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VOL. 11 - NO. 10

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From the Editors

Will everything be fine with so many axes to grind?

There comes a time each year when election season and spooky season collide, and on occasion it can be hard to say which is more stomach-turning, the politics or the poltergeists. Walk or drive through your surrounding neighborhoods — whether built on a former graveyard or not — and you'd be hard-pressed not to notice the sudden shifts in temperature from bone-chilling cold to skin-crisping hot regarding certain candidates, agendas, and issues. Repeating "Beetlejuice" or "Bloody Mary" three times may not have any effect on your neighbor, but mentioning a disfavored political party or its platform might just as soon summon a demon.

Everyone's got an axe to grind it seems, and it can be difficult to tell who's for real and who's wearing someone else's face — and we must *axe ourselves do we *haft to go through this again? For some, the contentious 2020 presidential election left a stench of something not fully decomposed, of lingering animosity, distrust, and fear. Although a return to the polls might seem as appealing to some of you as venturing into an unlit catacomb, Erie Reader contributing editors Jim Wertz and Ben Speggen shine a torch on why you should take those steps in these upcoming municipal general elections, as local leadership can either resurrect or butcher a community's fortunes. Of course, we have strong opinions on whose words ring true and whose words ring hollow.

Speaking of hearsay and hollows, there has been much speculation over the decades about one of Erie County's most infamously spinet-ingling of sites, Axe Murder Hollow — and what *actually happened there. Erin Phillips dissects fact and fiction in this issue's cover story, the accompanying illustration provided by (who else but) Monster Mark Kosobucki. Not to make a eugenics experiment out of this foreword (check Jonathan Burdick's foray into the gruesome and unsettling history of human selective breeding), but after years in cold storage, another Eerie Horror Fest is being spliced together this year, and all of us are morbidly anxious for a successful return from the dead.

Also showing out among the living again in 2021 is the Jefferson Educational Society's Global Summit, bringing together so many good brains in Erie you'd think they were catering a zombie wedding. The distinguished guests and panelists at this (lucky) 13th edition will certainly have much to comment on as our world continues to be haunted by armed conflict, social injustice, climate change, food insecurity, and disease (with COVID-19 and opioid addiction being a particularly perilous two-headed monster both locally and globally, as our Dan Schank details).

For now, we have little choice but to keep gutting it out. But we must hope that breaking our self-destructive curse is not just the stuff of legend.

Erie at Large: Defeating Trump Was Just the Start

Trumpian attitudes still strongly linger in right-wing politics, ideologies



By: Jim Wertz

Defeating Trump in 2020 was the first step in defeating Trumpism, but there's a long way to go. That's because the takeover of the Republican Party by anti-democratic factions of right-wing extremists extends far beyond their influence within the Trump Administration and campaign infrastructure during the past decade.

The Guardian recently reported on leaked membership documents of a group that connects Republican strategists and elected officials with leaders of organizations, many of which are anti-government and anti-democratic, that have been categorized as hate groups. It's part of the mission of the Council for National Policy (CNP), which for more than 40 years has pushed a radical conservative agenda in an effort to reshape the fabric of American democracy.

CNP leaders are best known for their efforts to create the "Moral Majority," popularized in 1980s Republican rhetoric and policy, and for their connections to the secretive conservative Christian group, The Fellowship, which was featured in the 2019 Netflix documentary series *The Family*, which illuminated how this cult-like organization used religion as a means to influence and manipulate American policymakers.

Over its more than 40 year history, the CNP has migrated from an ideological mission to push its conservative agenda through the influence of public

policymakers to a more insidious effort to undermine the democratic processes that have kept the clandestine organization from achieving its vision of a more perfect Union.

The CNP executive chairman told an audience in 2020 that the impending presidential election was "a spiritual battle" of "good versus evil."

To carry out its plan, the CNP has enlisted and counts among its leadership the founders of anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, and anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups, among others who sit side-by-side with better known conservative organizations like the Federalist Society and the American Conservative Union.

A spokesperson for the Global Project Against Hate and Extremism told The Guardian that the CNP "clearly remains a critical nexus for mainstreaming extremists from the far right into conservative circles."

While the CNP and its members include the most elite of the Republican establishment — including Reince Priebus, the former RNC Chair who served a short stint as Donald Trump's White House Chief of Staff — its evolution into a matchmaking organization for extremists has fed an ideological shift in the Republican Party that brought challenges to American democracy including the Jan. 6 insurrection at the United States Capitol and the persistent resistance to accept the outcome of the 2020 presidential election.

Most relevant to you, Reader readers,

Erie Reader contributing editor Jim Wertz urges you to do your homework on candidates for prominent local offices such as Erie County Executive before collecting your "I Voted" sticker on Tuesday, Nov. 2

is that these ideological machinations are central to many local Republicans and you can see it playing out this year in the nomination of far-right anti-government extremists across Erie County for County Council, sheriff, and even the county executive.

An archive of Facebook posts by Republican Erie County Executive candidate Brenton Davis made over the past few years recently became the subject of the Facebook group "True Quotes of an Erie Working Man." It can be found at facebook.com/groups/erieworkingman. It's illuminating.

The posts contain the shallow musings of the real Brenton Davis rather than the thinly veiled moderation of the candidate, hand polished by formerly respectable local Republican standard bearers, that you've seen on the campaign trail over the past few months.

His posts reflect the same anti-immigrant, anti-government, conservative ideology being preached by the CNP.

In a post from 2015 chastising Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto for welcoming Syrian refugees to his city, Davis exclaims that Peduto "knows not the thunder he is bringing upon his own city and state," suggesting as he had in more recent posts and comments that there is a correlation between immigration and a "plethora of issues, disease, and death." America, he says, is "at capacity."

Just last year, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and the federal election cycle, Davis questioned the pandemic, placing quotation marks around the word virus in an attempt to illustrate his disbelief, referring to mitigation efforts as acts of tyranny, and repeatedly posting about going to war against the United States.

"I could also have never fathomed a call to fight against our own government," he wrote. "But this is our reality." The post accompanied photos of his time in the military and a strange photo of Davis in his military uniform as an old man, made with the help of a social media app, presumably contem-

plating his victory against the same government he now campaigns to be a part of. "Together, we will take back Our America," he concludes.

These posts are just a few among the myriad topics including those comparing women to pick-up trucks and parking spaces, claims of election fraud long before 2020, and a series of verbal assaults, mostly directed at female Democratic politicians.

[Brenton Davis] now puts on a suit and feigns tacit support for the community issues and government programs he has for years rallied against. But no amount of whitewashing or cleaning of one's social media can cleanse the reality of what type of person lies in wait under that suit.

But what is most remarkable about this archive is the window that these posts open on Davis, the person, as compared to Davis, the politician. He now puts on a suit and feigns tacit support for the community issues and government programs he has for years rallied against. But no amount of whitewashing or cleaning of one's social media can cleanse the reality of what type of person lies in wait under that suit.

Someone once told me that when someone shows you who they are you should believe them. Brenton Davis has shown us post after post that, despite his self-celebrated military career, he's not fit for service.

Jim Wertz is a contributing editor and the Chairman of the Erie County Democratic Party. He can be reached at jWertz@ErieReader.com and you can follow him on Twitter @jim_wertz.

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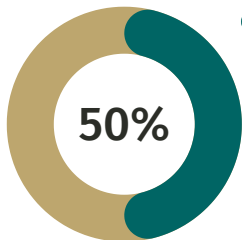
The Greater Erie Economic Development Corporation (GEEDC) and The Erie Community Foundation established the “We Believe in Erie Fund” in 2021. The two nonprofits are joining forces to inspire hope in the Erie community and bridge the gaps of economic and racial inequities.

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Erie's Municipal General Elections Set for Nov. 2

What role will voter turnout play as key races see new faces?



Among the key races in the upcoming municipal general elections are seats for Erie County Executive, Erie County Sheriff, and Millcreek Township Supervisor, among others. Compared to presidential elections, voter turnout in municipal elections tends to be drastically lower (around 30 percent of eligible voters in Erie County).

ed his sole 2021 primary challenger, first-time candidate Shawn Wroblewski, a paramedic with East Erie County Emergency Medical Services.

Wroblewski has endorsed Titus. But this hasn't been the only cross-party endorsement. Rita Bishop, who sought the 7th District county council seat in 2019 but lost to Republican Ellen Schauerman and finished last in the four-way Democratic contest in May, endorsed Davis.

Will these endorsements move the needle? It's hard to tell. Will potential future endorsements make a difference? That's also hard to tell, but it's worth watching.

In other races it may be harder to discern differences between candidates' demeanor, experience, and policy positions. The 2021 county executive candidates draw stark contrasts that stand to become more apparent as election day draws nearer.

Another thing to watch: Advertisements. Both candidates launched positively, featuring television ads promoting themselves and their campaigns. So far, only Davis has gone negative with a commercial he's approved that goes on the attack against Titus.

Titus has since responded on social media, posting that upon seeing their opponent's new negative ad, their 8-year-old son said: "Dad, this makes me want to cry. Can we have a commercial that says don't believe Brenton and follow your dreams, be yourself, and never give up?" To which Titus responds in the post: "Even better: we can have a whole campaign that says that."

There are plenty of other things to watch for before the election — additional debates (the first was toned down with both candidates staying calmly in their lanes), campaign finance reports (to see the impact of local and outside funding in a race drawing outside attention given Erie's continued bellwether status), coalition building within parties, across-the-aisle coalitions.

By: Ben Speggen

When it comes to voter turnout in municipal elections, Erie falls in line with national trends. As the *New York Times* reports, on average, just 27 percent of local populations head to the polls when their local elections are on the ballot. In May's 2021 municipal primary elections, just shy of 30 percent of eligible voters in Erie County cast their ballots.

But when it comes to electing the chief executive of the nation, turnout more than doubles. Just a year earlier when Democratic nominee Joe Biden defeated President Donald Trump, the incumbent Republican, Erie, again, fell in line with national voter turnout averages.

Low voter turnout at municipal elections continues to be the study of foundations, media, and think tanks nationwide. Some argue that voters feel there's more at stake in electing presidents, senators, governors, and congressional representatives. Others argue that getting to the polls is too challenging. Myriad recommendations and solutions have been and continue to be proposed.

In Pennsylvania, PA Voter Reform Act 77, signed by Gov. Tom Wolf in 2019, opened up the voting process to no-ex-

cuse mail-in ballots. With just the 2020 elections and 2019's primary in the books, it's hard to say just yet that in Erie it's had a profound impact on driving up overall voter turnout.

The challenge of getting voters to the polls is not party-specific. Five months ago in Erie's primary elections, just shy of 34 percent of registered Democrats voted. For Republicans, it was nearly 32 percent.

The reason for low turnout this year won't be because a marquee local race isn't on the ballot. This year, Erie is in the process of determining who goes down in history as the county's seventh top executive.

Its sixth and current county executive, Kathy Dahlkemper, elected not to seek reelection despite being eligible for one more four-year term under the county's three-term limit policy. The former congresswoman, who defeated Democratic incumbent Barry Grossman in 2013 and later Republican Don Tucci in the general election, made history in 2017. Defeating Republican challenger Art Oligeri, she became just the second Erie County Executive in Erie's history to serve more than one term. The other, Democrat Judy Lynch, served five terms in an era pre-dating term limits.

Dr. Tyler Titus, a mental health professional and small-business owner, emerged from a pack of four contenders in the spring after a four-lead-change election night that spilled over into the next day as ballots were still being counted. Titus, who made history as the first openly transgender person elected in Pennsylvania, is currently serving as President of the Erie School Board in their first term, and would again make history if elected, becoming the first openly transgender person to be elected county executive.

Brenton Davis, a military veteran and small-business owner, also looks to make history by doing what hasn't been done in 20 years: Win a bid for Erie County Executive as a Republican.

Since Richard Schenker, who served one term from 2002 to 2006, Democrats have held the seat. Of the six executives so far, just one other Republican has served — the first-ever County Executive elected, Russell Robison, who won office in 1977 after Erie County adopted its home-rule charter. Of the 11 terms served since Robison was inaugurated in 1978, Democrats have served nine and Republicans two.

The 2021 election marks Davis' second bid for county executive. Bested by Art Oligeri in 2017's primary, Davis defeat-

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tion building (since Pennsylvania remains a closed-primary state and support can only be manifested outside the ballot box in May), and more. And, there are plenty of other races worth watching.

With the ousting of Democrat John Morgan in his reelection bid in the primary, Millcreek will have a new face for Millcreek Township Supervisor after voters just bumped John Groh an election cycle prior. Too, there'll be a new sheriff in town. And both councils — the City of Erie and Erie County Council will be reconstituted anew with some incumbents not seeking reelection and others losing their primary bids.

And there's school boards. And there's ... well, there's a lot that *should* motivate more than one-third of the 86,462 registered Democrats and 66,976 registered Republican voters to get to the polls to elect those who govern most closely to them.

