The Erie Art Museum Spring Show
Celebrating a momentous milestone for a local art treasure

SeaWolves: A Howl of an Undertaking
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A Sit-Down with Joe Schember
Recapping the new mayor’s first 100 days

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From the Editors
Painting a Path

Religions abound, and with them visions of the afterlife. The debate about exactly what happens after death has raged throughout the entire sliver of eternity that humankind has existed. Regardless of creed or denomination, however, many thinkers over that span have viewed art as the passage to immortality. By creating some snapshot of the human condition or the soul at a particular moment in time, one can preserve his or her memory long after the body is extinguished.

If art truly is the distillation of life, then what better time to celebrate it then spring? Since its inception in 1923, the annual “Exhibition of the Artists of Erie,” now known as the “Spring Show,” has blossomed into a cherished rite of the season. The 95th iteration of the Spring Show opens April 21st. Juror Wendy Maruyama takes our Mary Birdsong through the selection process, and the extreme difficulty she had whittling down 643 submissions to the 102 that will be on display at the Erie Art Museum through July 1. The show is a testament to the supreme talent present both in the city and its surrounding areas and the will to be a part of something larger.

Of course, artistic talent is by no means the only inroad to participating in a grander design. A lasting legacy can be left by positively impacting future generations today. This can happen in our homes, through community outreach, and in our schools. Outside formal classrooms, we can learn about our pasts through local historical societies, helping to enrich our sense of place and our stake in what’s to come. Jonathan Burdick explains how to get involved.

No less essential in history’s trajectory are local governments and their accountability to their citizens. City of Erie Mayor Joe Schember hopes to guide our town toward a more prosperous tomorrow, by listening to the concerns of the people on the streets and trusting the expertise of his surrounding staff. Contributing editor Ben Speggen sat down with the mayor to recap his first 100 days in office and discuss how we might best control and shape the future.

But let us not forget about enjoying the present. The Erie SeaWolves have been laboring hard all offseason to create moments to remember them by, both in the stands and on the field. Though we may have plans for immortality, there’s nothing wrong with putting them on hold for a Smith’s hot dog and an ice cold beer. Lack of artistic dedication? Perhaps, but we won’t tell.
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A Sit-Down With Schember
Recapping the new mayor’s first 100 days

By: Ben Speggen

On a surprisingly colder-than-usual-for-April day in Erie, I sat down with Erie’s new mayor, Joe Schember, for an hour to discuss his first few months in office. We discussed a range of topics, including selfies, new key hires, Erie Refocused, the McBride Viaduct, and community policing, amongst many other things.

Ben Speggen: Let’s start at the beginning: When did it set in for you that you are now the Mayor of Erie and you now have nearly 100,000 bosses to answer to?

Joe Schember: It wasn’t really until I took office, but there was a lot of planning November through December. I went up to Harvard [a three-day seminar for newly elected mayors at the Institute of Politics at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government held in partnership with the U.S. Conference of Mayors], which was very helpful. But still, I had no idea what it was going to be like until I actually got here.

Now, my wife and I go to the grocery store like we always have, and before we leave, anywhere from 10 to 15 people have come to take selfies with me [laughs]. People have been very respectful, but I’m just not used to people coming up to me, just talking to me.

I do have a feeling that from these conversations I’m having that things are changing in Erie. I’m getting a very positive vibe from people in terms of what’s going on.

BS: What were some of those preliminary conversations in November and December like?

Erie Mayor Joe Schember has picked up on an overall sense of positivity during his first 100 days in office, but he knows it will mean nothing unless there are things to point to “in terms of making Erie recognizable and attractive, particularly the downtown and the Bayfront.”

JS: The biggest thing was staffing. My approach is that I want a good person running each department, and I don’t intend to stick my nose in there.

I feel that that’s one of the blessings that I’ve had: the team that’s formed around me. I can’t say I’ve recruited them or tried to bring them in. It’s a very diverse and very talented and very committed team that’s formed around me, and I’m really happy with that.

BS: You made some significant hires and changes at City Hall.

JS: Economic and Community Development, my number-one goal is to bring more family-sustaining jobs to Erie. And it’s probably an oversimplification, but I think that in a nutshell would solve all of our problems. More good family-sustaining jobs is a primary function of the Economic and Community Development department, and that’s why I was really happy to be able to put Chris Groner [as Director] in that role.

We created two new positions in that department as well. Abby Skinner, we named her grant writer. The city’s never had a full-time grant writer before. We felt that was important.

And also, I wanted to have a business development officer with the job to bring more jobs to Erie in three ways. [For that, we hired] Brett Wiler.

Erie Refocused has a very good vision for Erie’s future, and we needed a planner to move it forward. Our first step in this process is to get input from the community, from neighbors, and we’re planning to go to every neighborhood. We’re going to do that in every neighborhood in Erie, but we’re starting in the lower east side and the lower west side.

BS: As you’re having these Erie Refocused conversations throughout the 17 neighborhoods outlined in the plan, how are you making sure that the excitement is palpable outside of the downtown core?

JS: A lot of it is communication and talking about it. But also listening.

I know there are sections of the city that feel like they’re being ignored because all of the focus is downtown and the east and west Bayfront. Buki encouraged us: You can’t spread funding out over everything, or it just disappears. You need to focus on certain areas.

By focusing on these areas, it’s going to spread more quickly to these other areas as well. Anyone who wants to take their neighborhood by the collar and start to make it better, we’re going to be there helping them any way we can.

BS: What has the dialogue between the city and county been like since you took office and Kathy Dalkkemper began her second term as County Executive?
Executive?

JS: We actually have lunch with each other every other week. It’s just her and I talking and sharing ideas, and one of the things we’ve learned is that we’re not going to necessarily agree on everything, but we’re going to disagree respectfully and try to understand each other’s positions and move forward.

We do have slightly different perspectives with her looking at the whole county, but I consider myself a regional thinker as well. I don’t like that silo mentality and that turf protection we’ve seen in the past. So I’m trying to get away from that and build relationships not just with the County Executive but with the surrounding municipalities as well.

BS: The 24/7 Wall St. report labeling Erie as the "worst city for black Americans" — how are you tackling that?

JS: That’s been one of the most embarrassing things so far in my role, even though I had been elected but wasn’t mayor at the time, and that’s one of the things I want to change as quickly as I can. I’ve made an effort to get to African-American churches with Michael Outlaw [Community Liaison to the Mayor].

In America, the color of your skin, your religion, your ethnicity, your sexual preference — all that stuff — it shouldn’t matter if you’re a good person and you’re doing what’s best for the community; that’s what matters. So, I’m trying to remind everyone of that. I’m trying to treat everyone with respect, and I do feel like we’re making some progress in that area.

BS: The New York Times did a piece on the McBride Viaduct. You were quick in your administration to say you were proceeding with the demolition path.

JS: It might’ve seemed quick that I did that, but remember that I was on Erie City Council when the Viaduct was closed. I looked at it very closely. At that point, I felt the right thing to do was to tear it down.

BS: Assuming that everything goes according to, or as close to according to, plan as possible, how does Erie’s narrative shift in four years after your administration’s been in office?

JS: We better be able to point to some things we’ve accomplished in terms of making Erie recognizable and attractive, particularly the downtown and the Bayfront. And there better be a lot more jobs here that we can point to and talk about. And there better be a lot more people, Millennials, living in market-rate apartments downtown.

We won’t be everywhere we want to be, but we better have a lot more that we can say ‘look at this,’ ‘look at that’ now we want to do even more of that going forward.

BS: I’ve got to ask: Is it easier or harder to be a politician in the age of Trump?

JS: I don’t think about Trump at all, to be honest, in terms of what I do, because I have no ambitions beyond being mayor. I’d like to be mayor for three terms and leave a transformed city for future generations. That’s my number-one goal.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity. For a longer version, please visit www.ErieReader.com.

Ben Speggen can be reached at bSpegge@ErieReader.com and you can follow him on Twitter @BenSpeggen.
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Three Dems Debate for Erie’s New Congressional District

The Jefferson Educational Society will host a debate with Chris Reiger, Robert Multari, and Ron DiNicola

Monday, February 19 (President’s Day), the State Supreme Court announced Pennsylvania’s newly drawn 16th Congressional District, which will set the stage for the 2018 primary elections.

Erie, formerly known as Pennsylvania’s 3rd District, now stands as Pennsylvania’s 16th District. While the old district bisected Erie County, PA 16 now sees the county rejoined once again. Republican Mike Kelly, of Butler County, remains the representative for the City of Erie. Republican Glenn Thompson found his territory move eastward, losing control of locations like Summit Township, Harborcreek, Edinboro, North East, Wattsburg, Waterford, Cambridge Springs, Meadville, Union City, and the City of Corry.

“This is the first time since redistricting in 2010 that Northwestern Pennsylvania is united in a single congressional district; the courts ruled that the previous map was gerrymandered, and in the case of Erie County, made the district virtually unwinnable for Democrats,” explained Handerhan.

“The new map, approved by the State Supreme Court, still gives a registration advantage to the Republicans, but now the district is more competitive for Democrats.”

That competitive nudge comes at a pivotal time. It’s midterm season, and to most politicos, the nationwide results of this year’s election will act as a reflection of the recently elected presidential administration. This is where the pushback is most evident, and over the past century, this trend has favored the party out of power (aside from situations like the 2002 post-9/11 elections). For Democrats, this could signal another sea change. “Many see this as a viable, winnable race for the Democrats, which makes this primary very important,” said Handerhan.

The event will be moderated by Handerhan as well as Ben Speggen, program director at the Jefferson Educational Society (and Erie Reader contributing editor), each candidate will give an opening and closing statement and the chance to answer questions that we have prepared, in addition to audience questions that can be submitted in writing at the debate.

Check out a livestream of the debate on the Erie Reader’s facebook page.

Thursday, Apr. 26 // 7:00 p.m. // Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. // free // register online jeserie.org

By: Nick Warren

On Thursday, Apr. 26, three candidates vying for one of our region’s most powerful seats will participate in a debate at the Jefferson Educational Society. Three challengers will be on the ballot for this year’s May 15 general primary. For registered Democrats in Erie County, the names to watch will be Chris Rieger of Butler County, Dr. Robert Multari of Farrell, and Erie’s Ron DiNicola (Brian Skibo, of Hermitage was campaigning in early 2018, but has dropped out of the race and now ardently supports DiNicola).

