAND

[UPSTAIRS]

MATTY'S
OPEN MIC
ONITE



Spotlight on Erie

April 26 – May 9, 2017

Thursday, April 27

Warnings in the Water



“The Erie region holds great promise and potential, but is faced with significant challenges both now and in the coming years,” said Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Great Lakes Region Chief Tim Bruno. One of the chief protectors of Lake Erie’s health and wellbeing, Bruno a member of *Erie Reader’s* 2016 40 Under 40 class.

That said, he has added, “it’s up to Erie’s younger generations to buy into a shared vision, find solutions to our problems through a fresh perspective, and have the determination and persistence to follow through and build this community into a Pennsylvania success story.”

Bruno’s work has him coordinating water policy issues with other Great Lakes states and provinces and representing Pennsylvania’s priorities on water use and water quality; prioritizing and managing funding for various Lake Erie water initiatives; and working closely with local and county governments, other state agencies, and nonprofit organizations to further the goals of the DEP’s water protection programs. So, his perspective on the state of Erie County’s environment is worth listening to.

That perspective will be shared in fuller detail when Bruno presents a free discussion on the topic on Thursday, April 27 as part of the Jefferson Educational Society’s 2017 spring lecture series.

“Bruno will address the State of Erie County’s Environment, exploring the region’s water quality and water use, urban and agricultural land practices, and more to discuss where Erie County’s been and where it’s going,” according to JES.

Again, worth hearing for anyone who’s interested in – or concerned about – where we’re all headed water-wise. – Ryan Smith

7 to 8:30 p.m. // 3207 State St. // jeserie.org

Friday, April 28

TK Blues Opens Up Shop



Whether he’s playing rock, blues, or something in between, stalwart Erie artist Tony Kellogg is known and appreciated for having a skillful sense of musicianship – and for weaving heavy-with-heart tales of life and love (found, lost, and found again) into song.

Kellogg’s played before – and very well – with other well-known Erie area artists like his wife, vocalist Amanda Kellogg, bassist Larry Barr (Echo), and drummer Jon Teater (Sonny’s Fugitives). Now, he’s gotten that gang all together, and is presenting his latest (and what could be a greatest) project: TK Blues Co.

The quartet describes itself as “a musical blues-based ideal, 20-plus years in the making. Not exactly copycat, not exactly original.”

The quartet describes itself as “a musical blues-based ideal, 20-plus years in the making. Not exactly copycat, not exactly original.”

Something familiar, but new all the same: That’s a place where some of the best music springs from, and, coming from them, that sounds like it could be interesting (and, you know, probably pretty awesome).

We’ll get the chance to hear it when TK Blues Co. takes the stage at the Kings Rook Club on Friday, April 28.

It’s sure to be full of talented twists on the standard blues-rock fare, and, even more, straight from the strings

of the heart. – Ryan Smith

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. // 1921 Peach St. // facebook.com/TKBluesCo

Saturday, April 29

Climate March Passes Erie Coke Plant



The People’s Climate March in Washington, D.C. is set to gather a huge crowd of supporters. Additionally, “sister” marches will be held in hundreds of locations around the country on Saturday, April 29. In a similar fashion to the Women’s March, Tax March, and the March for Science, Erie will be doing its part, as well.

The march will proceed west toward the plant and head north on East Avenue, passing the Barber National Institute and ending at Wayne Park at the corner of East Lake Road.

Headed by the local organization Our Water, Our Air, Our Rights, the march will begin at 2 p.m.

The location of the march is one you might be familiar with. Event organizer Sam Miller explained that “following the *Erie Reader* story about the toxic air emissions from the Erie Coke Plant on the Lake Erie waterfront at the foot of East Avenue, we decided to plan the Erie Climate March on East Avenue.”

Penned by Katie Chriest, the article in question appeared in our March 1 issue. The cover story was titled “Clearing the Air.”

The event will begin at the beach and boat ramp at the bend of East Avenue, across from the Erie Coke plant. The march will proceed west toward the plant and head north on East Avenue, passing the Barber National Institute and ending at Wayne Park at the corner of East Lake Road.

Wayne Park will serve as a rally site, with music and environmental speak-

ers. The rally is expected to conclude at 4 p.m.

The Sisters of St. Joseph, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Erie, Solar Revolution Erie, Sisters of Mercy, S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie, The Erie Benedictines for Peace, and the Benedictine Sisters of Erie helped to sponsor the event. The Pennsylvania Chapter of the Sierra Club, and the Lake Erie Group endorsed the event.

“We expect a very large turnout, and have provided 600 surgical face masks for the first 600 people to wear in the march as protection from the toxic emissions from the plant,” Miller detailed. “The neighbors living downwind of the plant have experienced an abnormally high incidence of cancer and we will be pressing for a health survey and study as the basis for more strict air pollution regulations and controls under the EPA Clean Air Act.” – Nick Warren

2 to 4 p.m. // Beginning at the boat ramp at East Avenue, ending at Wayne Park // for more information, visit peoplesclimate.org/sister-marches or contact Sam Miller at 716.713.8621

Saturday, April 29

The Truth Is Out There (On the Bayfront)



Do you believe we’re not alone in the universe? If so, you might be inclined to converge upon the Bayfront Convention Center.

The Mutual UFO Network (MUFON) is holding Erie’s fifth annual UFO Conference. Founded in 1969 as the Midwest UFO Network, the organization grew, expanding its boundaries worldwide.