To be clear, there are literally *millions* of additional reasons. In the county alone, there are 275 million reasons with 275 million dollar signs attached to them, as the forthcoming pandemic

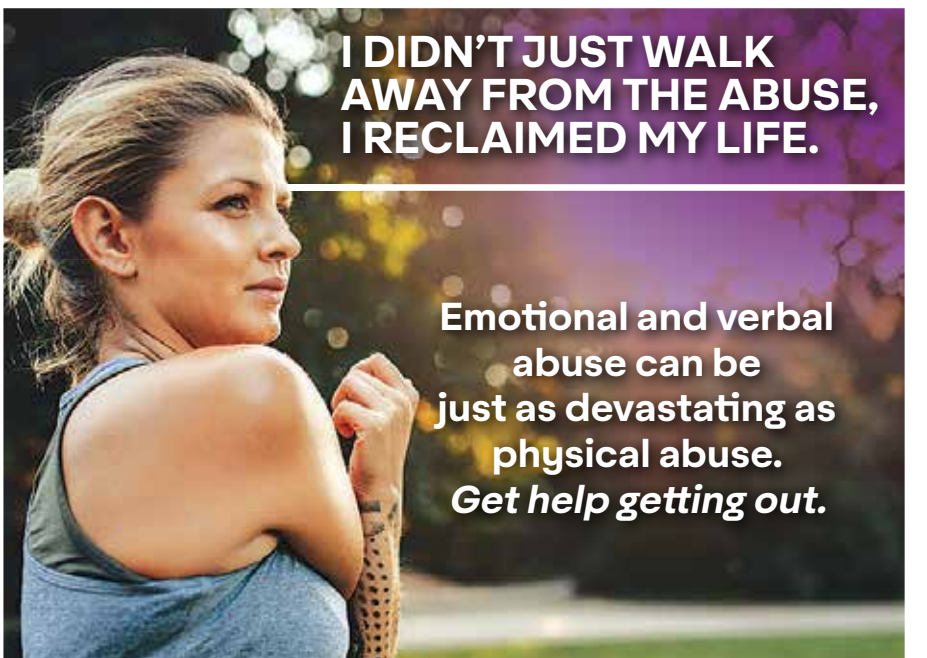
relief aid from the Biden administration's American Relief Plan will soon flow into the county where elected officials will oversee how these funds are injected throughout the region.

There's always a lot at stake when it comes to elections. But never before has there been so much hinging on a local election in modern history.

Will that be enough to drive voter participation in a municipal election to the same level as a presidential election? If not now, when, if ever?

Rather than garnering the attention of those eager to forecast who might win in 2022's midterms and 2024's presidential election, Erie could draw the eyes of a nation to be studied as a model where voters hold their local elections in the same regard — if not higher — than that of voting for presidents, senators, representatives, and governors. Perhaps it's time for Erie to buck the national trend and become a trendsetter. We stand to make history if we elect to do so.

Ben Speggen can be contacted at bspeggen@ErieReader.com, and you can follow him on Twitter @BenSpeggen.



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A Q&A with Erie County Sheriff Candidate Chris Campanelli

With 25 years of experience, Campanelli has a fresh perspective for the office



JESSICA HUNTER

Erie County Sheriff candidate Chris Campanelli has spent the past 25 years serving under sheriffs Bob Merski Sr. and John Loomis, ascending to the rank of captain. He has received endorsement from both men in his race against Republican challenger Brian Shank.

NW: Then after that, you were made captain, correct?

CC: I was then promoted to captain, which is the position I hold currently. That position directly supervises the criminal division of the sheriff's office, and oversees the daily operations of the office. Yeah, so I oversee the criminal civil division and the court division.

NW: Prior to this, I realized how little I understand about the sheriff's office, and I think a lot of people are probably in the same boat. Can you just tell me what are the main day-to-day and bigger picture duties of an elected sheriff in particular?

CC: It's more of an administrative position. But they oversee all of their command staff. They are the ones that are dealing with much more the administrative side of things, the budgets, the hiring process. I could go on and on. They do the sheriff sales for real estate property. Deputies handle personal property.

NW: How many deputies are in the Erie County Sheriff's Office?

CC: Our office has 40 full-time deputies, and I believe six clerical staff, and that includes our school resource officers (SROs).

NW: You mentioned John Loomis, the current sheriff. Can you talk about his endorsement and what that's meant for your campaign? And beyond that, also, Bob Merski Sr., the previous sheriff.

CC: Well, I'll start with Bob, because 25 years ago, I think Bob saw something in me just to hire me.

NW: He's the person who hired you?

CC: Yes, Bob is the sheriff that actually hired me full-time. I think he saw in me the things that he thought were right for that office. I worked for him as a civil deputy for 17 years. When John won the election and took over, he saw in me what I knew I had in there, and he liked the fact that I had strong leadership ability. I could make decisions. And I think a lot of that was my Marine Corps experience, as

well as my years of experience in the office. That's why he put me into his command staff, and I think that's why he consequently made me the captain. Because he knew that I know what it takes to run an office and to make sure the daily operations run properly.

NW: Am I correct that Loomis endorsed you even prior to your campaign announcement?

CC: He has from day one.

I would say that I'm very lucky because not only did he take the chances on me, in furthering my career, he's blessed me in a way — by being able to expose me to the budgetary side of things, the hiring process, and unfortunately the firing process as well. It's all part of what the sheriff does in running the office. I've been very lucky that he's taken the time to show me these things. Because these are things that the average person — and the average deputy — will never know.

NW: How does the sheriff's office work with the police department and their organizational leadership?

CC: We've had, in the 25 years that I've been there, an outstanding relationship with *all* the local agencies in Erie County. The Erie Police Department probably more than the rest because we interact with them more, because our home base is the courthouse here in Downtown Erie. We have done many, many things with them. We've worked side by side with them on the Weed and Seed program and on the Gun Task Force. I believe that all the agencies in Erie County would have nothing but good things to say about the sheriff's office.

NW: And probably the Police Athletic League is involved there as well?

CC: Correct. Actually, the PAL's program in Erie County is the *only* one in the United States where the county sheriff and the city police chief are both involved in the same capacity. So we're very lucky for that.

NW: What is your vision for moving the sheriff's office forward?

CC: I believe we have to look into ways to streamline the operations of the office, we need to incorporate definitely more technology. We're using some computers that are 10 years old. We have to increase and improve in areas of training. The warrant service

By: Nick Warren

Chris Campanelli was born and raised in Erie County. After graduating from Academy High School, Campanelli served in the Marine Corps for five years starting in 1991, being stationed in numerous countries throughout Southeast Asia.

For 25 years, he has served at the Erie County Sheriff's Office, rising to the rank of captain. In February of 2021, Campanelli announced his bid to move forward for the role of Erie County Sheriff.

In one of the few elected law enforcement positions, the Erie County Sheriff serves for a four-year term. The role is currently held by Campanelli's boss, John Loomis, who chose to retire after the end of his second term. Prior to Loomis, Bob Merski Sr. served as Erie County Sheriff for four terms and a 16-year run. Merski, Loomis, and Campanelli are all registered Democrats.

Like similar county departments, the sheriff's office looks different depending on where you're at. Pennsylvania's status as a commonwealth makes it distinct from neighboring out-of-state counties, while counties with varying populations and allocated resources see offices of varying capacities. In Erie County, our sheriff's office is an arm of the court versus doing patrol work like city or state police.

Nick Warren: Why are you running for Sheriff?

Chris Campanelli: I've been a public servant my whole adult life. It is what I was meant to do. It's my passion. I love where I live. I love the people that I provide services for, and I think it's the right move for me. I think as the sheriff, I would have the tools and the opportunity to actually *make* change for the better for the people of Erie County.

NW: A big part of your candidacy is the fact that you've served 25 years in the sheriff's office. Can you go into detail about how that's prepared you for the actual role?

CC: Well, I started in 1996. Right after I got out of the military and Act 120. I started as a per diem deputy, working full-time hours, but I basically ran the holding facility at the sheriff's office when we'd bring prisoners over for court hearings. From that in '98 I was hired full time. I was considered a civil deputy, so I did a lot of civil process, protection orders, sheriff's sales — things like that. When John Loomis became the sheriff, he promoted me to lieutenant. At that point, I was in charge of courthouse security, and I was the liaison to the court, so I handled all the court scheduling, and I was the liaison between the judges and the sheriff's office.



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needs to be revamped to improve our ability to effectuate and arrest more criminals off the streets of Erie County, to provide a safer community for us, and to take some of the burden off of the taxpayer.

NW: Can you speak a little bit to the differences between being involved in the City of Erie versus the county?

CC: One thing to understand about the sheriff's office is that what we do for the most part — that the other agencies don't deal with — is civil process. Civil process is probably 40 percent of what our office does, and that would be going out and serving criminal complaints, protection orders, writs of execution, things of that nature. We do that throughout every part of the county, where police agencies have a very small jurisdiction. Erie police can only be in Erie city limits ... Just as an example, if an officer from Edinboro had to arrest somebody that he had a warrant on but it was in McKean, a deputy sheriff from Erie County could go with him and he could arrest them because we have jurisdiction throughout the whole county. So that's why that communication is so important.

NW: Can you tell us a little bit about how your time in the Marine Corps has shaped you in your career in law enforcement?

CC: I have to be honest, and anybody that knows me will tell you the same thing. I will say this every day of my life. The Marine Corps saved my life. There was a time where I didn't know what I wanted to do with myself. That weird age of 18 to 20, you don't know what to do. And I was hanging out with the people that were not the best. And the light switch went off in my head. I said "I have to do something." I joined the Marine Corps because I knew it was *not* going to be easy. From day one they instilled into all of us, I believe, discipline, leadership, and the ability to adapt to just about anything. And those are the three major things — other than pride. I will always be a proud Marine. Those three things I will take to the grave with me, but there are others too: honor, respect, and courage. I think the main things that I've utilized for my career would be leadership, discipline, and the ability to make decisions. Anybody that carries a firearm needs to know how to make decisions at a second's notice.

NW: Can you talk a little bit about the role of politics at the sheriff's of-

fice or lack thereof?

CC: Well, I can say this. I think, as the sheriff, and any deputy that works for the sheriff, politics should not come into play at any time. The services that our office provides, will always, under my watch, be provided to every person that's in need. I don't think that race, religion, sexual orientation, or politics have anything to do with the services our office provides. And it would not — under my watch.

NW: Obviously, the role of law enforcement in the last two years has radically changed. Black Lives Matter, defund the police movements. Everyone's talking about it and many, many people believe in it. How do you see that shaping the sheriff's office?

CC: I believe our office has always held the highest esteem and the highest integrity, or I wouldn't be part of it. That being said, there's always room for improvement. And with the environment in today's society, there's no question that our deputies need more training, whether it be communication sensitivity, they have to be able to communicate with the different multicultural parts of our community. From the African-American community, the LGBTQ+ population, to our up-and-coming population of New Americans. You have to be able to communicate because some of them can't understand. And I can speak to this firsthand, having been raised by an immigrant, not educated. He *spoke* the language, but we understood him a little more than most people. He would have a hard time. But you have to spend a little more time and they have to learn to do that. And I think a lot of that is not only in the hiring process — you have to get better candidates — but also the educational process. You have to train them. It's not difficult. It's having an open mind and treating everybody the same.

NW: What is the first thing that you want candidates to know about you?

CC: I would want them to know that I'm the only candidate in this race that is certified to enforce criminal and civil law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I'm the only one.

Chris Campanelli wished to thank his campaign team, his wife Molly Ashby-Campanelli. Michele Farrell, Jim Farrell, Dave Ashby, Gary Grack, Patty Palotas, Rodell Ashby, Tom Szelinski, and Tara Szelinski.

Nick Warren can be reached at nick@eriereader.com

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Community College Aids Brain Gain

Two deans have Erie roots



By: Liz Allen

Saida Harper, 36, a stay-at-home mother of three, said that as she studies information technology at the new Erie County Community College, she also hopes to improve her conversational English. One day, she said, she may even combine her new IT skills with her law degree from Russia, her native country.

Tinya Thomas, 50, enrolled in the community college's liberal arts program at the urging of her husband, Jason. She has a GED, studied as a paralegal, and got certified as a home-health aide in 2002. "I always wanted to go to

school to further my education. I'm very inquisitive. I love learning," she said. "This opportunity is too good to let go by. Maybe someday I'll open my own business."

Erie County Councilman Andre Horton, 61, is taking an English class at the college because he's writing a book. Next year, after he retires from his job as a union laborer, he may go on to earn a degree. Tuition is currently free for Erie County residents, thanks to funding by Erie County Council through the American Rescue Plan. The ARP funds and donations are covering tuition for now because until the college

[top left] Dean Rebecca Walker, left, and Dean Keri Bowman, right, greet Tinya Thomas, a new student at the Erie County Community College. [top right] Saida Harper, right, is excited to begin studying information technology at the Erie County Community College. Those on hand to welcome Harper on her first day included, from the left, Clarissa Baker, coordinator of student success; Andrew Dick, registrar; Andrea Obert, college counselor; and Keri Bowman, dean of student support, success, and enrollment management. [bottom left] First National Bank employees Kristen Piccirilli, workplace banking specialist, and Christopher Hanes, branch manager, were ready to greet students at the Erie County Community College outside the Benedict Education Center, 330 E. 10th St., as a new term began. [bottom right] Erie County Councilman Andre Horton checks out a T-shirt from First National Bank before his first day as a student at the Erie County Community College. Christopher Hanes, left, is branch manager of First National's West Eighth Street bank. Horton, co-chair of Empower Erie, is paying tuition for the English class he's taking.

is accredited, students are not eligible for financial aid.

But Horton is paying for his college course. Horton co-chaired Empower

Erie, the group that successfully advocated to move the community college from long-time pipe dream to reality. By paying for his tuition, he wants to

reinforce the message that even at the normal \$160-per-credit-hour rate, the Erie County Community College is affordable, especially for those who didn't take a traditional path to college after high school.

These three adult students are among those who began classes in the college's new 12-week term, which started Sept. 29. The college's 16-week term began Sept. 1. The eight-week term starts on Oct. 21 and the spring term on Jan. 10. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, until the day before classes begin, although students are encouraged to apply with more lead time. There are also additional fees, including a \$40 one-time new-student fee.