“Of course we expect a civil debate on the issues, but we also anticipate the candidates delving deeper into their platforms and illustrating contrasts between themselves and their opponents,” said Penn State Behrend’s Caitlin Handerhan, who will serve as one of the moderators of the debate. “In a primary, it is important that candidates stand out and give voters a clear sense of who they are and why they are the best (in this case) Democrat for the job.”

Getting to this point, however, has been a virtual roller coaster. On Monday, January 22, Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court ruled that the state’s gerrymandered voting map was unconstitutional.

After new maps drawn by PA Republicans and Democrat Governor Tom Wolf were subsequently rejected, on
The Human Experience
Why local history matters

By: Jonathan Burdick

On February 16, 2016, Dr. Joseph Laythe gave his final lecture at Edinboro University. He had been battling cancer for years and, in his own words, wanted one last chance to give back to the university. The history professor who used to shout and pace excitedly through his legendary lectures, crafting voices for each historical figure, always making students laugh, was now softly reflecting on his career from his wheelchair — and while his voice had a slight rasp and his disposition was a bit more restrained, his humor, thoughtfulness, and passion were still intact.

“History is the human experience over time,” he told the audience. “We’re really all asking the same question: who are we and where do we fit in?”

A few weeks after his lecture, Dr. Laythe died. As I grieved, I opened my copy of his incomplete, but published book, titled Haunting the Past: History, Memory, Dreams, and the Reflections of a Dying Historian. I reread a passage that I had highlighted.

“I want my students and my readers to empathize with people of the past and thereby become more empathetic to their neighbors,” he’d written. “I have an obligation to reach my students to make them better people, not simply warehouses of facts, names and dates.”

History wasn’t learning merely what happened, but also how what happened affected individuals. For twenty years, Dr. Laythe taught students at Edinboro that understanding this shared history was important, that it mattered — that by digging into the stories of these individuals, we could better ascribe meaning to the present and, quite possibly, to our own lives.

Who are we and where do we fit in?

In recent years, it seems that history has often been elbowed to the sidelines. In public schools, the humanities are often the first to face curriculum cuts. At post-secondary institutions, declining enrollment in undergraduate history programs has been a topic of discussion for years.

Yet, the pendulum may be swinging. At Yale, for instance, history is once again the most popular major for next year’s class. Yale’s director of undergraduate studies recently maintained that “the present historical moment is enticing young people to join the discipline — [because] economic and political models failed to predict several defining events — [such as] the 2008 financial crisis and the 2016 presidential election.”

In the Erie region, historians at our local universities are also seeing a renewed interest in the field and are working hard to restructure their programs to adapt to the changing world.

“We have been very fortunate as a History Department to stay ahead of the curve,” said Dr. John Olszowka, department chair at Mercyhurst University. “I work with a very creative and energetic group of faculty and we as a department have tremendous support from the university’s administration.”

Their history courses are available to all students, not just history majors. “We’re trying to broaden students’ understanding of history,” he added. “We have also created a variety of new courses intended to broaden the skill sets of our students.”

These course offerings include a partnership with the Erie Maritime Museum to offer a three-week credited course sailing the Brig Niagara on Lake Erie. In other courses, students have helped create an African-American History Heritage Trail for the county, photographed and documented Erie’s historic buildings, and conducted original research to create podcasts (called “History Stories”) in lieu of writing traditional papers. Perhaps the next Stanley Nelson Jr. or Lynn Novick is already sitting in a class on campus, because in the fall semester, the university will be adding a brand-new concentration for history majors: Historical Documentary Filmmaking.

“Students are not only gaining valuable research, writing, and critical thinking skills, they are also developing technological skills that enhance their marketability to prospective employers,” Olszowka explained.

Dr. Amy Carney, history professor at Penn State Behrend, is equally optimistic.

“[Students] enjoy studying history. It is often one of their favorite subjects,” she said. Still, that wasn’t always reflected in the program’s numbers. “They lament that they cannot major in history because they or their parents believe that there are limited jobs for a history major.”

Her challenge, she believes, is to help change that perception.

Dr. Olszowka agreed. “I think people are surprised to learn that history majors do everything.” He listed off a few fields that recent graduates are working in: law, policing, government service, and even computer programming.

Dr. Carney also described how learning local history has had a personal impact on her students.

“Back in 1867, Otto von Bismarck, the chancellor of Prussia, was rewarded for his service to the kingdom.” she explained, reciting a story she often tells students. “He used the money that he had been given to purchase an estate — [near] a paper mill owned by two brothers, Georg and Moritz Behrend. Bismarck purchased a nearby paper mill, but leased it to the Behrends to run. This new mill was called Hammermühle, or Hammer Mill. Moritz Behrend used his financial success to finance his sons’ operation here in Erie.”

The three Behrend brothers — Ernst, Otto, and Bernard — founded their paper mill in Erie in 1898, naming it Hammermill Paper Company to honor their father.

“I like to share this story because my students are captivated by how something we...
Center and the Watson-Curtze visiting the Hagen History day out of history hopping: working to engage the public organizations in the region academia, there are numerous in the field — and outside of twined is common for those pacts the decisions we make as and culturally. It also often im-

happened in the past informs to the field. “So much of what the time that led them to make what people were thinking at context to better understand can use history to create a into where it might be heading for.

ty is to learn about the journey share her enthusiasm for en-

Mansion on West Sixth Street, walking to the Firefighters Historical Museum a block away on Chestnut, then traversing down to the Erie Maritime Museum and the Fort Presque Isle Blockhouse off the bay.

Throughout the rest of northwestern Pennsylvania, there are functioning museums and societies in nearly every town, often staying afloat thanks to donations and generous volunteers.

In Meadville, the Crawford County Historical Society has been doing an impressive job of engaging the public. They recently purchased the Tarr Mansion to renovate (saving the Civil War era building from demolition) and are operating a museum out of the Baldwin-Reynolds House, built in 1843 by Supreme Court Justice Henry Baldwin. They’ve also embraced social media, promoting events such as their upcoming Millennial Mixer, which combines Voodoo Brewery beers, food, guided tours, and local history trivia.

Josh Sherretts, President of the Crawford County Historical Society, and Vice President Ron Mattocks have a clear vision for the organization’s role in the community.

“Learning the history of where one lives allows a person to interact with and feel a part of their surroundings,” Sherretts stressed. “Our past has a way of making us feel connected with our environment. We better appreciate our community and often more thoroughly strive to do our part to enrich its future as a result.”

Mattocks agreed. “Learning the stories, particularly the personal histories, tends to give people something they can relate to — our shared humanity. It’s easy to feel as if your little town is just a tiny blip on a map,” he said, “but when you find out that the primary election system originated in Crawford County or that Meadville was the first place to desegregate schools before the Civil Rights Movement — then it’s a reminder that where you’re from is not insignificant.”

Titusville, just an hour south of Erie and the birthplace of the oil industry, is another locality that, quite literally, reshaped the world. Dr. Rhonda Clark of the Titusville Historical Society and professor at Clarion University, also recognizes the juxtaposition between history and community.

“I think that learning the history of the place you live in provides connection to community and it builds that community,” she said. “People who enjoy the past seem to me to be folks who are invested in their community and in people.”

When asked what she wished the public knew about the society, she pointed out their programming, but also added, “I wish people knew that everyone is important in building and supporting these institutions. It takes lots of volunteer time and energy to build museum collections and programs.”

Mattocks agreed. “We want people to know we’re not just a place to research family histories. We’re focused on using history to build our community and help move it into the future. There’s much one can learn from their local history that applies to the challenges that area might face today.”

Becky Weiser, President of the Erie County Historical Society, further echoed these thoughts. She wishes area residents knew more about what they offered to the public.

“My assistant, staff of incredible volunteers, and I are currently in the process of identifying every object [we have] and carefully maintaining those things that tell our history,” she said, then offered an example. “We recently found a scarf belonging to [Admiral] Lord Nelson... the hero of Great Britain’s greatest naval battle in 1805 [who] knew someone in Erie whom he gave it to.”

Danielle Lincoln, who also works at the society, stressed that historical societies and museums are for everyone. “We’re not just a bunch of older gentlemen sitting around a book or a painting smoking cigars and talking about war,” she joked. “We like to laugh. We love to meet new people and we like to have fun... and we’re constantly expanding our schedule of events for all ages.”

“It’s an exciting time to be the curator here,” Weiser concluded. “I hope the people of Erie County keep track of what we’re up to here, support us, and share the excitement of our local history.”

So, if you’re interested in getting more involved in the local history scene, in working to move your community forward, what can you do?

Start by simply visiting your local historical societies, museums, and organizations. Ask questions. Donate or volunteer if you’re able. Read the work of local historians already out there — in the local history section of the library, in periodicals such as the Journal of Erie Studies, or online at sites such as Old Time Erie, Erie Yesterday, and Erie’s African American History.

You can even become an amateur historian. Just start by asking yourself: who am I and where do I fit in?

Then dive right in. Dig through the local archives. Ask someone from your local historical society for help. Sometimes you’ll have to look for the story. Other times, the story will find you, a few words that catch your eye, then won’t leave your mind — a random obituary, a snippet from an old newspaper, a long-lost letter.

“It’s a lot of fun to be a historian,” Dr. Carney said of her profession, “to have the opportunity to sift through the available evidence and to weave a narrative that can help us understand our past.”

There’s a lot of the Erie region’s past to discover, so many stories left to tell. Let’s get to work.

Jonathan Burdick runs the historical blog Rust 

& Dirt. Follow them on Twitter @RustDirt, and on Instagram @RustandDirt.
A Howl of An Undertaking
SeaWolves season preparations a pack effort

By: Matt Swanseger

Ready or not, the home opener is coming. Nine days before the Erie SeaWolves take the field at UPMC Park for the first time in 2018, gale force winds howl across the concourse, carrying wisps of snow with them. Take me out to the ballgame.

Erie SeaWolves Team President Greg Coleman has witnessed this phenomenon a time or two during his eight years with the club. He is utterly unfazed. “We are lucky to get 10 days with running water before the opener.” Pumping water into the park’s plumbing system too early is a risky venture; if a pipe bursts (due to water expanding as it freezes) “you literally need to take a side of the building off” to address the problem. This is the kind of mess you can’t clean up by making a quick call to the bullpen.