There will be speakers throughout the day, beginning at 9 a.m. Cheryl Costa, a retired military veteran, is a former information security professional in the aerospace industry. A native of upstate New York, Costa will discuss sightings occurring all over New York state.

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The Russian Orthodox
Church of the Nativity
Presents the 9th Annual

TROIKA

Russian Festival

Friday, May 26, 2017 - 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturday, May 27, 2017 - Noon to 6 p.m.

Sunday, May 28, 2017 - Noon to 9 p.m.



Church of the Nativity Community Center
109 German Street Erie, PA 16507
www.churchofthenativity.net/troika

Russian Food • Ice Bar • Children's Area • & More

Kathleen Marden, a leading expert in the Betty and Barney Hill case (a well known abduction event known as the "Zeta Reticuli Incident") will lead a talk titled "UFOs: Fact, Fiction, and Disinformation." Marden has co-authored three books, having partnered with leading ufologist Stanton Friedman on two occasions.

MUFON State Director John Ventre and UFO researcher Owen Eichler will lead "Kecksburg Solved," an examination of the famous incident (sometimes known as "Pennsylvania's Roswell") that occurred in Kecksburg, a town 40 miles southeast of Pittsburgh.

Well-known UFO expert Nick Pope will host "Secrecy vs. Disclosure." The former head of the British Government's UFO project, Pope has been called "the real Fox Mulder," and has served as a consultant on many films and television shows, along with being a frequent guest on news programs.

Finishing up the day will be head of the Fayette County Pennsylvania Bigfoot Research Project, Fred Saluga. He will discuss Sasquatch ("Bigfoot"), and examine the possibility of the creature being an inter-dimensional being.

MUFON holds regular meetups in Erie, and the conference is their largest event in the area. — Nick Warren

9 a.m. to 7 p.m. // Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier // Admission \$29 (\$42 with lunch) // eriehomeshow.com // pre-register at mufonpa.com

Thursday, May 4

Scully Geared Up to Moderate Mayoral Debate



"The City of Erie is at an economic crossroads," Steve Scully explained. "And the decision voters make this year will determine which direction the community wants to take."

Scully, the senior executive producer

and political editor for C-SPAN, will serve as moderator for the Erie Mayoral Debate on Thursday, May 4 at the Jefferson Educational Society. An Erie native, Scully got his start as a reporter at WSEE before arriving at C-SPAN in 1990. Throughout his venerable career, he has been widely praised for his evenhandedness and impartiality. John Oliver of *This Week Tonight* has even paid tribute to Scully on occasion, airing multiple supercuts of the host's amazingly fair-tempered reactions, dubbing him "the most patient man on television." A world-class political referee, Scully was even tapped to be the backup moderator for all five presidential debates in 2016.

With nine mayoral candidates taking the stage, that patience will surely come in handy. As the May 16 primary approaches, candidates are nearing the home stretch. The evening will be split into two sections, the former for the seven Democratic candidates (Lisa Austin, Jay Breneman, Almi Clerkin, Steve Franklin, Rubye Jenkins-Husband, Bob Merski, and Joe Schember), and the latter for the two Republicans (John Persinger and Jon Whaley). There is a one-hour intermission scheduled following the Democratic candidates.

Members of the community are en-

couraged to submit their questions to contact@eriereader.com with the subject "debate question" ahead of time. Early attendees will also be able to ability to write-in questions before the event begins. Scully will select the questions, and each candidate will have one minute to respond. There will be no opening statements, but each candidate will have 30 seconds for closing remarks. To encourage equitable time for each candidate, volunteers will serve as timekeepers.

"I am looking forward to returning to the hometown I love, in order to moderate a debate where voters can determine who is the best person to lead the city and the region."

The debate is a coordinated effort on the part of the Jefferson Educational Society, WQLN, and the *Erie Reader*. WQLN will livestream the event online. The event is free, but attendees must register online at jeserie.org.

Scully warmly anticipates the event, admitting that "I am looking forward to returning to the hometown I love,

MUSIC

Dave VanAmburg & Friends

Apr. 26 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Maxi's Restaurant in the Bel Aire Clarion Hotel, 2800 W. 8th Rd. jazzerie.com.

SAS Acoustics featuring Kayti Stadler

Apr. 26 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Colony Pub and Grille, 2670 W. 8th St. facebook.com/SASAcousticDuo.

D'Angelo Department of Music: Faculty Recital Series

Apr. 26 — 8 p.m.

Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Colony Pub Trio

Apr. 27 — 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Colony Pub and Grille, 2670 W. 8th St. jazzerie.com.

Dave VanAmburg

Apr. 28 — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Dickey's, 3716 Liberty St. jazzerie.com.

Gem City Revival

Apr. 28 — 6 to 9 p.m.

The Cork 1794, 17 W. Main St. cork1794.com.

Slug Christ

Apr. 28 — 7 p.m.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com/pg/

basement.transmissions.com.

The Route 8 Band

Apr. 28 — 9 p.m.

Presque Isle Downs, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

TK Blues Co.

Apr. 28 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

1000hp: A Tribute to Godsmack

Apr. 28 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

Bravura and Obelus Double CD Release Show

Apr. 29 — 4:30 to 10:30 p.m.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions.

Gem City Jazz Ensemble

Apr. 29 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier gemcitybands.org.

D'Angelo Department of Music: Jazz Ensemble Concert

Apr. 29 — 8 p.m.

Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

The Groove

Apr. 29 — 9 p.m.

Presque Isle Downs, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Evad & the Ominous Squad, ONIMG, Till the End and The Hovelists

Apr. 29 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Bobbys Place, 1202 W. 18th St. facebook.com.