On the day when Harper, Thomas, Horton and other new students prepared to walk through the door at the Benedict Education Center at 330 E. 10th St., two deans and three other staff members were on hand to greet them, provide masks, and give them a small fruit-flavored snack. They were also ready to provide helpful solutions, such as when Thomas said she was having difficulty logging on to her classwork at home.

At a nearby table, Kristen Piccirilli and Christopher Hanes, from First National Bank, handed out free T-shirts with the EC3PA logo — a blue drawing of the Bicentennial Tower, set against an orange and yellow sky, with a blue and white border and the tagline, "Our Community, Your College." They also explained the bank's checking plan for college students.

College offices are located in the basement, and classes take place on the third floor; the Benedictine Sisters maintain their ministries on the first and second floors. Once students are admitted after showing their IDs at a front-desk window, they enter a space where handsomely tiled walls create a sense of tradition and serenity. The sleek new desks, computer stations, and big-screen projector systems signal that this building, which opened as St. Benedict Academy in 1955, is up to the task of educating students with up-to-date technology.

Administrators like to introduce themselves to students and memorize their names because they want the new collegians to know that the community college will support them from the beginning. Do you remember the daze of freshmen orientation? Imagine that nervousness combined with qualms about starting college years af-

ter you last set foot in a classroom. Or put yourself in the shoes of someone whose native language isn't English or faces a setback because childcare plans fall through or a transportation issue arises.

"Life gets in the way," said Dr. Christopher Gray, president of EC3PA, as the Erie college is known. "A \$40 flat tire can derail you."

Gray, the college's two deans, and their colleagues are there to keep students on track. All active students receive free EMTA bus passes. Parents have been introduced to the Sister Gus' Kids Café after-school program, run by Emmaus Ministries at 310 E. 10th St., just west of the college, and the college is working on securing childcare services.

"My mission and my passion are to help people better their lives and to make sure they feel like they belong in a college setting," said Keri Bowman, dean of student support, success, and enrollment management.

Rebecca Walker, dean of applied programs, student success, and innovation, also is passionate about her role — to help the new college students acquire skills that will lead to a good job when they are finished. "Education changes generations," she said.

They have more than an academic interest in making sure that Erie County is a place where affordable education leads to good jobs and an improved quality of life. Both women grew up here — Bowman attended General McLane High School, while Walker went to Iroquois High.

Before being hired at the Erie County Community College, Bowman was dean of student success at Northern Virginia Community College and Walker was associate dean of sustainability, business, and career technologies at Elgin Community College, about 35 miles northwest of Chicago. When the two educators moved back to Erie, they became part of Erie's brain gain, Dr. Gray said.

Family ties played a role in enticing Bowman and Walker to join EC3PA, but it's the opportunity to be part of a new college with mission-oriented goals that sealed the deal.

Bowman, 50, got an early look at how a community college education opens doors. "My dad went to a community college when I was little," she said. "I watched his college career unfold in such a dynamic, comforting environment." Her father, the late Don Bowman, became a registered nurse

and worked at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania's health center.

Bowman spoke candidly about "some trials" she faced when she started college at the University of Pittsburgh. "I had a really, really good time," she said with a laugh. She came back to Edinboro for her undergraduate degree, then earned her master's and Ed.D. at North Carolina State in higher education administration. She decided to concentrate on higher ed after working in the North Carolina prison system, where she saw "real and true racism" firsthand. That experience made her decide to help people to "better their lives and to make sure they feel like they belong in a college setting."

Her mom, Sandy Bowman, helped to "plant the seed" that Bowman should apply for a job at the Erie college by sending her newspaper clippings about Empower Erie.

Walker, 42, was not familiar with community colleges until she went to school in Kentucky. As she struggled to pay for college, she met roommates and hallmates who had already taken many courses at low-cost community colleges. "I was surprised that people had access to something that I didn't," she said. "I got a four-year degree in art, which did not get me a great job but did leave me with a lot of debt," she added.

After graduating, she taught overseas, mostly in Cambodia. "When I landed in Chicagoland, I ended up working with refugees and immigrants," she said. "I fell in love with that community and adult education."

Her passion is narrowing the skills gap, to guide community college students into technical fields so that they are equipped to move into a job — truck driving, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, welding or fire science, for example — when they are done.

Some community college students will also take the next step, by enrolling in a traditional four-year college. "Students who start and do two years (at a community college) are more successful when they transfer," she said.

Gray, the college president, said that community colleges do the "yeoman's work" of preparing vulnerable students to succeed at four-year institutions, noting that 60 percent of those who graduate from four-year schools have already taken courses at a community college.

Bowman and Walker decided they couldn't pass up on the chance to be part of that success story in Erie. Help-

ing to launch a new college requires a lot of adrenaline, said Bowman.

Beyond the daily rewards of meeting new students and walking them through the programs, there are also the rewards of being back in Erie.

For Bowman, that has meant enrolling her daughter at General McLane, her alma mater, and staying, for now, with her widowed mom. For Walker, it's living here with her husband and two little kids, who are now surrounded by "aunts, uncles and grandparents." It's taking the children to Sara's for an orange-twist cone, then sitting on the beach and listening to the waves.

Administrators [at the Erie Community College of Pennsylvania] like to introduce themselves to students and memorize their names because they want the new collegians to know that the community college will support them from the beginning.

Those other sounds you will hear in the near future? Those will be Erie employers, saying, "Wow! Look at this! We have people to hire," Walker said.

Liz Allen is thrilled that Erie finally has a community college, 20 years after a consultant's report, "Toward an Economic Development Strategy for Erie," by Brian Bosworth, urged Erie to create one. You can reach her at lizallenerie@gmail.com.

Learn more

To learn more about the Erie County Community College, visit ecccpa.org, where you can also find a blog by Dr. Chris Gray, college president. In addition to classes at the Benedict Education Center, 330 E. 10th St., the college is using space at the Corry Higher Education Center and offering big lectures, labs and field experience at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center on Fridays. Classes will begin at the Regional Career and Technical Center, 8500 Oliver Road, on Oct. 21. There are also online classes. Students all have access to use the resources of the Erie County Library and the libraries at Penn State Behrend and Edinboro University of Pennsylvania.

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Dueling Dual Epidemics

COVID-19 and opioid abuse in Erie County



With the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression have been exacerbated due to stress and isolation, feeding directly into another widespread crisis — our often lethal addiction to opioids in the United States. In 2020, 89 people died from drug overdoses in Erie County alone, with 66 overdose deaths so far this year, according to the county coroner's office.

one should be “included in every first aid station just like a defibrillator,” she is quick to resist thinking of it as a silver bullet: “One of the greatest dangers is considering naloxone the only intervention needed to end addiction and substance use. Without a continuation of care, there is no long-term solution for those who are suffering from substance use disorders.”

We've had some small victories in our efforts to address the heroin and opioid crisis over the past few years. Opioid prescriptions have been reduced by approximately 40 percent in the state of Pennsylvania, for example. And the warm handoff programs mentioned above, which pair people in overdose situations at emergency room facilities with immediate treatment and recovery services, were able to continue throughout the pandemic while medical professionals effectively maintained safety protocols.

But challenges related to COVID-19 — and synthetic opioids like fentanyl — have made real progress difficult. Kerner laments that fentanyl is not only showing up in our heroin supplies, but also in counterfeit pills as well. “With COVID-19,” she says, “not only is there the risk of contaminated sources, but also the threat of a deadly disease and mitigation efforts associated with it.” For example, people are less likely to use drugs in groups while social distancing. “As a consequence,” she continues, “if there are high amounts of fentanyl in what is used, an overdose might occur while the user is completely alone. This eliminates the chance of immediate intervention with naloxone or for the presence of emergency medical services.”

Addressing needs effectively

According to Mandy Fauble, director of clinical care services at UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor, “there are three key ways that we have

By: Dan Schank

Since the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 epidemic has directly impacted our lives on a daily basis, sometimes as an inconvenience and sometimes as a life-changing catastrophe. It's been absolutely exhausting — and it's not over yet.

But COVID isn't the only crisis we're dealing with. According to Jason Kisielewski, community affairs manager at Gaudenzia Erie, Inc., people living with addictions “have been facing two pandemics: the coronavirus pandemic as well as the heroin and opioid epidemic.” Over the past year-and-a-half, COVID-19 has taken the lives of nearly 700,000 people in the U.S. alone — including more than 500 of our neighbors in Erie County, according to the Erie County Department of Health. Alongside its wrath, overdose deaths also rose steadily. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate that over 81,000 drug overdose deaths occurred in the U.S. between May 2019 and May 2020 — the highest number ever recorded. By the end of the year, that number exceeded 93,000 people.

In Pennsylvania, the CDC has reported a 16 percent increase in overdose

deaths between 2019 and 2020, ending over 5,000 lives. In Erie County, drug overdoses led to 89 casualties in 2020. As I write this in late September, our coroner's office has recorded 66 overdose deaths in 2021. And our Commonwealth's website estimates that there are 4,677 people in Erie County living with a drug use disorder.

Concurrently, COVID-19 has left many of us more anxious and isolated, which often leads to destructive behavior. “People who are battling anxiety, stress, and depression often turn to drugs and alcohol to cope with things,” according to Kisielewski. “Addiction is an isolating disease, and COVID-19 has limited our clients' abilities to engage in social interactions with the recovering community.”

This article is an attempt to tell two familiar, depressing stories at once. We'll consider what people with addictions are going through during an unprecedented epidemic. And through conversations with local recovery specialists and public health officials, we'll examine what it's like to provide addiction resources at a time when our hospitals are overextended and many are understandably reluctant to leave their homes.

What has changed

“In 2018, Governor Wolf declared a state of emergency for the opioid epidemic. And we were really encouraged by the initiatives that were set forth from that declaration,” says Kisielewski. These initiatives have included training and outreach events targeting roughly 13,000 student and faculty members at our colleges, eight Medication Assisted Treatment programs across the state (as well as an expansion of such programs in our prisons), new initiatives targeting the needs of veterans with addictions, and a sustained effort to make naloxone widely available to first responders and community organizations.

For the unfamiliar, naloxone (often referred to by the brand name Narcan) is a medicine designed to reverse symptoms after an overdose has occurred. According to Mary Rose Kerner, epidemiology investigator at the Erie County Department of Health, “the benefits of naloxone include the complete reversal of an overdose which saves a life and enables us to transfer a person with a substance use disorder to a hospital where they can be introduced to warm handoff programs and treatment.” Though Kerner believes nalox-

ANTONIO RODRIGUEZ

seen individuals we serve impacted by the pandemic. The first has simply been an increase in stress. While we have all been impacted, for people who are already managing stressful situations or dealing with existing health concerns, the pandemic has generally taken a tougher toll. For individuals managing caregiving, parenting, health issues, moves, financial burdens or other types of needs like substance use disorder, they might be spread very thin in terms of the volume of things that demand their attention and that also require the use of their coping skills.”

Fauble continues: “The second challenge has been increased isolation. It has been difficult for many of us to be away from our friends, relatives, routines, and things that can give us a sense of purpose and keep us going throughout our day. For individuals seeking recovery, disconnection from 12-step meetings or healthcare services can also increase the risk of recurrence of use or postponing care.”

Fauble’s third challenge involves resources: “While many services have shifted to telehealth during the pandemic, or remained open, getting services and access to resources required efforts to adapt. The pandemic has certainly highlighted how successful virtual connections can be, but individuals often needed to learn new technology, figure out new transportation options, or develop ways to ensure their telehealth felt as useful to them as their in-person services.” At Gaudenzia, Kisielewski has also implemented a telehealth model, though it occasionally requires adaptation: “We have clients who are not comfortable utilizing telehealth opportunities. Maybe they don’t have access to a laptop, a desktop, a tablet, or a smartphone. So we’ve done things like having counseling sessions over the phone to address it.”

Vicki Church, a certified recovery specialist at Safe Harbor, has noticed “an urgent increase in the needs for social engagement” among her clients. She claims that practical concerns like “childcare and lack of transportation” have led to increased isolation. Fear of contamination on public transit, especially prior to vaccines becoming available, created challenges. She is also concerned about decreased awareness around addiction issues, noting that “the heroin/opioid crisis seems to have been put on the ‘back burner.’ It does

not seem as important, or as much of a crisis, as it should. And it does not help when our overdose rate continues to go up dramatically.” Church believes that we need “more media coverage, news reports, or even statistical analyses to show the community the importance of this.” She also cites the need for more education in our hospitals, especially concerning “stigma, empathy, and stories of hope surrounding substance use.”

“While we have all been impacted, for people who are already managing stressful situations or dealing with existing health concerns, the pandemic has generally taken a tougher toll ... they might be spread very thin in terms of the volume of things that demand their attention and that also require the use of their coping skills.” — Mandy Fauble, director of clinical care services at UPMC Western Behavioral Health at Safe Harbor

COVID-19 also increases the competition for financial resources. At Gaudenzia, Kisielewski notes that “there is strong competition for dollars. Organizations that have been so great and supportive in the past don’t have the ability to support us because they were also faced with their own unexpected situations.” At Safe Harbor, Fauble is quick to note that her organization has weathered the storm, but “that the recovery from COVID-19 may be more challenging over the next few years.”

We’re living at an uncertain moment, with a seemingly endless series of catastrophes competing for our attention. It can be easy to ignore the opioid crisis when focused on an immunocompromised parent, a child with a suspicious cough, or a small business trying to remain solvent. But the problem isn’t disappearing, and addressing it will require empathy, patience, resilience, and understanding.

Dan Schank can be reached at danschank@gmail.com.