The grounds themselves are maintained by Erie Events, who work closely with the SeaWolves throughout the year. When preparing for the home opener, the greatest obstacle the grounds crew will have to deal with is frost. Snow can be cleared away, but a deep freeze locks moisture into the soil that will begin to rise to the surface as temperatures warm, rendering the field a squishy, sodden occupational hazard. Despite record-breaking snowfalls this year, Coleman is not too worried about field conditions to start the year. “We’ve not had a lot of good clear, temperate days, but we’ve had no extremes. A couple of clear days in the 50s and it would green up a bit.”

To be fair, UPMC Park, which opened as Jerry Uht Park in June of 1995, was never intended to function in an Erie April. Back then, the SeaWolves were the short season single-A affiliate of the Pittsburgh Pirates, competing in the New York-Penn League. They played from mid-June through early September, a time when it’s easy to love baseball. Since 1999, however, the SeaWolves have been proud members of the double-A Eastern League, which begins its seasons in the depths of ‘spring.’ These are the times that try fans’ souls, but Coleman believes they’re better for it. “Our fans are not fair-weather; they’re all-weather.”

For better or worse, ‘til delay do us part — that is the charge of Coleman and his operations crew. “It’s a lot like planning a wedding,” he says. “It’s a great time, but it’s also a gigantic undertaking. We invite guests, pursue sponsors, book entertainment, shape the ball park experience, plan the menu with our caterer. We put on about 100 weddings a year — about 70 for our games, and 30 for other events.” In June, they will draft a preliminary outline for the following season; when the offseason process begins in September, they will flesh out and immediately set about executing those plans.

A master document is shared between the operations team and is updated continuously throughout the offseason. In this spreadsheet, everything from national anthem singers to who throws out the first pitch to postpone entertainment (fireworks, etc.) is slotted out.

A week before each home stand, the document will be reviewed to see if everything is still valid. The unexpected can and does happen — a storm system can wipe out an entire series; an unexpected guest or Major Leaguer on rehab assignment may be in town. Like the pitchers and hitters inside the lines, those who conduct the experience outside the lines are constantly reading the situation and making adjustments in real-time.

It regularly demands logging in extra innings at the office. “Folks are fans sometimes of a specific team or a specific player, but people do not know how hard this team of people works,” says Coleman, who has adapted himself for levels of fuel efficiency on par with a Tesla. “I slept maybe four hours last night.”

That’s important, because rarely do the players on the field boast the sort of “name brand” recognition to generate attendance, despite their undeniable talent (there are very few players that make it to the double-A, the last true development phase before the majors — triple-A rosters often serve as a sort of “extended dugout” for Major League clubs). At points throughout this year, fans can expect to watch the Detroit Tigers’ No. 1 (pitcher Franklin Perez), No. 4 (pitcher Beau Burrows), and No. 5 (catcher Jake Rogers) prospects, players that stand a good chance of making it to the big leagues, but the casual consumer won’t necessarily know that (or even care). “So there needs to be other motivation— relaxation, community involvement, pleasant memories. Our focus is on finding the passion points and making our product relevant through those passion points,” explains Coleman.

The Business Office, in tandem with its sponsors and partners, design an experience that they feel fans will want to take for a spin. The Game Day staff — those on the frontlines (concession workers, ushers, announcers, sound technicians, mascot C. Wolf and the Wolf Pack entertainment team, etc.) — assemble that experience on the field and try to ignite those passions. One of the most surefire ways to do that, especially at the Minor League level, is through a fun, quirky, or provocative (but not so provocative as to alienate) promotion. As a longtime executive in the Minors, Coleman has either conceived or encountered a number of incredibly creative (and sometimes bizarre) promotions. “There’s no such thing as a bad idea; at worst, it’s comic relief.” One he chuckles at today is the ‘Vices Night’ someone proposed during his time in the independent Golden Baseball League in California — people smoking “whatever they want,” boozing out of flasks,
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and gambling in the stands — essentially the antithesis of the “family-friendly” blueprint. The best promotions are those that are inventive, reflect well on the community and organization, and have reach and mass appeal (it’s a copycat league, no matter what league you’re in, and the ultimate flattery is to have other teams borrow and adapt your wildly original idea). One of the more unique concepts Coleman’s had a hand in is “What Could’ve Been Night,” which won Minor League Baseball’s Promotion of the Year in 2009. The single-A Bowling Green Hot Rods competed as the Bowling Green Cave Shrimp (the runner-up in the fan’s naming contest) for one night, complete with new uniforms, logos, and signage. Many teams have since tinkered with this idea, even in other sports — the NBA G League’s Erie BayHawks recently took the court as the “Erie Pepperoni Balls.”

Again, success as a Minor League club goes beyond on-field performance and wins and losses — those things help, but Minor League rosters are often very fluid and furthermore at the mercy of the parent clubs, whose priority is developing prospects to make their teams better. At the end of the day, what matters is that fans take home a memory or impression strong enough to return. For instance, they might launch a stuntman from a cannonball in center field into a net in front of home plate (Tuesday, Aug. 14). They might spike your insulin, if not your adrenaline (Sugar Rush Night on Saturday, June 23). And if those things fail, who could forget a night at the Cowboy Monkey Rodeo (Tuesday, June 19)?

Veteran pitcher Josh Turley, 27, was a 16th round draft pick of the Tigers out of Baylor in 2012. He posted a 3.69 ERA last season in bouncing between three levels of Detroit’s farm system, ending the year with the triple-A Toledo Mud Hens.

It may have been a chilly April so far, but things are indeed warming up at UPMC Park. Opening weekend pits the SeaWolves against the Altoona Curve and kicks off with the Opening Day Bash on Friday, April 13 in the UPMC Park Plaza. Food, entertainment, games, and happy hour drink specials ($3 select domestic drafts) will precede the first pitch, slated for 6:05 p.m. On Saturday, the SeaWolves will celebrate Erie Day, paying homage to the City of Erie’s birthday (it was incorporated April 14, 1851) with local students and organizations. The team will also recognize a local resident for his or her contributions to the community.

Whether or not the weather cooperates, here’s hoping this SeaWolves City celebrates many more birthdays to come.

Matt Swanseger is a proud former dance-off champion at Jerry Uht Park. For business inquiries or to debate hot dog condiment preferences (always Stadium Mustard, never ketchup), contact mswanseger@eriereader.com
A Momentous Milestone For a Local Art Treasure
Erie Art Museum’s Spring Show celebrates regional talent

By: Mary Birdsong

Wendy Maruyama sits in diffused light at the south end of the Hagan Gallery of the Erie Art Museum. Volunteers pad softly around the room providing a soft undercurrent of audible rhythm in the lively but hushed room. Everyone is wearing gloves as they transport works from stacks against the wall toward Maruyama. It is at once a chaotic, but well-organized bustle of activity. The jurying process for the 95th Spring Show is in full swing.

Maruyama, an artist, furniture maker and educator, seems to be enjoying herself as she brings the eyes and heart of someone with more than 40 years of innovative craftsmanship to bear on the 643 submissions to the show. She leans forward, squinting to examine details, leans back in her chair with folded arms to get a larger view. She asks for titles, knits her brow at one work, and rests her chin in her hands at others. Her ruminations only last a short while with each presentation and then it’s “yes,” “no,” or “maybe.”

The volunteers quickly move away, stopping at another table to announce each work’s fate to other volunteers and then head in different directions depending on the judgment the work they’re holding received.

This efficient procedure has been developed over the past near-century with staff and volunteers alike having honed the jurying process into an art itself. The in-person event is, in fact, part of the revered lore of the Spring Show; most jurying in the art world today is done via computers, with artists sending digital images of their works to jurors for review.

For John Vanco, former Executive Director of the Erie Art Museum, the in-person process held many advantages. “First, it’s fairer to the artist and the juror. Details and scale are much more obvious and works in two and three dimensions don’t suffer the way they might if the photograph used to present the work is not the best quality. Plus, it’s a far more satisfying process and then, once complete, the curator knows exactly what there is to work with.”

Susan Barnett, who joined the museum staff as curator last spring when Vanco retired, concurs. “The in-person jurying makes the local drop-off a community event. Artists may see each other for the first time in a while and the process can discourage those farther out of town from submitting, which gives the show a more local feel.” She also thinks that seeing the works in person lets the juror examine the material and craftsmanship in a more realistic way. “The works really present themselves as objects.”

Is she apprehensive about taking the reins from someone who has been curating Spring Shows since 1969? No, not really.

“I am so impressed with the quality of the work that was entered in the show and grateful to Maruyama for making the hard choices. From 643 entries, she chose 102 works for the show, a perfect number to fill the museum’s main gallery. We could easily have made three good exhibitions from the work that was entered,” says Barnett.

Vanco, who says he won’t miss working on the show, has great trust in Barnett. “I have no qualms about the Spring Show going forward. I’m sure she’ll change things but that’s a good thing. Fresh insights keep things evolving.”

Barnett’s fresh eye will build on the work Vanco accomplished in the past 49 years. To really see how the show evolved, a dip into the institutional memory of the organization is in order.

The annual “Exhibition of the Artists of Erie” began in 1923 at the Erie Arts Center, predecessor to the current museum, and was organized by the Art Club of Erie. Catalogs from some of the early years show us that awards were given, and the jurors were a team of local art pa-
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In a fascinating tidbit, the 1931 catalog, the eighth annual show, reveals that Catherine Burns Plavcan bests her much more famous husband, Joseph Plavcan with a “First Award.” He received a First Honorable Mention that year.

Of course, Vanco didn’t arrive on the scene until 1969, but he saw the first “May Show” in 1968 when he was working as a journalist for the Erie Daily Times. “I reviewed it, and I remember that it had some controversy as it contained a painting of a nude man in a bathtub.”

By the following year, the Erie Art Center had hired Vanco to be the first director. He renamed the May Show the Spring Show because he wanted to open it earlier, in April. He also expanded the radius of miles from which artists could contribute from 75 miles to 250, despite initial protests from locals. This brought in a wider diversity of talent to the show and as the years progressed, the Spring Show had developed a reputation for attracting quality work.

What also helped grow the quality of the show was recruiting the luminaries of the art world to jury the show. One, Marcia Tucker, was founder and director of the New Museum of Contemporary Art when she juried in 1983.

Jurors often came in skeptical according to Vanco. In fact one, gallery owner and dealer Bernice Steinbaum, said to him that she had high standards and remarked, “You might only end up with one work.” It turned out she was pleasantly surprised, as most others were as well.