Aqueous and Zack Orr

Apr. 29 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

Black Widow

Apr. 29 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

Rankin & Schell

Apr. 30 — 1 to 4 p.m.

Arundel Cellars, 11727 E. Main Rd. arundelcellars.com.

D'Angelo Department of Music: Composers Concert

Apr. 30 — 2 p.m.

Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Spring Choral Concert

Apr. 30 — 3 p.m.

Dr. William P. Alexander Music Center at Edinboro University, 110 Kiltie Rd. events.edinboro.edu.

D'Angelo Department

of Music: Small Ensembles Concert

May 3 — 7 p.m.

Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Blasco Concert Series: Erie Jr. Philharmonic Ensembles Spring Concert

May 4 — 7 p.m.

H.O. Hirt Auditorium at Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Wave Trails, New Morning Sunrise, and One If By Land

May 5 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com/kingsrookclub.

D'Angelo Department of Music: Wind Ensemble Concert

May 6 — 4 p.m.

Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

May Acoustic Showcase

May 6 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions.

Jim Donovan & Sun King Warriors and Smackdab

May 6 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

com/kingsrookclub.

My 3 Scum and Submachine

May 6 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

American Idiots' Green Day Tribute

May 6 — 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

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

D'Angelo Department of Music: Mercyhurst Chamber Orchestra

May 7 — 4 p.m.

Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

The Devil Wears Prada

May 8 — 6 to 10 p.m.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions.

Every Time I Die Spring Tour

May 9 — 6 to 11 p.m.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com/pg/basement.transmissions.

DANCE

Mercyhurst Dance Department: The Sleeping Beauty (Act III)

Apr. 28 — 7 p.m. & Apr. 29 — 2 & 7 p.m. & Apr. 30 — 2 p.m.

Mary D'Angelo Performing

Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Kentucky Derby Dance

Apr. 29 — 7 to 11 p.m.

Our Lady of the Lake Parish, 128 Sunset Dr. facebook.com.

FOOD & DRINK

A Night of Digestif

Apr. 27 — 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The Cork 1794, 17 W. Main St. facebook.com/TheCork1794.

Tibetan Momo Cooking Class

Apr. 28 — 2 to 5 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Boy Scout Troop #73 Spaghetti Dinner

Apr. 29 — 4 to 7 p.m.

St. Francis Parish Center, 8880 W. Main St. stfrancisxaviermckean.org.

Gears to Beers

May 6 — 9 a.m.

WQLN Public Media, 8425 Peach St. wqln.org.

BBQ, Beer and Beards

May 6 — noon to 7 p.m.

Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St. facebook.com/ErieAleWorks.

Fajita Benefit

May 9 — 7 to 11 p.m.

Mad Mex Erie, 5800 Peach St. facebook.com.

CALENDAR

in order to moderate a debate where voters can determine who is the best person to lead the city and the region. Running for office is the ultimate job interview, and my goal is to ask the questions voters are asking. I'm looking forward to it." – Nick Warren

Democrats begin at 5:30 p.m.,
Republicans at 8:00 p.m. // Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. // jeserie.org or 459.8000

Saturday, May 6

Iron City Punks Get Eerie



Nostalgia is a powerful drug, so consider Scotty's Martini Lounge your go-to dealer when they bring two of the region's O.G. punk bands to

Erie for their "Seis de Mayo" party.

My 3 Scum are among the forefathers in Erie's nearly 30-year history of underground punk and hardcore music. At their peak in the early 1990s, My 3 Scum gained a loyal following playing their peculiar blend of old-school punk rock and horror punk in the long-since defunct classic Erie music venue, the Continental Ballroom, and helped influence later generations in the Erie underground music scene. The band has continued to play around Erie occasionally, at The Beer Mug and the also now-extinct Crooked i.

Making their way up from Pittsburgh, Submachine started a circle pit in 1991 that still hasn't stopped. In that time, the band has made 11 albums, the latest being the three-song EP, *People*, released in January. And they haven't lost an ounce of the ferocity, aggression, and speed in their 26 years of existence (which, I might add, is astounding longevity for a punk band). Submachine has been a staple of hardcore punk in Pittsburgh, and doesn't show any signs of slowing down.

If you find yourself missing the way punk rock *used to be*, dig your old Converse out of the closet, and step yourself right back into the pit.

You might just find that punk wasn't really dead after all – or at least back from the dead, when My 3 Scum plays "Zombie Gonna Eat Yer Brains." – Tommy Shannon

9 p.m. to 2 a.m. // *Scotty's Martini Lounge*, 301 German St. // facebook.com

Saturday, May 6

Champions of the Sun



Rusted Root founding member Jim Donovan has long been celebrated as a hands-on, masterful musician, defying one-dimensional definitions and touching on teachable moments both sonic and social during a career that's danced through a good couple of decades.

Now, following what had been a lengthy hiatus, the drummer/multi-instrumentalist is keeping at it with one of his most worthwhile projects, Jim Donovan & Sun King Warriors – and they're bringing their light to the Kings Rook Club on Saturday, May 6.

If you're into rhythm, and grooving, you probably want to go check this one out. You'll get down, maybe learn something.

If you're into rhythm, and grooving, you probably want to go check this one out. You'll get down, maybe learn something.

It's an early show on their end, with things kicking off at 9 p.m.

And oh yeah: Nasty-funk favorites Smackdab are coming down to the Rook to close the night out in fine fashion.

That's a lot of dance-worthy jam, funk, rock, soul and everything in between for one evening.