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Country Fair

A Horrifying Experiment

Ironically, eugenics movement brought out humanity's worst traits



The American Eugenics Society (and its executive secretary Leon F. Whitney) espoused policies like forced sterilization and segregation to selectively breed the most “desirable” traits into future generations. While contested by some, these radical ideas were not damned outright or unanimously by Erie’s local leaders of the late 1920s during a Whitney visit.

cannot sustain themselves and must be a burden on society.” The term “feeble-minded” referred to those perceived to underperform on IQ tests. Hays added that these people must be “rendered unproductive, by segregation or otherwise” and stressed for the “elimination” of these “defective classes.”

Within a few years, eugenics was mainstream in the United States. Newspapers nationwide provided platforms for eugenicists. Speakers traveled around the country, elevating it in the public consciousness. Motivations varied. For some, it was clearly racism and xenophobia. For others it was ableism: a desire to eliminate physical disabilities and mental illness. Others yet believed controlling reproduction could reduce crime. If it *wasn't* embraced, one eugenicist proclaimed, there would soon “be more lunatics than sane people in the world.”

WELCOME LIBRARY

By: Jonathan Burdick

In Edwin Black's 2003 book *War Against the Weak*, he detailed the consequences of the American eugenics movement. Eugenics, a term first coined by Sir Francis Galton in the 1880s, formed as a belief system applying the concept of selective breeding used in plants and animals to realign human reproduction. The purpose was to increase “desirable” heritable traits in humans and eliminate those which are deemed “undesirable.”

If that gives one pause, it should. Separating people by desirable and undesirable traits is, at its core, unscientific — not to mention easily influenced by ideologies, systems of power, and discriminatory beliefs, as seen with the Nazis in Germany, who escalated eugenic practices to unimaginably horrific levels. Yet, for nearly half of a century (and arguably longer), this pseudoscience infiltrated the United States, promoted by disingenuous eugenicists

who twisted science to fit their philosophical pseudo-scientific worldviews.

“To perpetuate this campaign, widespread academic fraud combined with almost unlimited corporate philanthropy to establish biological rationales for persecution,” Black wrote, adding that eugenicists employed “a hazy amalgam of guesswork, gossip, falsified information and polysyllabic academic arrogance” to justify their ideas.

The Erie Daily News first reported on the blossoming eugenics movement in 1906. The article chronicled Willet M. Hays, the “earnest” and “energetic” Assistant Secretary of Agriculture and founder of the American Breeders' Association. He was, in his own words, interested in breeding *everything*. With his experience breeding animals, Hays felt that he could “improve the human race by the careful selection of parents for future Americans.”

“Fathers perfect physically, morally and mentally and mothers perfect

mentally, physically and morally would produce children with all these desirable attributes,” Hays professed. His goal was to alter American heredity to “improve the human breed” in order to “produce a race equal, if not superior, to the physical and intellectual attractiveness of the Greeks of old.”

Hays founded the Heredity Commission that year to advise the United States government. The New York Times explained its purpose as “encouraging the increase of families of good blood, and of discouraging the vicious elements in the cross-bred American civilization.” Hays argued in his writings that there were genetic facts needing to “be faced squarely” with fearlessness. First, he stated, it must be decided how to keep “genetically deficient classes and families” from reproducing. This included, in his words, “the feeble-minded, the insane, and several other classes of defectives” who had “no racial right to perpetuate their kind, a large percentage of whom

world” on eugenics. He, as one paper described him, “woos a city as a man woos a maid.” For two weeks he spoke throughout Erie in well-attended afternoon and evening sessions at various organizations, churches, and businesses about “race improvement” and “race betterment.”

As these ideas gained traction, theories on how eugenics could be applied to society differed. The Harrisburg Telegraph published an article in 1914 by well-known poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox. She argued for eugenic marriages certified by physicians, as “only the fit will be permitted to populate the world.” As for the “unworthy and unfit?” Sterilization.

“Eugenics will compel them to know that idiots, cripples and demented offspring are ... directly traceable to [heredity],” wrote Wilcox. “And when both men and women know that ... children may be made whatever the parents desire, a new earth will be given to us. And a new race of people to occupy it.”

In 1920, A.L. Cooper, president of the Child Conservation League of Erie, spoke to a group of 150 women at the

local YWCA. He advocated for these certified marriages and the passage of laws permitting sterilization of those with physical disabilities and mental illness and those deemed incompetent, including “criminals, epileptics, and the insane.”

Many others leaned into the racial component. An Erie Daily Times column with a zoologist claimed the “gradual deterioration” of humans was due to the “crossing of the races.” Another stated that as “the intellectual families die out, the foreigners are waiting to take their places in the community” and that the “influence of these lower types on our youth and on the American people, generally is the worst.” Some locally-published stories were even more outlandish, such as a full-page 1922 article titled “The Astounding New Theory That Men Should Marry Their Sisters” where Dr. Helen Dean King of the University of Pennsylvania championed inbreeding, as “blood marriage would produce a superior race.”

In 1923, the Erie Daily Times ran an op-ed calling for a national eugenics plan. This was long desired by many

eugenicists. A nationwide committee on eugenics had met that summer and suggested federal legislation on segregation and sterilization of “defective types.” The author railed against public education, saying money spent educating “backward and sub-normal pupils” was wasted and that philanthropists and the government should instead “devote all of their energies to the problem of encouraging the intelligent ones to progress.” He believed that the “best brains” in the United States were committing “race suicide ... because of the remarkable opportunities we offer to all.”

Local churches were popular meeting places for these discussions. In 1924, a meeting for men was held at the Glory Barn on Eighth and Cranberry streets for a lecture titled “Practical Eugenics.” Attendance from doctors, teachers, and preachers was specifically requested. The “soldier-evangelist” John Sproul spoke before an audience of 4,000 where he professed that the “perversion of our procreative powers” was the “greatest curse of the world today.” Sproul gave another talk while



HARRISBURG TELEGRAPH

The charismatic Dr. J. Aspinall McCuaig of the National Christian League for the Promotion of Purity led a number of well-attended speaking engagements throughout Erie in 1913, championing the causes of “race improvement” and “race betterment” that were central to the eugenics movement.

in town titled “Sex Hygiene” to 2,500 local women. He pointed out lax morals and told them they must urge the local school directors to incorporate eugenics and “sex hygiene” in the county high schools, which would reduce crime.

An event was held at the downtown Hotel Lawrence the following year, where the chairman of the Pennsylvania Conference on Social Welfare teamed with locals to declare support for a bill that would include a racial and eugenics clause for marriage certificates. Meanwhile, pro-eugenics propaganda continued to be published in the local newspapers. One eugenicist feared civilization was becoming “Frankenstein in disguise” and predicted that within 50 years the U.S. would “be industriously sterilizing the imbecile, segregating the inferior, [and] encouraging the reproduction of the best stocks.”

Around this time, the Erie Social Hygiene Association was founded. Much of their work involved notable public health measures: promoting sex education, testing for sexually-transmitted diseases, reducing drug use, and improving the sanitary conditions of Erie jails. Yet, the social hygiene and eugenics movements often overlapped and the association provided a local platform for eugenicists, bringing numerous speakers to Erie from the American Eugenics Association and related organizations.

Active members of the Erie Social Hygiene Association in 1928 included



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THE ERIE DAILY TIMES, FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 1928

Speakers Booked for Erie Social Hygiene Boyd Meet

Propagation of Feeble-Minded Picked as Topic at Dinner Session

Pursuing their custom of presenting for discussion at their annual meetings some hygienic question of statewide or national importance, the Erie Social Hygiene Association, at the dinner-meeting to be held at the Y. W. C. A. on May 18, has again chosen the propagation of the feeble-minded as the topic for consideration.

The speakers will be the Right Rev. John Chamberlain Ward, D. D., Bishop of the Episcopal diocese of Erie, and president of the hygiene society; Rev. Joseph J. Werhle, D. D., prominent Catholic educator, second vice-president, and Leon F. Whitney, executive secretary of the American Eugenics Society, Inc., New Haven, Connecticut.

An unusual interest in sterilization laws was manifested by those

who heard Judge G'oon's talk before the Erie society a year ago, it was desired to go more thoroughly into the question, according to Mrs. Harriet Powell, executive secretary.

The point of view of those who oppose a legal sterilization law will be explained in the address of Rev. Werhle. The advantage to human society from the adoption of such a measure will be pointed out by Leon Whitney, whose organization has promoted research in the subject and aided in framing successful legislation in several states. It is thought by many students of social problems that Pennsylvania should have such a law.


The public is invited to make observations at the headquarters of the association, 215 Marine Bank

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX
WRITES ON

Duties of Mothers

We Must Better the Mothers to Better the Race

Teaching the Duties of Fatherhood Is All Right, but Even That Is a Duty for Mothers to Instruct Their Boys



ERIE DAILY TIMES

THE ERIE DAILY TIMES Saturday Evening, January 7, 1933

The Astounding New Theory That Men Should Marry Their Sisters



Dr. Helen King, After Years of Scientific Research and Laboratory Experiment with Animals, Declares She Has Proved That Blood Marriages Would Produce a Superior Race, and Tells Some of the Reasons Why.

Dr. Helen King, University Faculty Member, Advocate of the Interbreeding of Close Kin.

PROFESSOR HENRY DELACROIX, in the new theory of eugenics states Dr. Helen King's theory that blood marriages would produce a superior race. "If you could produce a superior race, it would be the best thing you could do."

LOS ANGELES HERALD

prominent Erie figures such as Rev. Joseph J. Werhle, Bishop J.C. Ward, Home for the Friendless founder Sarah Reed, Erie Times founder John J. Mead, educators Joanna Connell and John C. Diehl, prominent Erie businessmen such as Alex Jarecki, Otto G. Hitchcock, and over 100 others. Each of their personal views concerning eugenics remains unclear, although Werhle, then superintendent of the parochial schools and future president of Gannon College, spoke against forced sterilizations on at least one occasion.

Werhle's opposition came during an event featuring American Eugenics Society executive secretary Leon F. Whitney. Within a few years, Whitney would be receiving praise from the Nazis for his book *The Case for Sterilization* and he, in turn, would describe Adolf Hitler's "courage and statesmanship" for Nazi Germany's sterilization laws. While in Erie, Whitney was described as being in "the thick of the fight" for sterilization legislation. His talk, titled "The Destroyers of America," described charity towards the "feeble-minded" as "ignorance, selfishness, thoughtlessness and misdirected." He told the Erie audience that "segregation and sterilization" were the "two great remedies" to America's woes.

Werhle provided his opposing viewpoints to Whitney's lecture, but the Erie Social Hygiene Association's official objectives still listed studying sterilization and "promoting among public officials an interest in this subject" as a priority. That same year, they invited Dr. Eugene L. Swan of the American Hygiene Society. He commended the progress of the association, but said plainly that America's problems would not be solved without sterilization.

While eugenics didn't receive much criticism in the Erie Daily Times, there was pushback on occasion. In one article, they noted that "bigoted" eugenicists were spreading "Nordic craze" propaganda stating immigrant quotas should limit immigration from South-eastern Europe and increase quotas for "the blond, dolichocephalic race" of the "Germanic people of Northern Europe." In another, they featured a doctor who believed that voluntary birth control was the answer over forced sterilization, which he reckoned had "dangerous possibilities." An anthropologist noted that "to 'breed' a race of humans involves a decision as to what is desirable" and that "cast-iron despots" would ultimately make those decisions.

Indeed, they seemed to be prophesying the rise of Adolf Hitler, who im-

Erie's local newspapers were seemingly not leery at all about stirring up conversation around the American eugenics movement, even providing a platform for some of its proponents to spread their outlandish and at-times frightening ideas and theories. The top left clipping is the announcement of American Eugenics Society executive Leon F. Whitney's invitation to a dinner put on by the Erie Social Hygiene Association, while the top right and bottom are op-eds by Ella Wheeler Wilcox and Dr. Helen Dean King.

plemented forced sterilization laws in Germany almost immediately after obtaining power in 1933. During these years before the war, German and American eugenicists even worked together and exchanged information as German eugenicists followed closely what many American and British eugenicists had done first. It's important to note that Nazism was not necessarily viewed then as it is today in the United States. As late as 1938, a Gallup poll indicated that 65 percent of Americans thought the treatment of Jews in Germany was either partly or entirely their own fault. Only the looming war would begin to reverse that trend.

By the 1940s, as the atrocities of Nazi Germany became more clear to the world, the eugenics movement began to fall out of favor. The Nazis had conducted at least 400,000 forced sterilizations, murdered 275,000 through its involuntary euthanasia T4 Program, and committed genocide of millions with the Holocaust all in the name of "racial purity."

The last openly eugenicist guest hosted by the Erie Social Hygiene Association was as late as 1942. His name was Paul Popenoe, who helped popularize eugenics while editing the *Journal of Heredity*. His well-known stances included the racial inferiority of Black people, who he described as "germinally lacking in the higher developments of intelligence," and the sterilization and segregation of "waste humanity." While leading the Human Betterment Foundation, he influenced the passage of California's sterilization laws. These had been cited by the Nazis as inspiration for their own sterilization programs. In fact, in 1934, Popenoe wrote an essay praising Nazi Germany's sterilization laws, calling them "favorable" and "the product of many years of consideration by the best specialists in Germany" He quoted Hitler's *Mein Kampf* approvingly throughout. Eventually, Popenoe rebranded as a marriage counselor and began writing advice columns for *Ladies' Home Journal*.

In the years following World War II, eugenics transformed into *genetics*. Geneticists warned of the dangers of letting belief systems and sinister ideologies corrupt scientific inquiry. For many in the United States though, it was too late. Numerous state governments *did* enact eugenics-based policies. Sterilization laws *had* been passed in many places, along with interracial marriage and sexual relations prohibition laws.