Having jurors from larger communities and markets gave the museum an opportunity to showcase regional talent to a wider world and gave staff the opportunity to work with notable professionals in the field. “There have been many great jurors,” says Vanco. “Recently Sergei Isupov and William Wegman were great jurors and wonderful to work with.”

Another innovation that spurred interest by artists was the instituting of a purchase patrons’ program where collectors agree to acquire a work from the show. This year that means $12,500 in guaranteed purchases. An additional $15,000 in cash prizes, including one from the Northwest Pennsylvania Artists Association, will also be awarded.

Some of those prizes will go to works chosen by Maruyama, who had a difficult task of winnowing down the collected works into a manageable show. “It was a true honor to jury such a significant exhibition ... there were so many stellar submissions that it became an issue of rejecting work not because it was poor, but because the space has limits,” she remarked in an email. “Sometimes I had to really shift the strategy on my evaluation process. For example, if there were three paintings I loved but each had, let’s say, crows, or trees as a central element, it came down to choosing the strongest depiction overall.”

And Maruyama also gives us other peeks into her approach by writing “as a craft person I am mindful of how well things are made, whether it’s painting or sculpture. But if I am distracted by it, then that is how I may come to a decision.”

Her words reveal how the varying approaches or emphases of jurors over the years have shaped the Spring Show in distinctive ways, giving each its own flavor. This, for better or worse, keeps the show fresh and new each year and one that is eagerly awaited in the community.

Erie will get to see the 95th show on April 22, when it opens to the public. Until then, the staff of the museum is busy with post-jurying logistics. Barnett is excited about installing her first Spring Show. “For me, as a new curator and Erie resident, the Spring Show is a fantastic opportunity to get to know the artists and their work. I look forward to laying out the show and exploring groupings by theme, medium and color until we find relationships that work. I do envision certain very strong works as central elements in various areas of the gallery.”

And she has reason to be excited to be part of the rich and storied tradition that is the Erie Art Museum Spring Show. The show has, in many ways, been the harbinger of spring, a re-awakening of the regional art world, an opportunity for artists to show off what they worked on over the winter.

“The in-person jurying makes the local drop-off a community event. Artists may see each other for the first time in a while and the process can discourage those farther out of town from submitting, which gives the show a more local feel.”

But as Barnett wisely points out, the Spring Show is “more than just an exhibition or a contest, the Spring Show brings artists together in Erie and the region. Artists of all ages and backgrounds stop by during the drop-off period to see one another’s work and offer support. The reception is a reunion for artists and a celebration that connects them to the community.”

So, as an interesting and rewarding Spring Show is at hand, let’s celebrate the Erie Art Museum as it reaches this remarkable milestone. And let’s all look forward to the 100th and many more after that from what is clearly a local treasure. Erie would be far poorer without it.

Mary Birdsong can be reached at mbirdsong@eriereader.com
Clybourne Park at Erie Playhouse Tackles Debate of Urban Development

The next show at the Erie Playhouse tackles issues like gentrification, race, and the impact of housing in a given community. Set in 1959 and 2009 Chicago, this play spans 50 years over the course of two acts. When asked what she hoped audiences would take away from the performance, Marketing Director for the Erie Playhouse Carolynn Lynn spoke of these themes at length. “My hope is that audience members see that issues like “white flight” and “gentrification” — terms NOT used in the show but very much topics in the air — have human faces.” Lynn anticipates that some audience members may walk out of the show due to profanities, but those who stay will witness the mirror image of the first and second acts. While the actual construction has been taken over by Julie Lokahi, who will also be the stage manager in charge of making the transformation happen each night. She has a larger-than-usual crew for this show to assist her, as the changes go all the way down to the walls and floors. The transformation process will happen in full view of the audience, so I think they will appreciate how major a change it will be,” said Lynn. The Erie Playhouse is also partnering with the Jefferson Educational Society for a series of lectures, the first one being “How Theater Can Teach Us: What Erie Can Learn from Clybourne Park.” More information about this event can be found on the JES website. — Michael Haas

Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. // Dates, showtimes, and prices available online at erieplayhouse.org

Memorable Messes in Dramashop’s The Clean House

O btaining a clean house is no small matter, and it can be particularly challenging when your Brazilian housekeeper prefers writing comedy to dusting anything. This is the set-up of Sarah Ruhl’s Susan Smith Blackburn Prize-winning play The Clean House, a witty, wise and romantic farce into the lives of a married couple, both doctors, who hire someone to keep tabs on the mess within, while it seems no one can control the messes without. These include both an eccentric sister with an abiding love of house cleaning (and meddling), as well as a troubling new romance between surgeon and patient. Relationships are tested and forged as the play’s emotional layers build one upon the other to a heartfelt conclusion for this humorous, whimsical comedy, opening for an extremely limited run at the Dramashop. — Cara Suppa

8 p.m. // 1001 State Street, Suite 210 // Pay what you can // dramashop.org/the-clean-house

Barber Art Show Brings Together Hundreds of Artists

The Barber National Institute will host an art show and sale featuring work from nearly 500 artists from all over our region. The 11th annual event is sponsored by physicians and supporters of the arts Jay and Mona Kang. To kick everything off, there will be a special unveiling of a public sculpture entitled “Timeless Possibilities.” At 11 a.m., a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held for the work at the Institute’s main entrance along East Avenue. The 15-foot-tall metal sculpture with nautical and temporal elements was designed and fabricated by students and faculty from the George Junior Republic. The base of the sculpture features a tiled mosaic designed by Frank Fecko, created by eight adults in the Institute’s Fine Arts Program.

The art show will run from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Friday with a wine and cheese reception starting at 5 p.m., and run until Monday evening. With over 200 works by young artists, in addition to many familiar regional, professional names on the walls, the show promises to span myriad styles and subjects, with the title of this year’s show fittingly asking the viewer to be “celebrating the possibilities.” — Nick Warren

FRIDAY, APR. 13

Erie Reader | ErieReader.com April 11, 2018
AN EVENING WITH JUDY COLLINS

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Tuesday, April 24 - 7 to 8.30 p.m.

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For more information – including the full speaker lineup and details on how to register – visit www.JESErie.org or call us at 814.459.8000!
The Big Mean Sounds of Tomorrow

Erie, audiences watched, spellbound by her amazing voice, as her backing band pumped out original soul tunes. This will be her first time in the larger downstairs complex. The headliners are a big band with a big sound — after all, it’s right there in the name. Big Mean Sound Machine is an afro-funk party band with a lineup between eight and thirteen members, depending on the performance. With a full horn section and plenty of percussion, the band brings a danceable, infectious groove that invites audiences to the dance floor, and released their fourth full-length album last year, titled Runnin’ for the Ghost. — Nick Warren

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

Maple Festival Offers Sweet Family Fun

People can further explore maple syrup production at the kid’s “Discovery Zone,” where you can watch demonstrations and taste the goods.

Live animal shows are also scheduled throughout Saturday and Sunday. Guests can also help name Asbury Woods’ new ferret by voting for their favorite option with a donation towards the care of the animal and its habitat. The name that raises the most money will win.

Maple Festival tickets will be available at the door. — Tracy Geigel

Saturday & Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. // Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. // $5 for Asbury Woods members, $7 for non-members, free for age 3 & under // 835-5356 // asburywoods.org

Jack Stauber to Release Third Solo Album HiLo at Basement Transmissions

McKean native and wildly unique avant-pop musician Jack Stauber is set to release his third full-length solo album HiLo, a follow-up to 2017’s Pop Food at Basement Transmissions. Joining him for this evening of fun will be a slew of equally entertaining acts such as Spish, Green Fingers, Teddy Rankin and Joose, which Stauber also fronts.

Stauber currently lives in the Oakland area of Pittsburgh where he attends the University of Pittsburgh for marketing and advertising. He actively uses these skills to his advantage with his unique VHS-style music videos and content that are equally as strange as his music.

If you’re a fan of wholeheartedly original and off-the-beaten-path pop music, you’d be remiss to miss the show. With Stauber’s current track record, one can only ponder what sort of musical menagerie of fun is in store for his ever-growing audiences. — Roman Sabella

6:30 p.m. // 145 W 11th St // $8 // facebook.com/basement.transmissions

Celebrate Bernstein’s Legacy with ‘Candide in Concert’

Earlier this winter, a collaboration between the Erie Playhouse, the Erie Philharmonic, and PACA (Erie’s Performing Arts Collective Alliance) was announced in an effort to recognize “the uniqueness of the Erie theater and art scene.” While “Candide in Concert” is not an explicit addition to this series, it is clear that the partnership opened further doors for collaboration between the organizations as the special event is presented in equal parts by the Erie Playhouse and the Erie Philharmonic.

“We are incredibly excited for the chance to work side by side with the Erie Playhouse again, this time with Bernstein’s legendary Candide,” says Steven Weiser, executive director of the Erie Philharmonic. “The music will really put the orchestra on display while the all-star cast from the Playhouse will not disappoint. This is a rare show to see live, and we are very honored for the chance to bring it to the Warner Theatre stage. This is definitely a night not to be missed!”

“Candide in Concert” is a one-night-only production being presented in celebration of renowned American composer, conductor and pianist Leonard Bernstein, just in time for what would have been his 100th birthday. The opera, based on a 1759 novella of the same name by Voltaire, tells the uplifting adventure of a man (played by Michael Valentine) who travels the world after losing his fiancée (played by Devon Lavinia Yates), encountering “duelists” and “countless con artists” along the way. Despite originally being met with “unenthusiastic reactions” upon its 1959 opening, this wildly popular production has now become a cult classic of sorts and is sure to stir a great deal of excitement within Erie’s dedicated theater community. — Aaron Mook

7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. // 23 West 10th Street // Tickets start at $25

FRIDAY, APR. 13

Two powerhouse groups are about to fill the downstairs of the King’s Rook Club with sound. Ithaca, New York’s Big Mean Sound Machine and Rochester’s Danielle Ponder and the Tomorrow People will be splitting the bill.

The latter features the spectacular vocal abilities of diva frontwoman Danielle Ponder. At her first appearance in

SATURDAY, APR. 14

The 42nd Asbury Woods Maple Festival promises to be sweet.

The festival, which annually attracts more than 1,000 guests, will feature maple syrup production tours and plenty of opportunities to sample the syrup and pancakes, too.