Almost sounds like summer's in the air, eh? – Ryan Smith

9 p.m. to 2 a.m. // 1921 Peach St. // facebook.com/kingsrookclub

FILM

Extreme Weather

Ongoing — 11 a.m. & 1 & 3 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com

Lewis & Clark: Great Journey West

Ongoing — noon & 4 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com

Prehistoric Planet

Ongoing — 2 & 5 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com

Invisible Hand

Apr. 26 — 7 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org

Invisible Hand

Apr. 27 — 8:30 to 11 p.m.

Edinboro University Cole Auditorium, 219 Meadville St. facebook.com/edinborofilmseries

A Boy and His Dog (1975)

Apr. 29 — 8 to 10 p.m.

Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse

The Lone Ranger

Apr. 30 — 1:30 p.m.

H.O. Hirt Auditorium in the Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org

Lovesong

May 3 — 7 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org

A Star is Born (1937)

May 5 — 8 to 10 p.m.

Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse

National Theatre Live: Twelfth Night

May 7 — 12:55 p.m.

Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu

Buster's Mal Heart

May 10 — 7 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org

VISUAL ARTS

Senior Art Thesis Exhibition

Ongoing through May 5

Mercyhurst University Cummings Gallery, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu

Senior Projects

Ongoing through May 7

Allegheny College Doane Hall of Art, 520 N. Main St. allegheny.edu

Far From Home: Recent Painting from Tom Ferraro

Ongoing through May 16

Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St.

glassgrowersgallery.com

Earth Stories

Ongoing through June 11

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org

Photographs by Gary Cardot

Ongoing through June 24

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org

94th Annual Spring Show

Ongoing through July 9

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org

Tin Plated Dreams: Sculptures by William Brady, Jr.

Ongoing through January 7, 2018

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org

The Shape of Things

Apr. 27 through May 4

Bruce Gallery in Doucette Hall, 215 Meadville St. brucegallery.info

Natural Impressions 6th Annual Mixed Media Student Art Show: All Things That Flower

Apr. 28 through May 28 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

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

Care For Your Mind: The Mental Health Show

Apr. 28 through May

27 (Opening Reception Apr. 28 — 7 to 9 p.m.)

Meadville Council on the Arts, 910 Market St. artsmeadville.org

THEATRE

The Trojan Women

Apr. 27, 28, 29 — 7:30 p.m. & Apr. 30 — 2:30 p.m.

Edinboro University's Diebold Center for the Performing Arts, 217 Meadville St. events.edinboro.edu

Lend Me A Tenor

Apr. 28, 29 & May 5, 6, 12, 13 — 7:30 to 10 p.m. & Apr. 30 & May 7, 14 — 3 to 5:30

All an Act Theatre, 652 W. 17th St. allanact.net

Ape and Essence

Apr. 28 — 8 p.m. & Apr. 29 — 2 & 8 p.m. & Apr. 30 — 2 p.m.

Gannon University's Schuster Theatre, 620 Sassafras St. gannon.edu

Committed Citizen

Apr. 28, 29 — 8 p.m. & Apr. 30 — 2 p.m.

PACA, 1505 State St. paca1505.com

Don't Dress for Dinner

Apr. 29 — 5:30 p.m. & Apr. 30 — 2:30 p.m. & May 2, 3 — noon

Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com

James and the Giant Peach

May 5 — 7 p.m. & May 6 — 2

& 7 p.m. & May 7 — 2 p.m. & May 12 — 7 p.m. & May 13 — 2 & 7 p.m. & May 14 — 2 p.m.

Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10 St. erieplayhouse.org

Laughter on the 23rd Floor

May 5, 12 — 8 p.m.

Dramashop on 2nd Floor of Renaissance Centre, 1001 State St. facebook.com

COMMUNITY

Tai Chi

Apr. 26 & May 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org

Pennsylvania State Police 'Come Get to Know Us Day'

Apr. 26 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. mercyhurst.edu

Erie SeaWolves vs. Altoona Curve

Apr. 26 — noon

UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th St. erieevents.com

LifeWorks Erie Open House

Apr. 26 — 4 to 6 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org

Free Home Buying Seminar

Apr. 26 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Bel-Aire Clarion Hotel & Conference Center, 2800

W. 8th St. eriefcu.org

Local Quality of Water

Apr. 26 & May 3, 10, 17 — 6:30 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. uerie.org

Candidate Forum

Apr. 26 — 6:30 to 9 p.m.

H.O. Hirt Auditorium at Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. facebook.com/keystoneprogresserie.com

Cultural Series: Facts, Alt-Facts and Anything But the Facts: Politics in the Digital Age

Apr. 26 — 7 p.m.

Mercyhurst North East Alex Theatre, 16 W. Division St. northeast.mercyhurst.edu

Halfway to Halloween Haunted History Tours

Apr. 26 — 7:30 p.m.