As Elizabeth Catts notes in her recent book *Pure America: Eugenics and the Making of Modern Virginia*, sterilization numbers in the United States are unknown and inconsistent across sources. Some estimates are in the 70,000 range. What is known is the intent of these sterilizations. "Allowing the 'unfit' to reproduce was tantamount to creating a societal debt that could never be repaid," Catts writes of the unifying message of the eugenics movement.

In the '70s, Austin J. O'Toole, who worked in the biology department at Erie's Gannon College, considered the ethical implications of trying to pre-empt man's future through genetics. "Who will determine which qualities are better for man? For *this* man?" O'Toole wondered. "Men have shown themselves neither wholly unprejudiced, nor critically wise in their choice of criteria."

In 1972, the Erie Daily Times published a column by widely-read scientist and writer Robert Ardrey. He warned against desires for an "Instant Man." In his view, the "rebellious man" was already a success story. There was no need for attempts to "domesticate" humans.

"Having failed spectacularly to invent better worlds, we presume to invent appropriate men to live in them," penned Ardrey. "I renounce instant Utopias. Whatever his avarice, self-seeking ambitions, competitiveness and presently perceived impossible contradictions, man's strength remains the strength that has seen him through billions of evolutionary years."

Perhaps then Ardrey's lesson, as simple as it sounds, is the most poignant. Instead of working to artificially alter humanity, which led to catastrophic consequences, we as humans can work to invent a better world.

Jonathan Burdick runs the historical blog *Rust & Dirt*. He can be reached at jburdick@eriereader.com

Wickedly Wonderful Feminism Movements

How tales of old protests highlight new changes to be made in feminism



The Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (W.I.T.C.H.) was inspired by a protest of the Miss America pageant (regarding sexual exploitation and normative female beauty standards) in 1968, lighting the fire under the cauldron of feminism for decades to come.

Augustine, affecting religious teachings and the basic understanding of reproduction.

Joan Chittister, a Benedictine Sister of Erie, addresses these outdated and largely misunderstood religious beliefs in her 2019 book, *The Time is Now: A Call to Uncommon Courage*.

Chittister describes how male ministers chose rigid compliance with church laws to remain superior, powerful, and primary, when, in fact, Jesus healed the outcast and enemies, and gathered men and women equally to his side. She continues on to say the church to this day disposes of women as secondary to God's plan for discipleship, despite the model of Jesus and his openness to women as leaders.

In her book, Chittister declares:

"There is a moment in life ... that we begin to understand, too, what da Vinci meant when he warned us, 'Nothing strengthens authority so much as silence.' Then our simpering silence ends and the prophetic spirit in us rises. As it is always meant to do. At that moment, we become free."

Although new waves of feminism have emerged since the '60s and '70s, many of the issues surrounding reproductive rights and diversity are still present in modern feminism. Many of the movements created in the past were based on the needs of white women.

Jasmine Flores, running to be the first Latina elected to Erie County Council, said she limits her interactions with activism to those who are inclusive of all identities. "We

have lots of work to do in Erie to be inclusive and diverse," Flores explained. "I personally limit my interactions with the demographic that practice old school mentalities and refuse to step in line to changing times before they run out of time. I focus on engaging with my community to bring us together to fight for our needs to be met as a unified front."

Laythe commented on the subject as well, saying that today, feminism is intersectional.

"I think the previous approaches to feminism were a little biased," Laythe observed. "We need to be doing more to support everyone. As we grow and evolve as a movement, I think it just needs to be bigger. We're learning that everything is interconnected ... and if we are truly trying to empower women, or to empower marginalized people, we have to empower everyone."

As for the kind of performative activism W.I.T.C.H. practiced, Flores believes there's no place for it in today's era as there are many problems in the Erie community that people could put their efforts toward.

The tricks of old are turning to tricks of the new as even the symbol of the witch looks to change the narrative and see women's power as a good thing. From Glinda the Good Witch of Oz, to Disney's Maleficent, to Hermione Granger, and countless more, the movement toward equality is still only growing larger, and as Mike Roeder once said, "It's better to build a longer table than a taller fence."

Tricks and treats aside, make this Halloween a little more magical, no matter *witch* cause you fight for.

Chloe Forbes can be reached at cforbes@eriereader.com

By: **Chloe Forbes**

'T was the Halloween of 1968, and black shadows seeped from behind buildings, pouring into the streets of the city. The shadows became forms, dressed as witches, inspiring terror and awe as they came to a halt. Carrying faux roasted boar heads, the group requested an audience with Satan at the New York Stock Exchange as they ordained:

*Wall Street, Wall Street,
Mightiest wall of all street,
Trick or Treat
The corporate elite
Up against the Wall Street*

The first of several performative activism "zaps" to come, this protest united what became known as the Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (W.I.T.C.H.)

Throughout history, the "witch" has taken on several different connotations, but W.I.T.C.H. took it to a new level, as part of the fight for gender equality. The group was created from a surge in interest in feminist activism following a Miss America protest, wherein

picketers compared the pageant to a livestock competition.

The name serves as a reference to witches throughout history — those scapegoats who have taken the blame for the ills of society, portrayed as the ultimate female transgressor. Although their movement died out fairly quickly, their message continues on through the work of activists today as women find themselves being condemned of faults not their own.

Vying to win the Democratic nomination for a seat on the Erie County Council, Lydia Laythe speaks from both her political experience and her work as a trauma therapist.

"It's easier to blame and scapegoat someone else — particularly someone who doesn't have a voice in the conversation or a seat at the table," Laythe said. "It's the reason why wealthy, conservative white men like Donald Trump blame immigrants or people of color for the ills of the working white poor. It's a lot easier to blame someone who's not there than to take responsibility and take accountability ourselves for the issues we face."

During the 1960s and '70s protests, radical feminists gave power to middle-class white women using the witch as a symbol, doing exactly what its opponents accused it of — distorting traditional values that devalue women.

"These sorts of historical beliefs are still embedded subconsciously in our culture, in our government, and in the ways we operate," Laythe vocalized. "It's really easy to miss how our beliefs and our assumptions have not evolved as our medical and scientific knowledge has evolved. We still hold onto these beliefs that were made out of total fallacy."

Laythe explained that many of these past beliefs relate back to Aristotle's teachings. In *De Generatione Animalium*, Aristotle explained the woman was merely a means to incubate the human form that the male created. If the offspring was born female, Aristotle referred to it as "imperfect" and the female was blamed for not properly nursing the offspring in the womb. This theory was adapted into the teachings of famous philosophers such as St. Thomas Aquinas and St.

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Exhuming the Hollow

Digging up a long-lived local legend



This old, freestanding stone foundation in the woods is a key detail in many versions of the Axe Murder Hollow legend. It is likely the last remnants of the Gack farmhouse, which was lost to fire in the winter of 1917.

called the Weis Library Church Cemetery, which was previously called the Salem Church Cemetery. There are approximately 350 graves in this cemetery, and exactly one bearing the name William.

The theory I've come up with surrounds this very man: William Gack. Frederick and Katharina Gack came to Millcreek from Germany in 1891 with their eight-year-old son William. They settled in this remote corner and started farming. Frederick died in 1909 and William continued on with the farm work after his father's death, remaining unmarried for decades and living only with his aging mother. In the winter of 1917, their farmhouse burnt down and was a total loss but for the stone foundation (sound familiar?). The family was displaced for a while before they were able to rebuild and it seems from that point, William ceased farming and became employed as a butcher at the Brown Brother's Slaughterhouse. He remained employed there until his death at age 73 from senile cerebral atrophy. William's mother died of cirrhosis of the liver. William never had more than a third grade education, which he received in Germany.

In 1922, the Gacks' home was burglarized by John Florillo and Roy Johns, who were both 14 years old at the time. The teens were apprehended by Gack and then held at his home until police could arrive at the remote location. So, picture if you will, the people and the setting that these teenagers would have encountered on their ill-advised foray into larceny: two very rural people, one being a large, foreboding man possessing the accoutrements of a butcher

— bloody clothing and aprons, cleavers, scimitars, and bone saws. When those kids got back from the juvenile detention center, what kinds of stories do you think they came up with about what they saw and experienced out in the middle of nowhere late one winter night? This is exactly how legends begin.

Now. I have painted an alarming picture of William here to prove my point, but in reality, he was likely just a normal guy working for a living. He did eventually marry about 10 years after his mother died (but not until he was 57 years old, so children in the area likely thought him a lonely hermit for many years). He had one son (as well as a step-daughter). His family were all still alive when William died in 1954 (i.e., he did not murder them with an axe). But, still. The perceived image of William could very well be the character that the legend was built upon and the "Billy" to whom Rusterholtz was referring.

In Stephanie Wincek's book, *Ghosts of Erie County*, she relays the long-told, familiar tale of Axe Murder Hollow, but also offers a different take: "An alternate version of the tale has to do with a band of gypsies who were traveling through Millcreek Township when they decided to camp in the hollow for the night. The leader of the clan learned that his wife had been cheating on him. Reportedly, the man immediately cut off his wife's head with an axe, then hid the head in the nearby Weis Library building located on the corner of Thomas and Sterrettania Roads." Stories litter the newspaper around the turn of the 20th century about "bands of gypsies" causing mischief and mayhem as they traveled through the county. There are a number of reports, both locally and nationally, of child abductions happening at the hands of such "gypsies," which undoubtedly struck fear into the hearts of many parents,

By: Erin Phillips

Somewhere in the woods of southwest Millcreek, off of Thomas Road, south of Sterrettania, along Walnut Creek and its tributaries, and near the McKean township border, lies a legend as old as anyone you know. The stories of Axe Murder Hollow vary but nearly all versions include similar details: a jealous husband brutally murders his unfaithful wife and their children with an axe in the woods. His tormented ghost, and the ghosts of his family, still haunt the area, and have been terrifying scads of curious teenagers for decades. Sometimes the story contains details of an old stone foundation in the woods, cars mysteriously stalling out, dramatic temperature changes, mysterious steps

leading nowhere. But where did this legend come from? How did it start? And is there truth to any of it? I definitely have some theories.

The first specific mention of "Axe Murder Hollow" by name in the newspaper happened in 1945, when it was reported that the entirety of the Harbor Creek High School football team made a trek out to the woods one night. Apparently, they witnessed an apparition, heard maniacal laughter and saw flashes of light, then high-tailed it back to their cars and spread their story (with ever-increasing flourish, no doubt). In an Erie Times article published in December of 1960, writer Tom McCormack interviewed Harper G. Rusterholtz, whose family owned acres of land and a dairy farm along Millfair

Road, less than a mile from the Hollow. Rusterholtz and McCormack report: "In the Hollow lived but one resident — an old hermit named Billy. Billy reportedly was a son of one of Erie County's pioneer settlers; but Billy was disappointed in love, so he spent his life in a crude hut deep in the woods." "He was mighty cross," said Rusterholtz. "We kids were scared to death of him, and avoided him all we could."

Who could this "Billy" be? This area of Millcreek, around the turn of the 20th century, was sparsely populated, but there were a few hardy residents who made their lives here. Most of the roads in the area are named for these residents: Thomas, Heidler, Grubb, etc. and many of these families are buried in a cemetery off Heidler Road

ERIE HISTORY AND MEMORABILIA



ERIN PHILLIPS



ERIETIMES-NEWS

William Gack is the probable inspiration for the Axe Murder Hollow legend. In 1922, two young teenagers were caught in the act of burglarizing the Gacks' home and detained by William — a longtime butcher at the Brown Brother's Slaughterhouse — until police could arrive. Tales of Billy the Butcher and roaming "bands of gypsies" made Axe Murder Hollow — located off of Thomas Road in southwest Millcreek — a destination for teenage thrill-seekers for generations. Today, much of this wooded area has been cleared for residential developments.

who then passed that fear onto their children.

The Weis Library, which is a prominent building that still stands at the southwest entrance to Thomas Road, was originally erected in 1896 upon the bequest of John Weis, a wealthy, childless, eccentric man who requested that when he died, a structure be built "to be used for a free library and place for literary and mental improvement." The building existed as a library for generations, before becoming a private residence towards the end of the last century, as it remains today. Many have worked in, patronized, and lived in the library over the years with no reports of beheaded gypsies turning up. Nonetheless, there was a rather disturbing report in the Erie newspaper of a murder in July of 1905 of a nearby Ohio woman who was killed by a "gypsy" with a chisel and then posed standing upright, inside a schoolhouse. Stories like that have a way of getting twisted up in our collective memory.

To add fuel to the Axe Murder fire, apart from Billy the Butcher and roaming gypsies, the Hollow was once the closing scene of a brutal and well-publicized murder that

took place in 1963: Edinboro College sophomore Mary Lynn Crotty of Lawrence Park at the hands of 21-year-old Daniel R. Biebighauser. Crotty was bound, raped, strangled to death, and then stabbed 15 times before her body was dumped in Axe Murder Hollow. Crotty was set up on a blind date with Biebighauser (who was, unbeknownst to Crotty, married with a son at the time) and it was during this date that the murder occurred. It was believed that Biebighauser made unwanted advances on Crotty, and when she resisted, he strangled her with her stockings.

The murder occurred in Harborcreek, and Biebighauser then kept Crotty's body in the trunk of his car for 14 hours, eventually dumping her in the woods off of Thomas Road. Likely, he chose to leave her there in an attempt to mislead investigators into thinking the murder had something to do with the hollow. During the trial, Biebighauser was described as "the type who could kill you and not say anything." And upon further investigation, he was shown to be obsessed with violence; in addition making his own knives, he had purchased a gun earlier in the

day on the day of the date (but because of state law at the time, he was not able to take possession of the gun for 48 hours), and drawings he made were found hidden in his car of nude women in violent, morbid situations. When confronted with these items, investigators had an easy time in coaxing a confession out of Biebighauser, who then led the police to where the body was located "seven-tenths of a mile south of the Thomas/Sterrettania roads intersection in Southwest Millcreek." In May of 1963, Biebighauser was found guilty of first degree murder, and sentenced to life in prison. While this crime did not happen at the hand of the ghosts of Axe Murder Hollow, the well-publicized details, circumstances, and location certainly contribute to the overall feeling of unease that locals associate with those woods.