Guided 45-minute historical tours will take place throughout the day, and a shorter 15-minute, friendly-for-all-ages version will also be available.

Saturday & Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. // Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. // $5 for Asbury Woods members, $7 for non-members, free for age 3 & under // 835-5356 // asburywoods.org

Jack Stauber to Release Third Solo Album HiLo at Basement Transmissions

SATURDAY, APRIL 14

ErieReader.com | Erie Reader | 23
Swaay quickly to release their debut EP, Jonas brother and former member of Hammermill Center. funk-pop stars DNCE at their very own public tickets start at $25

**S**pring concerts are an interesting phenomenon in the context of local college life. Traditionally taking place every other year to save for expenses, there’s a healthy sense of competition between Erie’s universities to see who can conjure the biggest name, drawing in not only students and staff but the public as well. This year, Gannon University has given the competition a run between Erie’s universities to see who there’s a healthy sense of competition every other year to save for expenses, college life. Traditionally taking place with rock and reggae in what’s with tension at (or near) an all-time high: Election Day 2016. The push-pull between Democrat and Republican, majorly and minority, traditional and progressive, globalism or isolationism, regulation or deregulation (and seemingly anything one might conceivably take sides on) had seldom felt so pronounced. This environment cultivated (guitar, keys, and backup vocals), and Jorgen Carlsson (bass). At the core of the Gov’t Mule’s sound are Haynes’s gritty electric blues riffs and commanding vocals, but the group also draws from gospel, soul, jazz, funk, and country to create a varied repertoire. They are also known to splice a well-placed cover or two into their sets, whether it be the Beatles (check out their great interpretation of “She Said, She Said”), Pink Floyd, or (naturally) the Allman Bros.

Like the Allmans, the band is well-regarded for their ability to improvise during their live shows, several of which have been recorded and are cherished by fans as much as, if not more so, than their studio albums. You’ll be able treasure their upcoming concert at the Warner Theatre (although you won’t be able to take home a copy), with metal-tinged Southern rockers Black Stone Cherry opening. Even if the music comes from being wound-up, listening is about unwinding. — Matt Swanseger

**SATURDAY, APR. 14TH**

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**GOV’T MULE UNWINDS AT THE WARNER**

**T**his month, Gannon University’s Schuster Theatre will be unveiling their latest show of the current season, Richard Bean’s One Man, Two Guvnors. Directed by Gannon alumna and theatre professor Alaina Manchester, this English adaptation of Carlo Goldoni’s beloved Italian comedy, The Servant of Two Masters, follows Francis Henshall, one man with two peculiar bosses that he must keep from interacting in 1960s-era Brighton. One Man, Two Guvnors originally premiered in May 2011 to widespread critical acclaim, including a five star review from The Guardian proclaiming it “a triumph of visual and verbal comedy.” Schuster Theatre’s performance will star students Luke Frawley, Petra Shearer, and Seamus Clerkin as lead Francis Henshall. — Aaron Mook

**EXPAND EXPERIENCE CLASSIC COMEDY ONE MAN, TWO GUVNORS AT GANNOON UNIVERSITY**

**T**his month, Gannon University’s Schuster Theatre will be unveiling their latest show of the current season, Richard Bean’s One Man, Two Guvnors. Directed by Gannon alumna and theatre professor Alaina Manchester, this English adaptation of Carlo Goldoni’s beloved Italian comedy, The Servant of Two Masters, follows Francis Henshall, one man with two peculiar bosses that he must keep from interacting in 1960s-era Brighton. One Man, Two Guvnors originally premiered in May 2011 to widespread critical acclaim, including a five star review from The Guardian proclaiming it “a triumph of visual and verbal comedy.” Schuster Theatre’s performance will star students Luke Frawley, Petra Shearer, and Seamus Clerkin as lead Francis Henshall. — Aaron Mook
LET’S GET MUDDY!

Run-A-Muck Mud Run • Sat. June 2

A MUDtastic event for kids and the entire family includes a 1.5-mile course and 20 unique obstacles all designed to get you wet and muddy.

Post Party Features:
- Food for purchase from Sticks & Bricks
- Northern Scoop Craft Ice Cream
- Ye Olde Sweet Shoppe

$25/participant includes official t-shirt or $35/participant day of registration (no shirt)
Eastside Family Y • 2101 Nagle Road
ymcaerie.org • 899-9622

Erie County Human Relations Commission
12th ANNUAL FAIR HOUSING SEMINAR
Wednesday, April 25th, 2018 (9AM – 5PM)
Pre-Registration is requested

- Deconstruction: A Strategy for Jobs Creation
- Updates on PHARE grant program
- America’s Fist Sustainable Urban Agrihood
- Erie Refocused: Putting the plan into Action
- Ethics – Real Estate
- Growing Communities
- Energy Efficiency – Commitment Leads to Action
- Transgender housing updates

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
Registration begins at 8:15 AM @ Blasco Library- Hirt Auditorium
$10 Cost includes Continental Breakfast & Lunch
Find out more at www.eriecountypa.gov/HRC
Email: cscalise@eriecountypa.gov or call 814-451-7021

April 11, 2018
Kings Rook

FRIDAY, APRIL 13
BIG MEAN SOUND MACHINE
+ DANIELLE PONDER & THE TOMORROW PEOPLE [DOWNSTAIRS]
SATURDAY, APRIL 14
SOPHISTAFUNK
+ THE LEC [DOWNSTAIRS]
FRIDAY, APRIL 20
AQUEOUS [DOWNSTAIRS]

DOORS 8PM | MUSIC 10PM

OPEN THURS-SAT @ 8PM
HAPPY HOUR SPECIALS 8PM-12AM
FREE POOL, SHUFFLEBOARD, & GAMES ALWAYS!
1921 PEACH ST - FIND US ON FACEBOOK

THURSDAY @ 10PM!
THIRSTY THURSDAY DRINK SPECIALS!
+ $2 WELLS & ALL DOMESTICS (8PM-11PM)
+ $3 ALL CRAFTS (8PM-11PM)
+ $2 FIREBALL (9PM-10PM)
+ $3.50 LONG ISLANDS (9PM-10PM)

NO COVER FOR MEMBERS EXCEPT SPECIAL EVENTS**

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NEW MEMBERSHIPS ONLY $10!
SEE DOOR STAFF FOR DETAILS!

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*Adult language/situations

April 11, 2018
**THURSDAY, APRIL 19**

Basement Transmissions is bringing the pain with one of the heaviest hardcore shows to come to Erie in months.

Pains, on tour from Chicago, unleashes devastating fury on their five track EP, *Drown the Earth*, one of the angriest releases I’ve heard in some time. Each track fades into the next, almost making the full EP feel as if it were just one long hardcore song. If it were, the song’s breakdown would be the track “The Mouth,” by far the heaviest song on the album.

Touring with Pains are Church Tongue, from Indianapolis. Church Tongue’s 2016 full-length album *Heart Failure* touches on many different subgenres of hardcore, at times sounding melodic, other times sounding like mid-2000s metalcore, with beatdown and mosh riffs sprinkled everywhere in between.

Local opening acts include Erie hardcore young bucks, Vivid Life, Erie metalcore band, Of Shadows, and Narwhal Bloodbath. So come out to Basement Transmissions to support the bands and mosh your socks off. — Tommy Shannon

7 p.m. // 145 W. 11th St. // $10 Advance, $13 Doors // facebook.com/basement.transmissions

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**FRIDAY, APRIL 20**

If you’re looking to escape to 1936 Paris while still in Erie, look no further than All An Act’s production of Comedy of Tenors. This play by Ken Ludwig, a two-time Olivier Award-winning playwright, is a show a year in the making for “A3.” Director David Mitchell said that the Comedy of Tenors, a sequel to *Lend Me A Tenor*, contains the same gut-busting comedy that will leave audiences in stitches. “A3” produced the prequel to Comedy of Tenors during their last season and the cast from that production will be reprising their roles in this piece. Mitchell went on to say that working with an ensemble cast allows the comedic elements to develop more organically and that audiences will be sure to notice their rapport. All An Act is known for their attention to detail in set design, and this show is no exception. The set has been developed by Mitchell, a man who wears many hats during the process of Comedy of Tenors. This comedy is “PG-13” according to Mitchell, and will run until May 13. — Michael Haas

7:30 p.m. (see website for full schedule) // 652 W. 17th St. // $12 Adults; $10 Seniors and Students (cash-only at the door) // allanact.net

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**FRIDAY, APRIL 20**

Music, when it comes from the heart and uplifts the soul, has a way of being handed down from generation to generation like a prized family heirloom. Jim Avett’s own father, a preacher who filled his family’s life with song, bequeathed it upon his son; Jim, in his turn, passed it onto his sons, Scott and Seth, better known as The Avett Brothers, as well as a daughter, Bonnie.

Erie might not have any blood ties to Avett, but that doesn’t make the gift of his music to the generations who come to hear him at Room 33 any less intimate or profound.

“When I heard Jim Avett years ago, I brought the house down,” said Rebecca Styn, proprietor at Room 33. “His music is so engaging and uplifting…He was one of the first people I reached out to when I knew we were getting ready to open.”

Situated along the State Street corridor in a plum location midway between Jekyll and Hyde’s and The Plymouth, speakeasy lounge Room 33 is the perfect venue for Avett to make his return to the Erie area — after all, a “generation” ago, Styn’s stylishly rendered space served as the Erie Ale House, and the very spot where Avett made his first appearance in the Gem City.

Now, this Navy veteran, farmer and welder-by-trade, whose music career blossomed late in life after the dual responsibilities of work and family no longer confined music to a mere hobby, will return to the stage for what Styn calls “an opportunity to experience musicians that [audiences] may not otherwise have access to.” Consider it a royal complement to the many talented local acts in the area, from a father and grandfather who look forward to every family dinner with the grandkids back home in North Carolina. — Cara Suppa

8 p.m. // 1033 State Street // General Admission $10 // facebook.com/room33speakeasy

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**WINE & CHEESE WEEKEND**

Apri. 20 — 5 p.m. & Apr. 21, 22 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Various Locations, Lackawanna County

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**NORTH EAST FOOD TOUR**

Apr. 22 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Bean Coffee Shop, 12 S. Lake St, North East, PA 16428 eriefoodtours.com

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**MOVIES**

**Aircraft Carrier**

Ongoing — 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. & 6 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.

biggreenscreen.com.