The Brewerier at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. brewerier.com

10th Annual Women In Leadership

Apr. 27 — 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center, 7794 Peach St. wild.sbdcgannon.org

Weightlifting & Cardio Fitness Class

Apr. 27 & May 4, 11, 18, 25 — 9:30 a.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org

UPMC HEALTH PLAN
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100 YEARS
THE PLAYHOUSE

YOUTH THEATRE

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Saturday, May 6
at 2pm

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SAT, MAY 6 • 6:35 PM

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MON, MAY 22 • 6:35 PM

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Sherlock's Park Place: \$2.50 Dos Equis Bottles & Tecate Cans
Empty Keg: \$2.50 Dos Equis Ambar Draft & \$1.00 Tecate Cans
Edinboro Hotel: \$2.00 Dos Equis Bottles
Edinboro Lake Resort: \$2.50 Dos Equis Bottles
Mad Mex: \$6.00 Dos Equis Ambar 22oz. Drafts & \$3.50 Lager Bottles
Darcy's Pub & Grub: \$2.75 Dos Equis Ambar Bottles
Bruce's Pub & Grub: \$2.25 Dos Equis Lager Bottles
That Place: \$2.25 Dos Equis Ambar Bottles
Molly Brannigans: \$2.50 Dos Equis Lager Bottles
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Girard Legion: \$2.00 Dos Equis Ambar Bottles
Czartoryski Cafe: \$2.50 Dos Equis Bottles
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Odis 12: \$2.25 Dos Equis Lager Bottles
Millcreek Brewing: \$2.50 Dos Equis Ambar Drafts
El Canelo Harborcreek: \$2.25 Dos Equis Bottles
\$3.25 Dos Equis Ambar Tall Drafts
Plymouth Tavern: \$2.50 Dos Equis Bottles
The Oasis: \$3.00 Dos Equis Lager Drafts
Eduardo's Tavern: \$2.75 Dos Equis Lager Bottles
Fat Willie's: \$2.50 Dos Equis Lager Bottles
Los Compadres: \$2.00 Dos Equis Bottles
El Canelo 12th St.: \$1.99 Dos Equis Bottles
\$6.00 Dos Equis Pitchers
3B Saloon: \$2.50 Dos Equis Lager Drafts
El Amigo: \$1.99 Dos Equis Drafts (4-6PM)
Calamari's: \$3.25 Dos Equis Bottles
Docksider: \$2.00 Dos Equis Bottles
Erie Arena Sports Bar: \$1.50 Tecate Cans

WEEKEND SPECIALS

Irish Cousin's: \$1.75 Dos Equis Bottles
Jekyll & Hyde's Gastropub: \$3.00 Dos Equis Drafts
U Pick 6 Tap House: \$3.50 Dos Equis Ambar Drafts



CERVEZA *of the* MONTH

Sacred Heart Ushers: \$2.25 Dos Equis Lager Bottles
McKean Tavern: \$2.50 Dos Equis Lager Bottles
Chestnut St. Pub: \$2.75 Dos Equis Lager Bottles
Bootleggers: \$3.00 Dos Equis Ambar Bottles
Chico's: \$3.00 Dos Equis Lager Bottles
Zukor Club: \$2.25 16oz. & \$2.75 21oz. Dos Equis Lager Drafts
El Canelo Peach St.: \$10.99 Dos Equis Buckets
Sluggers Sports Bar: \$2.50 Dos Equis Lager Bottles

The Devil's Last Night in Town

Back-to-back shows at Basement Transmissions showcase two modern giants of metal

**MONDAY, MAY 8 AND
TUESDAY, MAY 9**



THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

The Entertainment Collective is on fire, bringing two of the biggest bands in modern metal to Basement Transmissions on back-to-back nights, with The Devil Wears Prada on May 8 and Every Time I Die on May 9.

Taking their name from the novel by Lauren Weisberger, The Devil Wears Prada formed in 2005 in Dayton, Ohio. After signing to Rise Records, the band quickly shot to the forefront of the Christian metalcore scene that dom-

inated throughout much of the late 2000s. TDWP's first two albums, *Dear Love: A Beautiful Discord* and *Plagues* hold a special place in my heart, being among my favorite albums from my formative music years, heavily inspiring the writing style of my first several bands in high school. *Dear Love* was unlike any album I had heard before – bringing together soft, ambient guitar

TDWP's first two albums, *Dear Love: A Beautiful Discord* and *Plagues* hold a special place in my heart, being among my favorite albums from my formative music years

licks followed by loud, passionate verses and powerful breakdowns. It was the perfect combination of heavy and melodic, passionate and angry. While I did enjoy *Plagues*, it brought a style and formulaic songwriting approach that would be emulated by countless metalcore bands, which led to the genre be-

coming stale and uninteresting for several years. TDWP's fourth studio album, 2011's *Dead Throne*, saw them break away from the cookie-cutter metalcore style that they had helped create, making them far more interesting and putting them at the top of the genre once again.

Every Time I Die is one of those bands that won't be easily forgotten in the annals of metal history. The band is generally categorized as metalcore, hardcore punk, and post-hardcore, but since they began in Buffalo in 1998, the group has touched on and experimented in various metal subgenres, including sludge

metal, southern metal, mathcore, and screamo. Over their nearly 20 years and eight studio album discography, Every Time I Die have truly risen to the status of metal icons.

Supporting acts for Every Time I Die include their touring package, Wage War and '68, while support on The Devil Wears Prada's show comes from Erie locals Amavasya and Mallory Run, as well as Meadville's Ashes of a Generation. Each band has something unique to bring to the stage, and is well worth your time.

Both TDWP and ETID have played at either The Hangout or Forward Hall in years past, and each have only risen in their fanbase and stardom since then. It's time now to welcome them back, and show them again what the Erie scene is all about. – Tommy Shannon

The Devil Wears Prada:
May 8 // \$20; all ages

Every Time I Die: May 9 //
\$20 presale, \$25 at door

Both shows at 6 p.m. //
Basement Transmissions, 145
W. 11th St. // facebook.com/basement.transmissions



EVERY TIME I DIE

Chair Massage

Apr. 27 — 10:30 a.m.
to 3:30 p.m.