Today, the area of Axe Murder Hollow has become less and less like anything anyone would be afraid of. Flanked by children's athletic fields, new construction pops up around Thomas Road every day. While this area was kept remote and unsettled for generations in Erie, the lure of real estate opportunities in Millcreek out-

weigh the discomfort some might feel about living in the Hollow. And although this area has been a popular haunt for teenagers for so many years, it is always good to remember that this is, in fact, someone's property and your curiosity should be curbed with respect for their privacy. So, enjoy this entertaining story and pass on the legend, but please: no trespassing.

While I was able to uncover some of the characters that may have lent to the legend of Axe Murder Hollow, whether or not there is any truth to the

"axe murder" part still remains to be seen. But likely it all originated the way most legends do: someone got scared once and made up a story. And that story, just like in a game of telephone, goes through many versions over the years and ends up nothing like what actually happened. Since the physical location of Axe Murder Hollow is changing so rapidly, the place we all associate with this legend simply won't exist for the younger generations. So please, make sure you tell your children and grandchildren some version of this tale while you take them on a spooky drive on Thomas Road some foggy night, so that, hopefully, this long-lived Erie legend will never die.

Erin Phillips runs the Instagram @olderieonfoot, an in-depth look at local architecture "by foot, stroller, papoose, bike, and occasionally minivan."



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FEATURE

War of the Wings

The Definitive Chicken Wing Ratings vs. The Best of Erie voters



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Matt Swanseger

The best chicken wings may or may not be hotly sauced, but they will always be hotly debated. And one group of self-described “wing connoisseurs” have a bone to pick with our most recent Best of Erie list.

Or should we say past seven Best of Erie lists. Since the Erie Reader started collecting votes in 2014, a natural pecking order to the “Best Wings” category has emerged. From the beginning, Odis 12 Bar & Grille has ruled the roost — no doubt thanks to its host of inventive flavors and spacious sports bar setting. Although there have been no shortage of worthy challengers, the runners up, too, have proven fairly unflappable — the One Way Inn and the Park Tavern *usually* round out the top three (John’s Wildwood Pizzeria supplanted Park Tavern last year).

“I think the Best of Erie list is more of a popularity contest than the *actual* best,” contends Max Maas, vice president of Small Business Alternatives in Erie. Feeling cooped up during the pandemic winter, Maas and friends Mike Rouse, Joey Jelinek, Billy D’Andrea, and Pat LaFuria set out to compile “Erie’s Definitive Chicken Wing Ratings.” Setting private clubs to the side, “we literally tried to name as many places as we could come up

with that are known for their wings.” Their ambitious tasting itinerary included a staggering 47 local establishments — since January, they’ve made it through 30 of them. So although they didn’t completely clear their plate, there has been more than enough to chew on. To sample every sauce selection in each establishment’s poultry portfolio would’ve been overwhelming — and quite expensive, given that chicken wing prices have tripled in the past year due to rising demand and record shortages. Therefore, when ordering, the group simply asked for that restaurant’s “signature flavor” or what they’d serve at a wing competition.

Using a weighted grading scale, wings were judged on appearance, size, originality/creativity, and dipping condiment (ranch or bleu cheese). Taste and size factor more heavily into the composite score, while criteria like creativity/originality matter less. Maas concedes that subjectivity

and personal preference are always at play in exercises of this nature, but counters that his judging panel solidly reflects the wing-loving spectrum from drums to flats, mild to hot, and dry to sloppy.

The Definitive Chicken Wing Ratings top five shook out as follows:

- Fiddle Inn — Everything’s**
- The Brotherhood of St. Joseph’s —**
- Titters #1**
- French Creek Tavern — Medium**
- Valerio’s — Honey Golden Ranch**
- Beechwood Golf Course — Spicy**
- Garlic Shank with Bomber Dust**

Here were the top five results for “Best Wings” in the 2020 Best of Erie voting (note that we have no category for specific wing flavors — yet!):

- Odis 12**
- John’s Wildwood Pizzeria**
- One Way Inn**
- Plymouth Tavern**
- Park Tavern**
- Split Orders**

Best of Erie voters and the compilers of the Definitive Chicken Wing Ratings could not be further apart at the top. The panel ranked the Odis 12 Original Sauce wings 26th out of 30 in their ratings list. Maas noted the Odis 12 Original was not necessarily a bad wing (7.07 out of 10 composite score), but the iconic spot could have chosen a much more exciting flavor from their extensive roster.

Maas and his buddies were not impressed at all with the size or appearance of John’s Honey Mustard wings, although they rated the flavor decent (5.34 out of 10). Overall, these finished dead last among the reviewers. While Maas admitted they may have gotten “a bad batch,” he suspects John’s excellent pizza and close association with a buzzing brewpub (Erie Brewing Co. Knowledge Park) boosted their standing among Best of Erie voters.

The gang never got around to trying the One Way Inn, a perennial favorite among Best of Erie voters (you can never go wrong with the 24K, hot + honey mustard blend)

The Plymouth Tavern’s Sweet and

Spicy wing finished middle-of-the-pack (17th out of 30) in the panel’s ratings list, scoring above an 8.00 in appearance, taste, and dipping condiment categories.

Although we’re talking chicken wings, this is where we have beef. The Park Tavern Herbie Cajun wing (a spicy BBQ sauce infused with Cajun spices) — named one of the Erie Reader’s 11 Can’t Miss Dishes this past March and one of my personal favorites — was ranked a shocking 20th out of 30 according to Maas and company.

The Bleu Chippers

Everythings came together at the top — the Fiddle Inn’s flagship wing (tossed in a secret blend of sauces and studded with chopped garlic) ranked first among all contenders in taste (9.40 out of 10) and size (9.20) and third in originality (9.12) for a composite score of 9.18. Although the Harborcreek haunt is still being underrated by Best of Erie voters in my opinion (6th place in 2020), it’s at least being acknowledged.

The Brotherhood of St. Joseph’s Club in North East — whose dining room is

open beyond the brotherhood to the general public — finished just barely behind the Everythings with their Titters #1, rated a 9.16 out of 10 overall. St. Joe’s is one of three establishments — along with the French Creek Tavern and the Beechwood Golf Course — ranked in the group’s top five that weren’t even Best of Erie nominees.

Maas said his group was perhaps most pleasantly surprised by the Valerio’s Honey Golden Ranch flavor — they did not approach it with high expectations, but “holy shit, that sauce was amazing.” Valerio’s finished ninth in last year’s Best of Erie vote.

Although garlic-forward signature sauces loomed hot and heavy in the Definitive Chicken Wing Ratings, sometimes a perfectly executed Buffalo wing (aka “Medium”) is all you need. The French Creek Tavern in Findley Lake, N.Y. has one of the region’s best.

What is your favorite wing in Erie, PA? Make your voice heard— Best of Erie nominations are open now.

Matt Swanseger (mswanseger@eriereader.com) is just a wet nap away from answering your emails.

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JES Global Summit XIII: Inveterate, Intriguing, and In-Person

Former President George W. Bush headlines annual speaker series

By: Cara Suppa

After a tremendously exhausting and disappointing 2020, there is nowhere to look but the future.

This is doubly true for the team at the Jefferson Educational Society, where 2020's Global Summit was canceled and 2021's earlier event was held virtually.

However, the entire 2020 lineup agreed to keep their engagements with the JES, and the nonprofit think tank is now proud to present Global Summit XIII, headlined by keynote speaker President George W. Bush.

"It's been so long since we have been able to see our audience in-person; we miss them dearly," Ferki Ferati, Ph.D., president of the Jefferson Educational Society, said.

He continued, "We are an organization in the business of gathering people, and not being able to do that because of COVID-19 was extremely challenging. We were able to successfully provide content for them online but seeing them in person is much more satisfying."

And while the JES looks forward to returning to in-person programming, its illustrious lineup of speakers, panelists, moderators and presenters all speak to where the country, and our little city within it, is heading.

This is highlighted by the keynote speaker, George W. Bush — a polarizing figure, and a highly influential one. Bush, along with U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.) and former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, will comment on the state of the nation today, and how we can overcome the threats we face.

Ferati hopes that "the audience comes with an open mind to learn the different perspectives on how to address those issues."

Of course, the threat of COVID is far from over, but according to Ferati, safety has always been the utmost concern in bringing audiences back.

"We know from our research that the vast majority of our audience is vaccinated," Ferati said. "Until otherwise recommended by the CDC, anyone attending our events will either provide a vaccine record or a negative test."

For the JES' full COVID policy, you can visit their website at jeserie.org/about/covid-policy.

Monday, Nov. 1 // 7:30 p.m.

Clayola Brown and DeWitt Walton: The Impact of Systemic Racism in Communities of Color

Clayola Brown is a leading voice in civil rights activism as the president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute in Washington, D.C., which contributes to the AFL-CIO organization's "unions' bridge to diverse communities, creating and strengthening partnerships to enhance the standard of living for all workers and their families."

A native of Charleston, S.C., Brown spent 17 years winning a union contract for the employees of textile giant J.P. Stevens, and went on to lead, organize, and inspire over the next four decades.

According to the JES, Brown will "discuss the impact of systemic racism in communities of color," in a talk that will be moderated by DeWitt Walton, the District 10 Council Representative of Allegheny County and vice president of the Pittsburgh A. Philip Randolph Institute.

Wednesday, Nov. 3 // 7:30 p.m.

Jeffrey Rosen: An Evening with Jeffrey Rosen

A law professor at George Washington University, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, and a contributing editor to *The Atlantic*, Jeffrey Rosen has also published six books, including *Conversations with RBG: Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg on Life, Liberty, and Law*.

Rosen will bring his expert knowledge of the Supreme Court (he has personally interviewed several justices), White House politics, and constitutional law to Global Summit XIII and provide insight that only "the nation's most widely read and influential legal commentator" can.

Thursday, Nov. 4 // 7:30 p.m.

Camille Busette: The Power of Policy Reform to Address Racial Justice in Erie

Camille Busette, Ph.D., has worked for years to address income inequality in communities of color throughout

her career, and most significantly now, as a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, where she has spearheaded the organization's Race, Prosperity, and Inclusion initiative.

Dr. Busette is returning to the JES with a discussion on how currently written policy, in cities like Erie and other comparably sized locations, engenders racial inequality, as well as how these policies have been and are being addressed.

Monday, Nov. 8 // 7:30 p.m.

Barbara Perry, Stacy Cordery, and Anita McBride: The History and Role of First Ladies

Each panelist in this discussion of First Ladies, a role of ever-increasing influence and inspiration, brings a long history of study and insight into the women who have stood — some more boldly than others — next to the men who become Commander-In-Chief.

Barbara Perry, Stacy Cordery, and Anita McBride each have close ties to the lives of some of the most visible women in the country, whether it's multitudes of interviews with presidential insiders (Perry), years of research and study (Cordery), or direct working access with presidential staffs and First Ladies (McBride).

To make this illuminating panel even better, Steve Scully, Erie native and former broadcaster with C-SPAN, and the current senior VP of communications with the Bipartisan Policy Center, will be moderating.

Tuesday, Nov. 9 // 7:30 p.m.

George W. Bush: An Evening with President George W. Bush
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier

The illustrious keynote speaker for the Summit XIII, George W. Bush's life has been politically charged since birth.

The son of George H. W. Bush, VP to Ronald Reagan and our nation's 41st President, GWB went on to become the 43rd President of the United States from 2001 until 2009.

During his tenure the world changed dramatically; from the terror attacks of 9/11 to the rapidly transforming digital and technological revolution, Bush guided the country with the steady presence of his wife Laura by his side,

while raising two college-aged daughters.

After his tenure as arguably the most powerful man in the world, Bush retired to pursue major philanthropic endeavors, author four books, and enjoy grandparenthood.

His speaking engagement will be preceded by both former Pa. Gov. Tom Ridge, the first Secretary of Homeland Security and Erie native son, as well as U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey.

Steve Scully (the longtime C-SPAN host now working with the Bipartisan Policy Center) will moderate the program.

Wednesday, Nov. 10 // 7:30 p.m.

Andrew Card and Mack McLarty: A Conversation with Former White House Chiefs of Staff

The President's Chief of Staff wears many hats — just ask Andrew Card and Mack McLarty, who served under George W. Bush and Bill Clinton respectively.

Card became a visible figure in the American landscape when he notified President Bush about the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center buildings on the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. A politician and administrator, he formed part of Bush's administration for three years before being promoted to Chief of Staff.

Thomas F. "Mack" McLarty had a successful career as, among other positions, the CEO of Arkla, a natural gas company. He entered politics under the first Bush administration before transitioning to the Clinton administration — a natural switch, as it turned out, since McLarty and Clinton had known each other since kindergarten.

Join these two, also moderated by Steve Scully, as they recount the challenges (and hopefully some triumphs) of advising two of the most influential and powerful men in the world.

Thursday, Nov. 11 // 7:30 p.m.

Doris Kearns Goodwin: The New Deal to Great Society: FDR and LBJ

A die-hard Red Sox fan, a Ph.D. holder, and a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Doris Kearns Goodwin combines the down-to-earth with the aspirational.