**Prehistoric Planet**

Ongoing — noon & 3 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.

biggreenscreen.com.

**Flight of the Butterflies**

Ongoing — 1 p.m. & 4 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr.

biggreenscreen.com.

**Call Me By Your Name**

Apr. 12 — 8 to 10 p.m.


**VISUAL ARTS**

**Senior Art Thesis Exhibition**

Apr. 13 through May 15

Mercyhurst University, 301 E. 38th St. mic. mercyhurst.edu.

**Gary Spinosa: Divine Instinct**

Apr. 13 — 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. & Apr. 14, 15 — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. & Apr. 16 — 11 to 6 p.m.

Barber National Institute, 100 Barber Place barberinstitute.org.

**Diane Gruguras, “Mysterious Vapors” & Ryan Burke, Jade Sculptures**

Apr. 13 through May 15

Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St. glassgrowersgallery.com.

**95th Annual Spring Show**

Apr. 21 through Jul. 1

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

**Spring Show 2018: Public Opening**

Apr. 22 — 1 to 3 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

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**THEATER**

**Til Beth Do Us Part**

Apr. 11, 24 — noon & Apr. 14, 21 — 5:30 p.m. & Apr. 15 — 2:30 p.m. & Apr. 20 — 7 p.m.

Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

**Beauty and the Beast**

Apr. 12, 13, 14 — 7 p.m. & Apr. 14, 15 — 2 p.m.


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**Mercyhurst Theatre Program: Doña Rosita the Spinster**

Apr. 12, 13, 14 — 7:30 p.m. & Apr. 15 — 2 p.m.

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

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**Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.**
Aqueous Expects More Highs for the Rook on 4/20

Plus a Q&A with guitarist Mike Gantzer and bassist Evan McPhaden

FRIDAY, APR. 20

By: Ryan Smith

In this bright, shining era — when live, jam-based music has been made Great Again — I’m excited all the time. Excited for all the shows I get to make it to. Excited — I’m excited all the time. Excited for all the shows I get to write about.

But I’ve come to realize that few bands get me in full-on groove mode more consistently and more genuinely (just, more) these days than Aqueous.

And man, I’m not alone swimming in those waters. Now, don’t get me wrong: Wherever they’ve gone, the Buffalo-based prog-jam powerhouse has been non-stop melting the minds right outta showgoers for a good handful of years now. But more recently, it seems, the flow of the waters they’ve been running has really picked up with unrelenting speed and awesomeness. And now ... well, now, Aqueous is on fire.

They’re a huge part — a feather in the hat, let’s say, or an arrow in the quiver — of a vibrant, ever-changing, healthy, friendly live music culture that’s been born both regionally and nationally in recent years. That’s thanks in large part to a whole bunch of different, amazing and amazingly different bands, and to all the different and amazing people who come out to support them and feel the grooves they’re giving.

It’s a give-and-take that, once you’ve experienced it, you just get it. And with Aqueous, you get it quick. Almost from their start, Erie’s gottenAqueous, and has given them plenty of friendly ears — and they’ve returned the favor in kind many times — making the Gem City a home-away-from-home for the Empire State born-and-bred quartet. They’ll be making their way back to their local home-base, the King’s Rook Club, for the first time in 2018 on Friday, April 20, so mark the date (just so you don’t, um, space on it) for what’s sure to be one for the books.

I caught up with half of Aqueous — guitarist/vocalist Mike Gantzer and bassist Evan McPhaden — on the fly recently for a quick little question-and-answer session, where they touched on stuff like their new album in the works, their recent bid for a spot on National Public Radio’s Tiny Desk Concert series, the coming summer music festival season, and what’s been on their personal playlists.

Here’s what they had to say:

Ryan Smith: So, tell me just a bit about the Tiny Desk.

Evan McPhaden: The Tiny Desk (submission) video was another idea we’ve always wanted to do. We shortened our song “Underlyer” a bit, and kinda just went for it. We love slimming down our approach to our tunes, in terms of less pedals and making them bare bones, which you can see in that video or our Paste Magazine session.

RS: What’s some of the stuff you’re listening to most these days?

Mike Gantzer: Recently, I’ve really been in love with Fleet Foxes! I’ve also been listening to some cool jazz-influenced hip-hop, particularly an artist out of Chicago called noname. There’s also a band called Mild High Club that I’ve been digging on, and also some Bill Withers, CKY, Metallica, and The Strokes. It’s been an eclectic month for my listening tastes!

RS: Word is no one should ever miss an Erie show. Word? And elaborate, please.

EM: That’s a good piece of advice! Erie has become sort of second home for us. It’s probably the first area outside western New York where we saw people come out to shows and show support. We usually try to throw some surprises into those sets as well. But, overall, we feel comfortable, which brings out great improv, vibes and energy.

RS: Anything else you’d like to add on any and all things Aqueous?

EM: The future looks great right now! We’re entering festival season where we’re playing some awesome fests including Electric Forest, SummitCamp, Peach Fest, Cobblestone Live and Night Lights. We’re also gonna be putting out a new album this fall with a big tour behind it. This album had a different approach for us, which was fun. Generally, we wrote tunes, played and tested them live, then recorded it, but for this album, we wrote songs thinking in a studio setting. There’s a bunch of new tunes that have never been played live yet that we can’t wait to dig into!

10 p.m. // 1921 Peach Street // 21+ // facebook.com/kingsrookclub

Rent
Apr. 12 — 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
A student cast brings alive the iconic musical about young bohemian artists in NYC at the dawn of the AIDS crisis.
Penn State Behrend, 4701 College Dr. behrend.psu.edu

Detroit
Apr. 12, 13, 14 — 8 p.m. & Apr. 15 — 2:30 p.m.
Allegeny College, 520 N. Main St, Meadville, PA 16335 allegeny.edu

The Clean House
Apr. 13, 20 — 8 p.m.
Dramashop, 1001 State St. Suite 210, dramashop.org

Clybourne Park
Apr. 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 25 — 7:30 p.m. & Apr. 22 — 2 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. erieplayhouse.org

One Man, Two Guvnors
Apr. 19, 20, 21 — 8 p.m.
Schuster Theatre, 620 Sassafras St. gannon.edu

A Comedy of Tenors
Apr. 20, 21 — 7:30 to 10 p.m. & Apr. 22 — 3 to 5:30 p.m.
All An Act Theatre, 652 W. 17th St. allanact.net

The Fantasticks
Apr. 21 — 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.
The world’s longest-running musical finds a home at Edinboro, as students bring the traditionally friendliness of years now.

Various Locations, ohio-basketball.com

Erie SeaWolves vs Altoona Curve
Apr. 13 — 6:05 p.m. & Apr. 14, 15 — 1:35 p.m.
UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th St. milb.com

Great Lakes Lakeshore Championship & Dave Chaffee Arms Classic
Apr. 14 — 8 a.m.
Bookended by bodybuilding competitions, palms lock and battles of the biceps ensue in the Dave Chaffee Arm Wrestling tournaments.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8109 Perry Hwy. presquiessedowns.com

SPORTS
Erie Tip-Off Classic
Apr. 13, 14, 15

Erie SeaWolves vs Trenton Thunder
Apr. 16, 17, 18 — 6:05 p.m. & Apr. 19 — 12:05 p.m.

NPS Great Lakes Championships & Dave Chaffee Arms Classic
Apr. 14 — 8 a.m.
Bookended by bodybuilding competitions, palms lock and battles of the biceps ensue in the Dave Chaffee Arm Wrestling tournaments.
Presque Isle Downs and Casino, 8109 Perry Hwy. presquiessedowns.com

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

Great Lakes Bodybuilding Competition
Apr. 21 — 1 p.m.
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier naturalmuscle.com

COMMUNITY
Great Lakes Shipwreck Exhibition
Ongoing through Apr. 13
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trecri.org

Family Storytime
Apr. 11, 18, 25 — 10 to 11:45 a.m
Presque Isle State Park
Interchange Rd. erielibrary.org

The Birds Have Returned
Apr. 11 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org

Adult Art Classes
Apr. 11, 19 — 10 to 11 a.m.
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 5101 W. 6th St. learb.org

Read to a Therapy Dog
Apr. 11 — 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. & Apr. 23 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Edinboro Branch Library, 413 W. Plum St, Edinboro, PA 16442 erielibrary.org

Milton Hershey School Informational
Apr. 11 — 6 p.m.
Golden Corral, 7500 Peach St. mhskids.org

Presque Isle State Park
After Dark: Long Pond Trail
Apr. 11 — 7:30 to 9 p.m.
East Pier Parking Lot in Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. trecri.org

Tots in Nature Class:
Apr. 11 — 7:30 to 9 p.m.
Schuster Theatre, 620 Sassafras St. gannon.edu

Erie SeaWolves vs Altoona Curve
Apr. 13 — 6:05 p.m. & Apr. 14, 15 — 1:35 p.m.
UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th St. milb.com
Talking reached number two on the Billboard charts for both Top R&B/Hip-Hop Albums and Top Rap Albums. In 2016, his sophomore album, the aforementioned Happy Camper reached number one on the Rap charts.

Despite his techy pedigree, Allen’s work doesn’t fall in the “nerd-core” camp. With up-tempo beats that mix together an ultimately joyful, easygoing R&B feel, his albums have struck a chord with many fans. The overall tone is light-hearted, with an honest touch. Throughout his catalog, the listener discovers that Allen isn’t trying to be someone that he’s not, and his genuine love for making music shines through, fans forming a veritable friendship with the charismatic entertainer. In 2014 he gained an even larger following thanks to a team-up with Ed Sheeran for the single and accompanying video for “All About It,” which features the two in spacesuits and superhero costumes.

On Saturday, April 21, he’ll be performing at Penn State Behrend’s Junker Center for the school’s spring concert. Students — and well, anyone who needs to deliver just the kind of atmosphere that Allen enjoys — and well, anyone who needs to relax and have a little fun. — Nick Warren

8 p.m. // Penn State Behrend Junker Center, 5103 Station Rd. // $10 for the public, $5 for Penn State Behrend Students // behrend.psu.edu/concert
Open the door to your future

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- Meet with Admissions
- Talk to Residence Life
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Register today at
www.Edinboro.edu/visit
SATURDAY, APRIL 21

Chicago-based cellist, composer, and educator Tomeka Reid will lead an impressive collection of musicians in The Tomeka Reid Quartet as part of Performing Artists Collective Alliance (PACA) Jazz Night on Saturday, April 21. Reid, who has been described as “a remarkably versatile player” by Howard Reich of the Chicago Tribune, will be playing alongside several other impressive artists, including world-renowned jazz guitarist Mary Halvorson, double bassist Jason Roebke and drummer Tomas Fujisawa. As an educator, Reid has led string improvisation workshops in Italy and the U.S.