[LifeWorks Erie](https://lifeworkserie.org), 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.org.

Adult Art Classes

Apr. 27 & May 4 — 1 to 3 p.m.
[LEAF Education Center](https://leafeducationcenter.com),
1501 W. 6th St. [leaferie.org](https://leafeducationcenter.com).

Library Explorers

Apr. 27 — 4 to 4:45 p.m.
[Children's Storytime Room at
Blasco Memorial Library](https://blasco.org), 160
E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

American Short Stories

Apr. 27 & May 4, 11,
18, 25 & June 1, 8, 15,
22 — 4 to 5:30 p.m.
[Jefferson Educational
Society](https://jesociety.org), 3207 State
St. [jeserie.org](https://jesociety.org).

New Horizons Music Project: Strings and Folk

Apr. 27 & May 4, 11, 18,
25 — 4 to 6 p.m.
[LifeWorks Erie](https://lifeworkserie.org), 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.org.

Environmental Justice Listening Tour

Apr. 27 — 5 to 7 p.m.
[Tom Ridge Environmental
Center](https://tomridgeenvironmentalcenter.org), 301 Peninsula

[Dr. dep.pa.gov](https://dr.dep.pa.gov).

T-Shirt Printing

Apr. 27 — 6 to 8 p.m.

[Peninsula Room in the Blasco
Memorial Library](https://erielibrary.org), 160 E.
Front St. erielibrary.org.

CVC Victims' Rights Speaker Series:

Matthew Sandusky

Apr. 27 — 6:30 p.m.

[H.O. Hirt Auditorium at
Blasco Memorial Library](https://cvcerie.org),
160 E. Front St. cvcerie.org.

Music of the World, A Creative Arts Residency

Apr. 27 & May 4 —
6:30 to 8 p.m.

[LifeWorks Erie](https://lifeworkserie.org), 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.org.

Matthew Broussard

Apr. 27 — 7 p.m. & Apr. 28,
29 — 6:45 & 9:30 p.m.

[Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club](https://jrslastlaugh.net),
1402 State St. jrslastlaugh.net.

The State of Erie County's Environment

Apr. 27 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.

[Jefferson Educational
Society](https://jesociety.org), 3207 State
St. [jeserie.org](https://jesociety.org).

Paint and Rock

Apr. 27 — 8 to 10 p.m.

[Kings Rook Club](https://kingsrookclub.com), 1921
Peach St. [facebook.
com/kingsrookclub](https://facebook.com/kingsrookclub).

Tai Chi

Apr. 28 & May 5, 12, 19,
26 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.

[Regency at South Shore](https://lifeworkserie.org),
322 Washington Pl.
lifeworkserie.org.

Celebrate Mother's Day Benefit

Apr. 28 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[Claytopia](https://claytopia.com), 924 W. Erie
Plaza Dr. [facebook](https://facebook.com/claytopia).

31st Annual Workers' Memorial Service

Apr. 28 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.

[Erie City Council](https://eriececitycouncil.com), 626 State
St. unionhall.aflcio.org.

Katrina Brown Comedy Night

Apr. 28 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.

[Riverside Inn](https://riversideinn.com), 1 Fountain
Ave. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com/riversideinn).

4th Annual Mystery at the Maritime: The Psychedelic Sixties

Apr. 28 — 7 to 10 p.m.

[Erie Maritime Museum](https://eriemaritimemuseum.org), 150 E.
Front St. flagshipniagara.org.

Sisters Of Saint Joseph

"Guess That Tune" Gala

Apr. 29

[Bayfront Convention Center](https://bayfrontconventioncenter.com),
1 Sassafras Pier ssjerie.org.

Northwestern Drama Club 5K Color Fun Run/Walk

April 29 — 7:30 to 11 a.m.

[Northwestern Elementary
School Corder Gym](https://northwesternelementary.org),
10450 John Williams
Ave. [northwesternmscr.
eventbrite.com](https://northwesternmscr.com).

Presque Isle's 61st Spring Clean-up

Apr. 29 — 8 a.m. to noon

[Rotary Pavilion in Presque
Isle State Park](https://rotarypavilion.com), 301 Peninsula
Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Law Day 5K

Apr. 29 — 9 a.m.

[Erie County Courthouse](https://eriecounty courthouse.com),
140 W. 6th St. eriebar.com.

MUFON UFO Conference

Apr. 29 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[Bayfront Convention
Center](https://bayfrontconventioncenter.com), 1 Sassafras Pier
erieevents.com.

Great Lakes Beach Glass & Coastal Art Festival

Apr. 29, 30 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[Bayfront Convention](https://bayfrontconventioncenter.com)

[Center](https://1sassafras.com), 1 Sassafras
Pier relishinc.com.

Our First Birthday Celebration

Apr. 29 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

[The Family Show](https://thefamilyshow.com), 2501 W.
12th St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com/thefamilyshow).

Build Your Own Terrarium

Apr. 29 — 10 to 11:30 a.m.

[Asbury Woods Nature
Center](https://asburywoods.org), 4105 Asbury Rd.
asburywoods.org.

Mercyhurst North East Open House

Apr. 29 — 10 a.m. to noon

[Mercyhurst North East
Ridge Health & Safety
Building](https://mercyhurst.edu), 16 W. Division St.
north.east.mercyhurst.edu.

YMCA Healthy Kids Day

Apr. 29 — 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

[JMC Ice Arena](https://jmcicearena.com), 423 W.
38th St. ymcaerie.org.