A White House Fellow during the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, Kearns tackled poverty concerns, before



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Jefferson Educational Society's Global Summit XIII will feature an impressive array of guest speakers, highlighted by former U.S. President George W. Bush on Tuesday, Nov. 9. Also appearing will be (top row, left to right) Clayola Brown, DeWitt Walton, Jeffrey Rosen, Camille Busette, (second row, left to right) Tom Ridge, Stacy Cordery, Anita McBride, Barbara Perry, (third row, left to right) Pat Toomey, Steve Scully, Andrew Card, (fourth row, left to right) Mack McLarty, Doris Kearns Goodwin, and Robert Pape.

moving on to teach at her alma mater, Harvard, and later aiding Johnson as he wrote his memoirs.

Her entry into the literary world, a biography of LBJ, has been joined by several other books, including 2018's *Leadership in Turbulent Times*, a work which promotes the idea that men and women in leadership often travel a long road to reach the point of influence, and that under the surface, they're all as human as any of us.

Kearns' unique first-hand experience

of one of the most influential political leaders of all time also gives her particular insight into the integration of more women in leadership positions.

Friday, Nov. 12 // 7:30 p.m.

Robert Pape: Holding the Line: Political Violence in America and the Implications for Democracy

What is the role of violence in the political arena? After all, this country was founded only after fighting a bloody, five-year war with Great Britain.

If anyone has answers, it's Robert Pape, this year's Thomas B. Hagen Dignitas Award recipient and a life-long scholar of "the effectiveness of economic sanctions, humanitarian intervention policy, U.S.-China relations, and American Grand Strategy," according to the Global Summit XIII press materials.

Pape will present his discussion of violence's place in American democracy, drawing on his decades of research and firsthand experience. Pape is currently installed at the University of Chicago,

though he hails from our little corner of the world, Erie, Pa.

All events begin at 7:30 p.m. // See the JES website at jeserie.org/global-summit for the events listing, including individual locations // Adult tickets: \$35; VIP Tickets: \$60; Adult pass: \$150; VIP pass: \$300; see the JES online brochure at jeserie.org for full ticket options, including early bird prices and special event pricing for keynote speaker

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Something Rotten! Fresh Again at the Erie Playhouse

The Playhouse debuts *Something Rotten!* for the first time in community theater



RICK KLEIN

PREMIERING FRIDAY, OCT. 8

When Shakespeare said “Brevity is the soul of wit” he might as well have been referring to *Something Rotten!*, the musical comedy that premiered in 2015, but is set in 1595. The show — written by John O’Farrell and Karey Kirkpatrick — follows brothers Nick and Nigel Bottom as they try to write a hit play in the shadow of the greatest bard of all time, Shakespeare. With help from a soothsayer who foresees the future of theater, Nick and Nigel set out to write the world’s first musical.

Something Rotten! was nominated for 10 Tony Awards, including Best Musical, and the Erie Playhouse is the first community theater in the nation to bring it to the stage. Originally slated to run in March 2020, the Playhouse was granted early access by the show’s licensing agency and since *Something Rotten!* is a brand new production, there weren’t any previously used resources for the Playhouse to rent from other theaters. This means that their production team worked diligently on the costumes, sets, and backdrops to make sure the show is up to the high standards that the community expects from the Playhouse.

Rich Tryzbiak and Josiah Prittle portray playwright brothers Nick and Nigel Bottom in the Erie Playhouse production of *Something Rotten!*

Executive director Kate Neubert-Lechner said, “The show is a hysterical skewering of musical theater and Shakespeare, while being a complete love letter to both at the same time. It truly is one of the funniest shows to be produced on Broadway in the last decade and has something for everyone — romance, comedy, huge musical numbers, and tap dancing eggs.”

Something Rotten! is rife with references, as they take you through a journey of not only Shakespeare, but other hits including *South Pacific*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and *The Lion King*. With songs like “God, I Hate Shakespeare,” “Hard to Be the Bard,” and “Make an Omelette,” you are sure to be singing these numbers long after the curtain call. — Larry Wheaton

Running from Oct. 8 through Oct. 17, 7:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. Sundays // Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th Street // \$12 to \$20.75 // Contains adult language and situations // For tickets and full showtimes go to erieplayhouse.org



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Moby Dick! The Musical Brings Laughs to Dramashop Stage

Presenting a whale of a musical comedy



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PREMIERING TUESDAY, OCT. 12

In what have truly been trying times for all, *Moby Dick! The Musical* is the hero (and comedic relief) we didn't know we needed, but are sure glad has come around.

Dramashop's latest production follows the girls of St. Godley's School and their headmistress as they put on a musical retelling of the famous *Moby Dick* novel in an attempted fundraiser to keep their school afloat. "It's just plain fun, and a chance to come together and goof off," said director Zach Flock. "This is pure entertainment at a time when we all just want to celebrate theatre and share some laughs."

The cast — a mix of Dramashop veterans and new faces alike — are the first to grace the company's stage in a full production with a live, in-person audience since pre-pandemic. "After 18 months of virtual theater, it's been such a joy to be back in the room with old friends and to welcome new friends into the fold," said Flock.

"It's great to see what energy and enthusiasm all company members bring to the process."

The show's opening night, Oct. 12, also marks 10 years to the day of Dramashop's inaugural production, being celebrated that same night with the company's Thank You, Ten! Celebration prior to the show.

With 10 years under Dramashop's belt, Flock reflects on its growth over the years: "We've really shifted from a handful of people moving the organization forward to a bigger, more sustainable group. It's a community organization in every sense of the word. We still function without a paid staff, which is what keeps our overhead expenses so low. I don't know that people realize everybody working at Dramashop, including me, is doing it as a labor of love, and I'm grateful to all of them."

While the production marks a milestone for the company, it is also a milestone in many other ways: "I give so much credit to everyone working on this production, rehearsing under

***Moby Dick! The Musical* follows the girls of St. Godley's School and their headmistress as they put on a musical retelling of Herman Melville's classic novel in an attempted fundraiser to keep their school afloat. The Dramashop production premieres on Tuesday, Oct. 12 in tandem with their 10th anniversary celebration.**

very atypical circumstances," Flock said. "To rehearse a musical, learn choreography, and do vocals all while wearing a mask is not the most fun, but it's what we need to do to cross the finish line safely — and it's better than not being able to do theater at all. Against the backdrop of a pandemic, theater might not seem important to some people, but for artists who love the work so much, we feel so lucky to be back at it." — Ally Kutz

Oct. 12, 14-15, and Oct. 21-23, 8 p.m. and Oct. 24, 2 p.m. // Dramashop, 1001 State St., Ste. 201 // \$25 opening night (with reception), \$7.50 opening weekend, \$15 all other shows // dramashop.org

Vanessa Williams to Bring Model Performance to Mercyhurst

Multi-talented songstress latest star to shine in MIAC lineup



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FRIDAY, OCT. 22

A model of consistency, Vanessa Williams has earned multiple No. 1 and top 100 hits on various *Billboard* Album and singles charts. She has also achieved fame in film, television, recordings and theater.

Williams rose to attention after being crowned Miss America in 1984, the first African-American woman to receive the title. Subsequently, she has appeared in a number of television shows and films, including *The Love Boat*, *Bye Bye Birdy*, *Desperate Housewives*, and *Soul Food*. She received an NAACP award for Outstanding Actress in Motion Picture and won Best Actress at the Santa Barbara African Heritage Film Festival, Harlem International Film Festival, and African-American Women in Cinema Film Festival.

Beginning her acting career in 1985, Williams starred in *One Man Band*, following up with a role in *Checkmates* as Laura.

Williams has been recognized by every major industry award affiliate, earning four Emmy nominations, 11 Grammy nom-

Singer, actress, and model Vanessa Williams' talents have been highly recognized and highly rewarded over the course of her decades-long career. She will perform live at Mercyhurst's Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center on Friday, Oct. 22.

inations, a Tony nomination, three SAG award nominations, seven NAACP Image Awards and three Satellite Awards.

Williams has also made a mark in the fashion industry, when she launched her own clothing line, "V. by Vanessa Williams" for Evine Line in 2016.

In 2017, Williams eventually received a career pinnacle with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. She brings all that talent and all those credentials to the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst University for one night only, continuing an impressive 2021-2022 MIAC Live slate. — Anna Malesiewski

7:30 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center at Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. // Adults: \$45 - 60 // miac.mercyhurst.edu

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It's Alive! Eerie Horror Fest Makes its Return

Film premieres, celebrity guests, and more highlight the film festival's packed schedule



GAUMONT

By: Amy VanScoter

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 27 - 30

As any true horror fan knows, what may at first appear dead is often never really gone for good. The four-day Eerie Horror Fest is a prime example. The event is not only very much alive, it's alive and *moving*, with all the pieces you remember, and plenty of fresh new parts being introduced this year under the leadership of the Film Society of Northwest Pennsylvania.

The Eerie Horror Fest makes its return Oct. 27 at the Erie Playhouse in downtown Erie. This once huge, cultural event was originally founded by the Ropp Family. They held the event for 11 years, eventually growing into the Warner Theatre and at its peak, welcoming thousands of genre fans from all over the country. John Lyons, programming director of the Film Society of NWPA, says it's where he "found his taste for horror."

"It has been out of operation for about five years and has been sorely missed by not only horror hounds but the local film community and the community at large," said Lyons. "The Film Society of NWPA approached the Ropp family about bringing the festival back to life under our wing and they have agreed." Lyons

as well as Erika Berlin, president of the Film Society of NWPA, serve as leadership to a team that includes both lead members of past Eerie Horror Fests David Von Bostaph and Mark Kosobucki and new marketing and events experts Amanda Shaffer, Dorota Swies, and Margaret Dieudonne. Greg Ropp will also continue to be involved in the fest.

"Each year Greg Ropp will continue to host a block of films [called] 'Poppa Ropp's Fright Flix,' named after his late father Dick Ropp, whose eponymous Edinboro Video Store introduced me to so many great films across all spectrums back in the days before the internet and Netflix," Lyons said. "It's important to carry on that tradition of discovery," Lyons added, "while also aligning the event with the Film Society's mission of elevating Erie's film industry, empowering regional

filmmakers, and of course fostering support for the art of film."

Lyons says the Film Society will reintroduce the community to this four-day event while also programming some new films for audiences to discover, some of which aren't out until next year. "We're going to bring some stars to our city and showcase their classic films. And we're going to give creatives here — not just filmmakers but writers, actors, and other creatives — the opportunity to network with industry experts and learn how to pitch the idea to potential investors, producers, distributors," said Lyons.

Film festivals offer a platform for filmmakers to get their films made by presenting their creative ideas, their stories, talent, and skill. Writers and filmmakers around the region will have the opportunity to bring their

[top left] Originally released in 1981, *Possession* turned heads for its stunning choreography, pounding score, grisly imagery, and haunting performances. See the 4K restoration on Friday, Oct. 29 at 9:30 p.m. as part of the Poppa Ropp's Fright Flix program. [bottom center] David Naughton, star of *An American Werewolf in London* (1981), will be available for a Q&A session, autographs, and photos following the movie's 6 p.m. screening on Friday, Oct. 29. [bottom right] 2020's *Antebellum* will screen as part of Dr. Rhonda Matthews' Race, Horror & Transference program on Thursday, Oct. 28.

stories to life on Saturday afternoon at the Velocity Network building (121 W. 10th St.), where the Greater Erie Film Office and Blood Oath will host a networking event and industry panel on how to pitch your idea to producers and distributors. They will introduce a new Pitch Competition for Eerie Horror Fest 2022 with great new opportunities for writers and filmmakers to bring their stories to life.

The Eerie Horror Fest features 10 films and nine celebrity guests. Each night includes a curated program of new, upcoming and classic short and feature length films, celebrity guests with live, in-person Q&As, and photo and autograph opportunities. Celebrity guests include:

Michael Biehn (*The Terminator*, *Aliens*, *Tombstone*) Girard native Marc Blucas (TV's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the locally-made *Unearth*) and David Naughton (*An American Werewolf in Lon-*

don). A new aspect to this year's fest will be video gaming demonstrations and showcases.

A Nightmare on State Street costume and dance party at Griswold Plaza will get guests into the proper spirit on Saturday, Oct. 23. Presented in partnership with the Erie Downtown Partnership, the event benefits both the Horror Fest and the Downtown Fall Fest (taking place the following day). Tickets are \$25 for singles and \$40 for couples and includes a drink ticket, with a discount available as an add-on when purchased with Horror Fest tickets.

Wednesday and Thursday 4 to 11 p.m., Friday 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., Saturday noon to 2 a.m. // Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. // All-Access Passes and single Day passes are available. All-Access includes admission to all four days of the event (and celebrity meet and greet events at the Meiser Building, 23 W. 10th St., and the Film Industry Panel and Reception with Blood Oath and Marc Blucas) for \$125 or \$150 if you'd like to add a poster/t-shirt. Day passes can be purchased for \$25 // Erie Playhouse doors open at 4pm and the program starts at 5 pm. COVID policy and guidelines of the venue will be followed // Check out eeriehorrorfest.com for more information.

Amy VanScoter enjoys watching horror movies all year, especially during the month of October. She can be reached at avanscoter@gmail.com.