Halvorson has visited Erie a few times in recent years and returns this time as the recent winner of four categories of the Downbeat Critics Poll, including world’s best jazz guitarist. NPR’s Lars Gotrich has stated she is “the most forward-thinking guitarist working right now,” which will make for quite the show when combined with the talents of the rest of the quartet.

The Tomeka Reid Quartet will treat crowds to their avant-jazz stylings that show equal parts experimentation and improvisation with an overall love for groove. You won’t want to miss what is sure to be night of purely magical jazz chemistry as these talented and celebrated musicians take the stage. — Roman Sabella

8 p.m. // 1505 State St. // $15 // paca1505.com

Workshop
Apr. 14 — 1 to 3 p.m.
Lowe’s, 1930 Keystone Dr.
howardhanna.com.

Veterans Miracle Center
Erie Live Auction
Apr. 14 — 3 to 7 p.m.
Lake Erie Church, 1565 W.
38th St. vmcenter.org.

Ladies Night Make N Take
Apr. 14 — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars,
9440 W. Moin Rd. North East,
PA 16428 piwine.com.

Raptor Experience
Apr. 15 — noon to 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center,
301 Peninsula Dr. treepci.org.

Harborscreek Youth Services Designer Purse Bingo
Apr. 15 — noon to 5 p.m.
Our Lady of Mercy Church,
837 Bartlett Rd. harborscreek,
PA 16421 facebook.com.

Tree Observation Hike
Apr. 15 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Erie Bluffs State Park,
10990 W. Lake Rd. Lake City,
PA 16423 treepci.org.

Family Storytime
Apr. 16, 23 — 10 to 10:45 a.m.
Edinboro Branch Library,
413 W. Plum St. edinboro.

STREAM Studio
Apr. 16 — 4 to 4:45 p.m.
Lincoln Community Center Library,
1255 Manchester Rd. erielibrary.org.

Family Storytime
Apr. 17, 24 — 10 to 10:45 a.m.
Iroquois Avenue Branch Library,
4212 Iroquois Ave. erielibrary.org.

Great Books
Apr. 17, 24 — 4 to 5:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society,
3207 State St. jeserie.org.

The World at Night
Apr. 17 — 6 p.m.
Planetary director Dr. David Hurd guides stargazers for an illuminating view of the night sky from an animal’s eyes.

Adult Beginner Mountain Dulcimer Class
Apr. 17 — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Lakewood United Methodist Church, 3856 W. 10th St. facebook.com.

From Hated to Greatest:
The Life of Muhammad Ali
Apr. 17 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society,
3207 State St. jeserie.org.

April Work Day for
Operation Christmas Child
Apr. 18 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Grace Church, 7300 Grubb Rd. somaritanspurse.org.

Halfway to Halloween
Haunted History Tours
Apr. 18, 25 — 7:30 p.m. &
April 20, 27 — 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Halfway to Halloween, hops and barley combine with the building’s spirits for a real spectre-tour sport.
The Brewerie at Union Station,
123 W. 14th St. brewerie.com.

Gannon Writing Awards
Featuring Professor
Berwyn Moore
Apr. 18 — 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Gannon University’s Yehl Alumni Room,
100 University Sq. gannon.edu.

Read to a Therapy Dog
Apr. 19 — 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Millcreek Branch Library,
2088 Ironbridge

SUNDAY, APRIL 22

Earth Day in the Time of Trump
Climate, conservation and citizen activism topic of lecture

Carter delivered an Emergency Declaration, which moved 900 families from this hazardous area, a victory for the grassroots environmental movement.

Once families were relocated from Love Canal, Lois’s life was changed forever. She founded the non-profit Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste in 1981, renamed the Center for Health, Environment, and Justice (CHEJ), to help train and support local activists with their environmental work. Today she continues to help communities like Flint, Michigan, battle environmental threats to their health and well-being.

“One place I always tell people to get involved locally,” she told an audience last fall in Medford, Massachusetts. “We are not big enough to deal with climate change on a grand scale, but if everybody worked from where they are” they would “create a beautiful, green, clean community,” a place that is “eco-friendly and where people want to live.”

A 2017 HBO documentary, Atomic Homefront, follows the unfolding crisis in St. Louis, Missouri, a major metropolitan area that lies dangerously close to a large landfill containing radioactive uranium waste and an escalating underground fire. Gibbs is working with a group of moms-turned-advocates as they confront the EPA and local and state officials and fight for testing and remediation.

Lois has appeared on 60 Minutes, 20/20, Oprah Winfrey, Good Morning America, The Morning Show and The Today Show. CBS produced a two-hour, prime-time movie about Lois’s life entitled Lois Gibbs: The Love Canal Story starring Marsha Mason. The 2012 documentation A Fierce Green Fire toured nationwide after it premiered at the Sundance Film Festival.

Gibbs Erie lecture is part of the Charlene M. Tanner Speaker Series endowed by Doris Cipolla and co-sponsored by the Mercyhurst University Sustainability Office and the Evelyn Lincoln Institute for Ethics and Society.

If I were Scott Pruitt, faced with citizen activists mobilized by Gibbs, I’d be shaking in my boots.

— Lisa Gensheimer

7 p.m. // Taylor Little Theatre,
Mercyhurst University, 501 East 38th Street // free and open to the public // sbennett@mercyhurst.edu for info

CALENDAR
By: Nick Warren

Brian Regan is a master comedian. Whether by personal observations or dog barks, he’s able to cull authentic laughs from audiences all over the country. His upcoming appearance at the Warner Theatre on Thursday, Apr. 26 will mark his seventh time in Erie. We checked in with him to get some personal views on his craft and see what he’s got in the works.

Nick Warren: It seems like you’ve gotten approval from ‘alt’ guys and ‘road dogs’ alike. They seem to appreciate the craftsmanship of the jokes you do. Do you think you’re able to tap into the fundamentals of humor? Not to get too abstract immediately.

Brian Regan: That’s what’s always intriguing about comedy, there’s the funny side of it, and there’s the math and science side of it, which I do love talking about, but it feels weird talking about something that makes people laugh. I enjoy the craft of comedy. I enjoy coming up with an idea, and I enjoy trying to figure out the best words and the best beats to convey that as clearly as possible. It’s a constant quest, because if you get it too lean and mean then you take the heart out of it, so you do have to have enough in there to give it reality. It’s always a tightrope, you’re always trying to find how much brevity to have involved, how much exposition. I consider it like playing an accordion, sometimes you feel like stretching your act out to get as much funny in there as possible, and sometimes you’re squeezing it together and getting rid of all the fat.

NW: Working clean and working with general observations, it seems like you can make comedy out of virtually anything. Do you find that true?

BR: I think there’s humor in everything. Not every comedian is going to find it in everything. I might look at something and say ‘I don’t see anything there’ and then the next comedian will look at the same exact thing and say ‘I just thought of five minutes of jokes.’ That’s what’s fun about the world of comedy. Sometimes you’ll hear another comedian do something and you’d think to yourself ‘how did I not think that?’ You’ll tip your hat to these people because they found something there that I didn’t. So the topics themselves to me are almost incidental. If you can make someone laugh about an awning on a building, that’s just as cool as making someone laugh about politics.

BR: That’s a hard tee shirt for me to sell [laughs]. I don’t even know how to spell out what my dad said growing up. Biddle eebbaum bumba waybay.

NW: [laughs] There’s just a certain ring to it.

BR: Yea. Bick bick bickadee bang. These are things my dad actually used to say, so I have them clearly in my head. I don’t expect other people to say them as clearly as mine.

I was grappling with the title. The title for a while was I Don’t Know What It Is. That was when I messed up a line in the special and then we used it as an out-take. I fumbled [saying] ‘I don’t know what it is’ and said ‘well that’ll be a good title,’ because it also is what life is all about. And then they said I Don’t Know What It Is is too long, so we changed it to I Don’t Know, and then I thought I don’t want to undercut myself as a comedian. The role of a comedian is to see things and point them out, so if the title is I Don’t Know, then I’m not serving myself as a comedian. So I decided I didn’t want that to be the title, and then they were like ‘the show’s going to go streaming in three minutes’ [laughs]. I’m exaggerating, but I was on the clock. So I thought, ‘what pops out here?’ and I jotted down a number of punchlines, and I thought nun-chucks and flamethrowers are weapons, and so you could — metaphorically and hopefully — add that as a connotation, like I’m doing comedy as weapons. It’s a very tenuous reason [laughs], but it’s something hopefully people would remember.

NW: Anything else coming up on the horizon?

BR: I’m doing The Tonight Show next week [scheduled to air Friday, Apr. 13]. I’m also on a TV series called Loudermilk. It’s not my comedic vision, Peter Farrelly and Bobby Mort are the creators. He [Farrelly] saw me do stand up, asked if I wanted to be in this TV series and the next thing I knew, I was in it! It’s a rare experience for someone in show business, where somebody has said something and followed up with it. [laughs] So, it’s kind of a departure for me. It’s me acting, and it’s me in a role that isn’t necessarily clean. The whole show is kind of gritty, and my character is kind of gritty. I’m proud of it. And if people want to see clean stuff, maybe they shouldn’t watch, but if they’re into good solid comedy, I recommend they check it out.

NW: Yea, you’re somewhat of an anomaly. If you look at your IMDB credits, it’s all ‘Brian Regan as himself.’ And then in Loudermilk you’re playing ‘Mugsy.’

BR: What’s weird is that you have a lot of comedians who can be really down and dirty in their act, and then they do a voiceover in a wholesome Disney movie, while I do the opposite [laughs]. My act is completely clean, and then I was in Chris Rock’s movie [Top 5], and now Loudermilk, and both of those are on the dirtier side of the track. So I guess I do everything opposite of everybody else.

7:30 p.m. // 811 State St. // Tickets are $38.50 each and can be purchased at the Erie Insurance Arena box office, online at eriewarnertheatre.com, or by calling (814) 452-4857.
Speechless: *A Quiet Place* is a Familiar Story Told in a Clever New Way

I don’t think I’m bragging when I say I’m something of a horror movie connoisseur. I’ve seen so many horror flicks that it takes quite a bit to genuinely surprise me and with that being said, I can happily say that John Krasinski’s film *A Quiet Place* was a pleasant little surprise.