Dave Chaffee Arms Classic and Bikini Bash

Apr. 29 — noon

[Presque Isle Downs](https://presqueisle.com),
8199 Perry Hwy.
eriesportscommission.com.

People's Climate March

Apr. 29 — 2 to 4 p.m.

[East Avenue Boat Ramp](https://eastavenueboatramp.com), 103
East Ave. [peoplesclimate.
org/sister-marches/](https://peoplesclimate.org/sister-marches/).

DJ Toom Wag and Drag

Apr. 29 — 2 to 6 p.m.

[Sacred Heart Usher Club](https://sacredheartusherclub.com),
716 W. 26th St. [facebook.
com/theannashelter](https://facebook.com/theannashelter).

Union City Prom

Apr. 29 — 7 to 11 p.m.

[Warner Theatre](https://warnertheatre.com), 811 State
St. erieevents.com.

Garden Brothers Circus

Apr. 30 — 1 & 4 p.m.

[Erie Insurance Arena](https://erieinsurancearena.com), 809
French St. erieevents.com.

Raptor Experience

Apr. 30 — 1 to 4 p.m.

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

Wildflower Walk & May Day Seed Bomb Craft

Apr. 30 — 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

[Asbury Woods Nature
Center](https://asburywoods.org), 4105 Asbury Rd.
asburywoods.org.

Spring Robins: Little Leaves Program

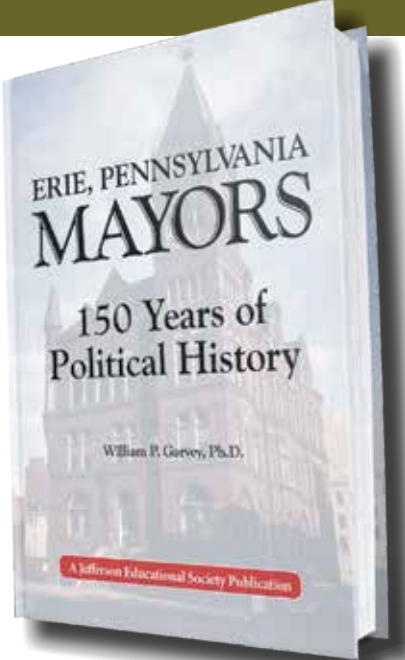
May 1 — 10 a.m. to noon



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CALENDAR

LEAF Education Center,
1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

The Death of the Roman Republic: Lessons For the American Republic Today?
May 1 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Fit for Life Fitness Class
May 2, 9, 16, 23 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Keeping Your Computer Secure and Healthy
May 2, 9 — 10:30 a.m. to noon

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Great Books: Standing Down, From Warrior to Civilian
May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 & June 6 — 4 to 5:30 p.m.

Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

City Council Meeting
May 3 — 9 a.m.
Erie City Hall, 626 State St. erie.pa.us.

Collage Mixed Media Class
May 3 — 1 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Preservation Erie Backstage Tour
May 3 — 6 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran Church, 2216 Peach St. preservationerie.org.

Women's Reading
May 3 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.
The Writing Studio, 310 E. 10th St. writingstudio-erie.org.

Discover Your Hidden Talent: Drawing for Absolute Beginners
May 4, 11, 18, 25 & June 1 — 1 to 3 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Cinco De Mayo Fiesta
May 4 — 5 to 8 p.m.
Bel-Aire Clarion Hotel, 2800 W. 8th St. eriedawn.info.

Erie Mayoral Debate
May 4 — 5:30 to 9 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Sips and Shirts Workshop
May 4 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Erie SeaWolves vs. Trenton Thunder
May 4, 5, 6 — 6:30 p.m. & May 7 — 1:30 p.m.

UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th St. erieevents.com.

Mike Green
May 4 — 7 p.m. & May 5, 6 — 6:45 & 9:30 p.m.
Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club, 1402 State St. jrslastlaugh.net.

The New Jim Crow
May 4, 18 & June 1 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 7180 Perry Hwy. uuerie.org.

Shoot the Rock Spring Jam
May 5, 6, 7
Family First Sports Park, 8155 Oliver Rd. eriesportscommission.com.

2017 Festival of the Birds at Presque Isle
May 5, 6, 7
Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. presqueisleaudubon.org.

Sacred Heart Knight of Columbus Casino Night
May 5 — 6 to 10 p.m.
Sacred Heart Auditorium, 816 W. 26th St. sacredhearterie.org.

The Spring Event 2017: Cinco de Mayo
May 5 — 6 to 11 p.m.
Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel, 55 W. Bay Rd. ehca.org.

Fantastic Frogs
May 5 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. asburywoods.org.

Xcel State Gymnastics Championships
May 6, 7
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier eriesportscommission.com.

Kayak Anglers Presque Isle Major
May 6 — 5 a.m.
Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. eriesportscommission.com.

Tech Savvy Workshop for Girls 6th to 9th Grade
May 6 — 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Edinboro University, 219 Meadville St. auwerie.org.

Rummage Sale 2017
May 6 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Little Mates Discovery Day 2017
May 6 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Erie Maritime Museum, 150 E. Front St. facebook.com.

Reading Buddies with the Erie Playhouse: James & The Giant Peach
May 6 — 10:30 a.m. to noon

Gerard Alliance Church, 229 Rice Ave. unitedwayerie.org.

Week Walk for International Herb Day
May 6 — 11 a.m. to noon
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

LuLaRoe Pop Up Event
May 6 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Arundel Cellars, 11727 E. Main Rd. facebook.com.

'Spring Edibles' for International Herb Day
May 6 — 1 to 3:30 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Pop Up Punk Flea
May 7 — noon to 5 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com.

Adaptive Equipment for Your Daily Living
May 8 — 10:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Forgiveness: A Journey Through Emotional Wellness
May 9 — 1 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Community Benefit Agreements: Tools to Ensure Development Helps Everyone
May 9 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Spring Homeschool Day (Migrating Bird Identification)
May 10 — 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Niagara Boat Launch in Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Age Out Loud: Celebrate Older Americans Month
May 10 — 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Body Language: It Says More Than You Think with Janine Driver
May 10 — 1 to 4 p.m.
Zem Zem Shrine and Banquet Center, 2525 W. 38th St. janinedrivererevent.com.

DiscoverE: Fish
May 10 — 2 to 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. events.dcnr.pa.gov.

Humility, Curiosity and Bold Moves Forward in Science & Medicine
May 10 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

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MUSIC REVIEWS

Kendrick Lamar

DAMN.
Interscope/Top Dawg

★★★★★

Kendrick Lamar returns to defend his well-deserved crown. After the release of 2015's masterpiece *To Pimp a Butterfly*, Lamar cemented his legacy as one of the greatest hip hop artists of all time. In March of 2016 he unceremoniously released *Untitled Unmastered*, a compilation of previously unused *Butterfly* material. *DAMN.* is the first true follow-up to 2015's opus. Unlike *Butterfly*, the album goes relatively unadorned. Forgoing the more complex jazz instrumentation, Lamar employs a more traditional style of beat-making this time around. The stakes appear to have been lowered, with fewer explicitly political statements, or outwardly experimental choices. The album itself carries the burden of *Butterfly*'s success, the opening track "BLOOD," ending with a FOX News soundbyte courtesy of a heavily out-of-touch Geraldo Rivera, as does the following song. Lamar goes on to mention the clips himself in "YAH." (like the album title, every track is stylized in all caps followed by a period). Lamar may be playing it safer, but he's still a complete master of the genre. A detailed storyteller, he's able to tuck dense narratives into the tiniest of spaces.

– Nick Warren



Father John Misty

Pure Comedy
Sub Pop

★★★★

The perpetually praised Joshua Tillman, better known as Father John Misty, can be a divisive figure. There are plenty of things worth lauding in his music, along with an equal number of eye-rollingly ham-fisted attempts at artistry. He follows the potent formula established on earlier albums, combining stream-of-consciousness lyrics with a good dose of "blue-eyed soul." Misty joins together phonetically appealing word combinations that appear to be very insightful while crooning earnestly over steadily mid-tempo ballads. Don't get me wrong, every track sounds fantastic. Misty's baritone vocals are creamy and full of passion, and every bit of instrumentation is lush and gorgeous. Here's the trick, though: If you ever want to immediately stop liking Father John Misty, listen to an interview with him. His persona (regardless if it's a put-on, or not), oozes with such ridiculous levels of pretension that it's nearly impossible to separate art from artist. Whether you think the emperor wears clothes or not, in a vacuum, it's an incredibly listenable album, full of quotable takeaways and hummable tunes.

– Nick Warren



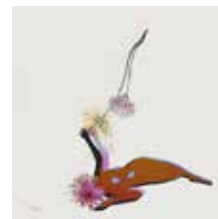
Future Islands

The Far Field
4AD

★★★★★

If you were a fan of Future Islands' 2014 album *Singles*, you aren't alone. That album was a watershed moment for the band. Propelled in no small part by singer Samuel T. Herring's otherworldly live performances, the band proved themselves to be a favorite amongst discerning fans and critics alike. Blending theatrical broadness with primal physicality, Herring is able to squeeze passionate drama from every single line. It works all the better because of his unassuming looks, far from the traditional rock star. There's a remarkable honesty in Herring's delivery which can be off-putting for some, even laughable for others. *The Far Field* gives listeners more variations on the band's relatively simple synth-pop grooves, William Cashion's prominent bass plucking out steady, even lines against Gerrit Welmers' keyboards and programming. Past all the earnestness and discotheque danceability (complete with guest vocals from Debbie Harry on the penultimate track "Shadows"), the album stays a bit too within the lines. Few tracks cut through the casual listening experience to forge that deep, resonant connection *Singles* made.

– Nick Warren



The Moonlandingz

Interplanetary Class Classics
Chimera Music

★★★★★

A thoroughly solid debut, *Interplanetary Class Classics* sets modest goals and accomplishes every last one of them. The band describes themselves as "Psychedelic Ouija Pop." It's swirly garage rock that doesn't take itself too seriously. There are plenty of captivating choruses, like "Sweet Saturn Mine" and "The Cities Undone." Sections of the album are repetitive, but far from boring. The band builds up each thumping track with hypnotic precision. The biggest surprise comes when you find out who's actually in the band. The bizarre project includes Sean Lennon (son of John and Yoko) on guitar, along with singer Lias Saoudi and guitarist Saul Adamczewski from the London band Fat White Family, plus Lennon's Ghost of a Saber Tooth Tiger bandmate (and girlfriend) Charlotte Kemp Muhl, joined by members of the avant-garde Eccentric Research Council. The Moonlandingz were launched after being referenced as a fictional band on the Eccentric Research Council's album, *Johnny Rocket Narcissist & Music Machine I'm Your Biggest Fan* (which featured a nearly identical version of the track "Sweet Saturn Mine"). After beginning as a hoax, The Moonlandingz are now, thankfully, a real thing.

– Nick Warren



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