The film follows the day-to-day lives of a family trying to survive after the world has been ravaged by sightless creatures who hunt by sound. Due to the creatures’ super sensitive hearing, the family is forced to live in near complete silence. They can only communicate via sign language and must be extra cautious of where they walk and what they do because the slightest loud noise could mean their doom.

It goes without saying that the real star of this film is the incredible sound mixing. Often filled with long stretches of silence, the slightest ambient noise is enough to create a world of suspense for the audience. I would go so far as to say that the first 30 to 40 minutes of the film is a near perfect example of tension building. Krasinski has a lot of fun scaring the audience with what we hear and what we don’t hear. Sadly when the creatures actually show up in the later half, it turns into a more cliched (though well-made) monster movie fare, trying to scare through special effects set pieces rather than good old creeping tension. That being said, *A Quiet Place* has enough nerve-wracking sequences to leave any horror fan speechless. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: John Krasinski // Written by: Krasinski, Bryan Wood and Scott Beck // Starring: Emily Blunt, John Krasinski, Millicent Simmonds and Noah Jupe // 90 minutes

Hey, Remember the ’80s?: *Ready Player One* is a Smart, Fun Nostalgia Overload

S teven Spielberg became a household name by producing and directing films whose imagery became iconic for entire generations of viewers. So it’s natural that he directed *Ready Player One*; a movie that enthusiastically celebrates those same pop cultural artifacts.

Set in the year 2045, the film gives us a world ravaged by overpopulation and poverty. However, the people escape their dreary existence by immersing themselves in the Oasis, a virtual reality world where people can be or do anything they want. And apparently most people want to be popular fictional characters from the ’80s, ’90s and 2000s. But when the creator of the Oasis dies, a contest is created for a chance to win ownership of his creation and everyone jumps at that opportunity.

As I said before, the film celebrates nostalgia but it also smartly undercut that celebration by showing the stultifying effects of living one’s life devoted to pop culture. These characters live fantastic lives in the Oasis but their real lives are spent in isolation with huge corporations taking more and more of their freedoms away. It was a welcome decision for the movie to focus the climax less on the competition and more on a kind of citizens’ uprising against the forces of greed and corruption. Sure it’s all an escapist fantasy, but in this age when the Internet (our own Oasis) is at risk of falling into the hands of the corporate elite, watching the little guys fight back against oppression is the kind of escapism I think we all need right now. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: Steven Spielberg // Written by: Zak Penn and Ernest Cline (based on the novel by Cline) // Starring: Tye Sheridan, Olivia Cooke, Ben Mendelsohn, Lena Waithe, T. J. Miller, Philip Zhao, Win Morisaki, Simon Pegg and Mark Rylance // 140 min.
The Republic of Wolves
Shrine
Self-Released

When talking about the Long Island quintet, The Republic of Wolves, there’s an elephant in the room. That elephant 1) is an iconic emo band hailing from the same location noted to have a similar sound, and 2) was recently outed for almost a decade of abusive behavior. Yes, there is no tangible connection between Brand New and The Republic of Wolves, but following years of influence and sonic comparison, it’s hard not to hear just a little bit of the former in everything the latter creates. And that’s okay. For all intents and purposes, Shrine picks up where Brand New’s disgraced legacy left off, delivering a career’s worth of menace and grandeur. It’s hard, hard work having a soul,” vocalist Mason Maggio sings on opening track “The Canyon.” Just moments before second track “Bask” opens up with the life-affirming gang vocal, “So let’s get to work!” a well-worn genre for some, Shrine fails for seconds. — Matt Swanseger

Unknown Mortal Orchestra
Sex & Food
Jagajaguwar

Unknown Mortal Orchestra leading man Ruban Nielson taps into listeners’ primal pleasure centers with Sex & Food, the experimental pop band’s fourth album. Much like contemporaries Tame Impala, UMO draws heavily from the psychedelic rock and pop music of the 1960s and 1970s, in terms of production, instrumentation, and sound. The album’s best asset might be in its dynamics; the ebbs and flows in mood and intensity, like those primitive urges after which it is titled. Take for instance the record’s opening sequence: “Major League Chemicals” gets things off to a rollicking start, with a swell of high gain guitars, vintage electric piano, and an acrobatic bassline. Nielson proceeds to slow things down with the haunting “Ministry of Alienation,” before proceeding to stratospheric highs as vocalist (and project mastermind) Will Kraus lends a breathy pseudo-whisper above the grainy track. It’s a high point in energy ebbs and flows in mood and intensity, like those primitive urges after which it is titled. Take for instance the record’s opening sequence: “Major League Chemicals” gets things off to a rollicking start, with a swell of high gain guitars, vintage electric piano, and an acrobatic bassline. Nielson proceeds to slow things down with the haunting “Ministry of Alienation,” before proceeding to stratospheric highs as vocalist (and project mastermind) Will Kraus lends a breathy pseudo-whisper above the grainy track. It’s a high point in energy "High Horse." The timbre and instrumentation of the record is almost completely unlike anything that could have been imagined in the indie pop vein, with reverberating guitar, spacious keyboard tones, and sequenced drum parts. Tonally, the record gets better with the underrated women of mid-90s pop — The Cardigans, Lisa Loeb, Sixpence None the Richer, or Natalie Imbruglia. Perhaps the best example of the album might be around the midpoint, with “Happy & Sad,” an emo pop ballad. It’s lighthearted enough to not be truly depressing, a sugar-coated treat that still isn’t afraid to hide its bitterness. — Nick Warren

Kraus
Path
Terrible Records

Kraus is the latest in a line of nearly inescapable Bandcamp recommendations, and for good reason. Path is an otherworldly shoegaze experience that can be both relentlessly aggressive and exceedingly calm, like Sigur Ros playing through a whole lot of distortion pedals. The album’s opening and closing tracks (“Figure” and “Mostly,” respectively) almost mirror each other with a Kid A-level of ambience, but it’s what’s packed in between that has more in common with various Deftones projects than, say, “Motion Picture Soundtrack.” Second track “Burn” is a melodic thrasher that takes noise-rock to stratospheric highs as vocalist (and project mastermind) Will Kraus lends a breathy pseudo-whisper above the grainy track. It’s a high point in energy that Path never truly loses — one that only simmers and fizzes along the way. Though Path may be an acquired taste for some, it’s liable to bend the minds of lo-fi musicians everywhere as the soaring piece and deafening detail was recorded in Kraus’ bedroom. If Kraus truly has become inescapable, it’s likely because this incredible and unexpected recording demands to not be overlooked. — Aaron Mook

Kacey Musgraves
Golden Hour
Mercury Records

It’s easy to write off a pop-country record. Golden Hour though, is a masterpiece — being exactly what it seeks out to be. The emotional purity on display in this record is elemental, containing deceptively simple building blocks of successful songwriting. For her third album proper, she’s somehow able to outdo herself again — even after two crossover successes with indie critics and country fans across America. Golden Hour pushes the boundaries of what can really be considered country. The 29-year-old’s Texas twang is omnipresent, as is her Western lyrical motifs at play in songs like “Space Cowboy,” “Velvet Elvis,” and “High Horse.” The timbre and instrumentation of the record is almost completely unlike anything that could have been imagined in the indie pop vein, with reverberating guitar, spacious keyboard tones, and sequenced drum parts. Tonally, the record gets better with the underrated women of mid-90s pop — The Cardigans, Lisa Loeb, Sixpence None the Richer, or Natalie Imbruglia. Perhaps the best example of the album might be around the midpoint, with “Happy & Sad,” an emo pop ballad. It’s lighthearted enough to not be truly depressing, a sugar-coated treat that still isn’t afraid to hide its bitterness. — Nick Warren
### Crossword

**Across**

1. Muslim pilgrimage  
9. Set straight  
14. Not esta or esa  
15. Uber rival  
16. Big name in Japanese electronics  
17. Hollywood agent’s job?  
20. 2008 film whose title is the initials of the martial arts expert who stars in the film  
21. Drunk motorist’s defense, briefly  
22. Part of a tuba’s sound  
23. USA ___  
26. They may make your hair stand on end  
27. “Who am ___ judge?”  
28. Miss one’s target during a pajama party fight?  
32. “Geez!”  
33. Knee-slapper  
34. Relative of -ists  
35. Tupperware contents, perhaps ... or this puzzle’s theme  
42. Dentist’s directive  
43. “I became insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity” writer  
46. Nullify a hunter’s weapon?  
51. NYC subway line named for two boroughs  
52. Carded, for short  
53. “Again ... ”  
54. Palindromic male’s name  
55. Modern prefix with gender  
56. President after Tyler  
57. Budget figure for a governor?  
58. Winter home, perhaps  
59. Pain in the neck  
60. “Dear old” person  
61. “The Greatest”  
62. Great deal  
63. Apt rhyme of “squeak”

**Down**

1. “Yoo-___!”  
2. Off-road wheels, briefly  
3. Beats Electronics co-founder Dr. ___  
4. “Star Wars” character ___ Binks  
5. The mi. in Mile-High City  
6. Like purple hair  
7. Org. with a “100 Greatest Movie Quotes of All Time” list  
8. Name on green-and-yellow soda cans  
9. St. Francis’ home  
10. Back muscle, to weightlifters  
11. Heaped together  
12. Elvis, at times  
13. They don’t make it  
18. Tool for the Grim Reaper  
19. [This is scary!]  
23. Friend of Huck  
24. Things zygotes come from  
25. Winter home, perhaps  
29. Cooperstown inst.  
30. Go beyond ripe  
31. “___ Misérables”  
35. The Once- ___ (Seuss character)  
36. Word on either side of “a”  
37. Biblical verb ending  
38. Keeps lusted, say  
39. Don  
40. “Brian’s Song” or “Sybil,” e.g.  
41. Bart Simpson catchphrase  
43. Org. for people puttering around?  
44. Foreign agreement  
45. Come to a close  
46. Mount in Exodus  
47. Havens who sang at Woodstock  
48. Romeo’s last words  
49. “The Crimes of Love” author Marquis ___  
50. “You should know better!”  
56. Cornmeal bread  
57. Blink ___ eye  
64. Hoist in the arm  
65. Not many ___

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