UNIVERSAL PICTURES



LIONSGATE

OCTOBERFEST

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Gallery Night with Artist Kevin Irvin, 7-10pm
Free Beer Samples by Erie Beer, Wine available
Food Truck: Tha Flavor Bucket, 6-10pm

SATURDAY OCT 16TH

Family Friendly Octoberfest 10am-4pm
Free Face Painting by Taradoodles, 11-2pm;
Polka Music – The Mar-Vels Polka Band, 1-4pm
Free Beer Samples by Erie Beer
Food: Bro-Mans Sammiches, 12-7pm;
Coloring Contest & Free Fall Coaster painting for children



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AGENDA

- 8:30 AM** Bob Cranmer: Demon of Brownsville Rd.
- 9:45 AM** Col Halt: Rendlesham Forest Case
- 11:30 AM** Lunch On Your Own
- 12:30 PM** Bill Birnes: UFOS, JFK, Marilyn & Area 51
- 2:15 PM** Richard Lang: Declassification and Disclosure
- 3:34 PM** John Ventre: Native American Folklore & Creatures

Pre-Register at www.mufonpa.com / Location: Erie Public Library

“Utopias Always Fail”: *Cryptozoo* is Visually Dazzling, but Leaves You Wanting More



MAGNOLIA PICTURES

★★★★

Thanks mainly to Disney and Pixar, many American audiences view the medium of animation as something that's strictly for kids. This

is unfortunate as there are plenty of complex, provocative, and mature stories that would best be suited to the craft, but they can't reach a wide enough audience. That's

why Dash Shaw's (*My Entire High School Sinking Into the Sea*, and graphic novels like *Bottomless Bellybutton* and *New School*) new film *Cryptozoo* intrigued me. The premise

feels like something straight out of Disney but the film itself is far from that. The result is a mind-bending visual experience but sadly something that's often lacking in story and character.

Lauren Gray (voiced by Lake Bell) is a woman obsessed with finding cryptids (animals that only exist in myth and folklore) and bringing them to an elaborate nature preserve that she hopes will help people better understand them. When she and her team go looking for a strange creature that eats dreams, she is confronted by government agents who want the cryptids as weapons, endangering her life and forcing her to confront whether her own intentions for cryptids are entirely noble.

The animation is an absolute feast for the eyes, somewhere between shadow puppets and a psychedelic acid trip. During the adventure scenes in the

zoo it becomes a spectacle like *Jurassic Park* meets Ralph Bakshi. Sadly, the story and characters don't get as much attention. The film creates such a fascinating world but doesn't give us enough time to just take it in. The story about the fine line between preservation and exploitation is intriguing but there's not enough time to ponder those ideas. *Cryptozoo* is a feast for the eyes but I wish there was more for the brain to chew on. — Forest Taylor

Cryptozoo is now playing in select theaters and is available on Apple TV+, Google Play, and YouTube // Written and directed by: Dash Shaw // Animation Director: Jane Samborski // Starring the voices of Lake Bell, Zoe Kazan, Louisa Krause, Alex Karpovsky, Peter Stormare, Michael Cera, Angeliki Papoulia, Thomas Jay Ryan, Emily Davis, and Grace Zabriskie // 95 minutes // Unrated (R equivalent)

Fear of the Flesh: *Titane* Takes Body Horror to a New Level



DIAPHANA PICTURES

★★★★★

Julia Ducournau's debut feature *Raw* clearly owed a debt to the early films of David Cronenberg. Much like him, she displayed a clear fas-

ination with the human body both in terms of sexuality and the myriad ways the body can be broken down and torn apart. Her new film *Titane* ups the ante on that thesis and

then some with even more Cronenbergian body horror (somewhere between *Crash* and *The Brood*) but with a story that is decidedly her own. The film manages to be

strange, sexy, surreal, oddly funny, and stomach-churning all at once. And now this gross little curiosity is coming to the Eerie Horror Fest.

At the center of the plot is Alexia (Agathe Rousselle), a dancer with an unusual obsession with cars following a childhood accident that left her with a titanium plate in her skull. She must flee the city after committing a series of unexplained murders and in the process enters the life of a fire captain (Vincent Lindon) who has just been reunited with his decade-long missing son. However, things get complicated when Alexia's old life and the new one she's trying to build collide in a gruesome and unexpected way.

I'm trying to keep the plot as vague as possible as part of the fun in this story is letting it

take you in wonderfully weird directions. Ducournau is juggling with different themes at the same time related to family, gender identity, sex, and most importantly, the ever-changing relationship between the soft, malleable human body and the cold, unmoving forces of mechanization. These themes don't all mesh perfectly but most of the enjoyment lies in just witnessing it all unfold. — Forest Taylor

Titane is currently playing in select theaters and comes to the Eerie Playhouse on Saturday, Oct. 29 as part of Eerie Horror Fest // Written and Directed by: Julia Ducournau // Starring: Agathe Rousselle, Vincent Lindon, Garance Marillier, Lais Salameh, Mara Cisse, Marin Judas, Diong-Keba Tacu, Myriem Akeddiou, Celine Carrere, and Bertrand Bonello // 108 minutes // Rated R



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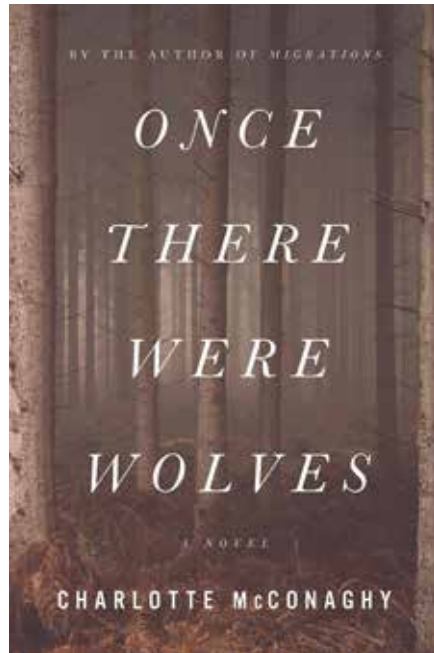
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Once There Were Wolves

Charlotte McConaghy weaves wildly enthralling tale



In this gripping new novel from Charlotte McConaghy, even the most wild beasts cannot compare to the wildness of mankind.

Inti Flynn is the lead biologist on a team of researchers attempting to reintroduce gray wolves back into the Scottish Highlands, a terrain where they haven't been in hundreds of years. With her schedule already packed between the team's research and taking care of her housebound twin sister Aggie — who has been deeply traumatized by events occurring before they came to Scotland — Inti finds even more trouble when resistance from the surrounding community makes their research even more difficult.

Inti and Aggie have always been close to each other and to the wild — Inti experiences a rare condition called mirror-touch synesthesia, where she is able to experience a similar sensation in the same or opposite part of the body that another person feels. For this reason, she was never able to hunt for food as a child when living with their nomadic father, Aggie always having to take the final plunge.

For Inti, this condition brings heartache — she feels the same trauma her sister feels, and knows exactly what the wolves are feeling as her team observes them. But it also allows her to understand her work more deeply and identify more easily with the wolves and their needs.

With beautiful scenery and absolutely incredible character description and development, it is difficult to put down McConaghy's newest novel. Each character's personality shines through, leaving a trail of breadcrumbs to the much larger story behind it all.

Written from Inti's perspective, *Once There Were Wolves* is a captivating and enthralling look at humanity, the wildness within, and how a much closer look reveals the dark similarities between humans and the wild beasts of the forest. — Ally Kutz

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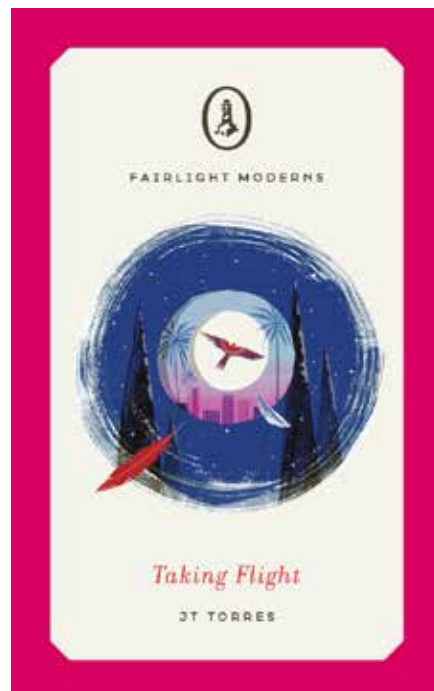


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Taking Flight

JT Torres' debut a magical exploration of intergenerational bond



Books (based in Oxford, UK) called the Fairlight Moderns. These books are published through the company's open submission process so that means we get to read books written by people who have not necessarily been published on a large scale before. Additionally, all of the books in the Fairlight Moderns series are beautifully designed with original artwork and illustrations. *Taking Flight* is a perfect book to start on in this series and it is JT Torres' debut. It reads like a memoir, and it is, but the author also weaves in mystical elements. Torres uses this mysticism with such a matter-of-factness, that it all feels very real, like something the characters are actually experiencing. The publisher describes the genre as magical realism, and that is exactly how it reads.

The book is about the bond between a young Cuban-American boy (Tito) and his grandmother (Nana). Tito was born from an unplanned and

unwanted pregnancy. So whereas he often feels invisible and unwanted in his own home, he finds he is the most at home with his Nana and the story forms from the progression of their relationship. Nana's life is full of magic and she attributes many of the events that happen in her world to her "illusions." As Nana's memory begins to fade, Tito feels himself start to disappear, literally, and cannot find a way to break the spell. As the story weaves through places (Florida and Alaska, specifically) and life phases (like a modern American coming of age story), the reader finds themselves magically connected to these two characters who are so bonded through time, space, and even death. This book is witty and beautiful, surreal, bizarre and undoubtedly moving. It is a quick read and a great introduction to the series, which I look forward to exploring more. — Erin Phillips

Fairlight Books // 160 pages // Fiction, magical realism



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Podcast Picks: October 2021

Audio infotainment to engage your thinking gourd

Flagship Stories

Hosted by: Christopher Lantinen and Nick Warren // anchor.fm/flagship-stories

We are proud to introduce a brand new podcast from the Edinboro Beehive in conjunction with the Erie Reader. You probably already know that Erie is an ever-changing, ever-evolving and altogether fascinating city. On *Flagship Stories*, we look at the people who are guiding us along in that journey. Together, we try to figure out what makes Erie, Erie. It's the essential stories of the Flagship City.

Chris Lantinen serves as the show's main host. Digital Media Coordinator for the NWPB Innovation Beehive Network at Edinboro University, Chris is at home behind the microphone, having hosted the long-running *Modern Vinyl Podcast*. Joining him is Nick Warren, the managing editor of the Erie Reader (artist, musician, and amateur podcast enthusiast).

An interview-based documentary podcast, *Flagship Stories* strives for high production values and warm listenability.

The show's first episode features Laura Domencic, the new executive director of the Erie Art Museum. Laura talks about her history as both an artist and curator, as well as the museum's plans for the future. Hear about some of Erie's upcoming exhibits and events, and find how Domencic — a recent transplant from the Pittsburgh area — is adjusting to life in Erie.

Episodes will be released monthly, so stay tuned for the next one, as we talk to John C. Lyons about his films, as well as the Eerie Horror Fest. — Nick Warren



The Ringer Gambling Show

Hosted by: Warren Sharp // theringer.com

Sports gambling in Pennsylvania has gone from "I know a guy who knows a guy," to billboards for MGM and FanDuel dotting the cityscape. But as easy as those advertisements make winning seem, you should do your best to be an informed bettor (and to protect your bank account).

Of note, Warren Sharp leads *The Ringer Gambling Show*, a tri-weekly podcast pairing the NFL analyst with — and here's the key — three different co-hosts, all with different energy. The week begins with Sharp and Chris Vernon recapping the prior weekend's action. Vernon, normally part of the site's basketball coverage, brings great enthusiasm and seamless set-ups (Vernon is a sports radio veteran and it shows). Wednesday includes Sharp and Ben Solak for a nerdy breakdown of the week to come. For my money (literally), this is the most helpful segment; the Sept. 29 episode pushed the listener to the Cowboys and their awesome receiving corps (the Cowboys beat the Panthers). Friday brings Ringer mainstay Joe House to the show. He mostly contributes the "degenerate gambler" angle, and it's always fun to hear Sharp's reaction to his co-host's multi-leg parlays and "teases." While House isn't an expert like Solak, he gambles more like the listener and can thus act as audience surrogate.

There's one caveat I'll offer. At times, Sharp seems to hold back; you see, his primary endeavor is Sharp Football Analysis. It's a pricey gambling advice service, and you get the feeling that Sharp holds his best intel for that. It makes sense, given the podcast is free, but that might frustrate you at times. — Chris Lantinen



Buddycast

Hosted by: Nick Sorensen // buddycastpodcast.com

If you ever need a buddy in Erie, Pennsylvania, Nick Sorensen is your man. Sorensen is the host of *Buddycast*, a live-streamed podcast where guests — his buddies — are interviewed about their careers, unique talents, hobbies, and lives.

Sorensen masterminded the show during the early weeks of the pandemic with the help of his girlfriend Jessica, who also occasionally appears on the show. Tired of all the negativity, he deliberately made his interviews stand out with kindness, positivity, and optimism, focusing on making people feel a little more normal (and a little less angry) during not-so-normal times.

Since then, Sorensen has interviewed a dizzying number of people with a wide assortment of backgrounds. Episodes have included actors, voice actors, comedians, cartoonists, authors, impersonators, magicians, musicians, artists, athletes, teachers, newscasters, radio show personalities, motivational speakers, puppeteers, business owners, powerlifters, coaches, jugglers, and even clowns. While plenty are familiar local faces, he's also had on celebrities including Bill Klein of the popular TLC show *The Little Couple*, Sinbad, Stephen Tobolowski, Hunter "Patch" Adams, Vince Papale, and Bob West, the original voice of Barney.

It's Sorensen, who works in digital content management and performs locally as a comic, that makes *Buddycast* stick out among Erie's growing podcast scene. If you feel you need some positive vibes, check it out. — Jonathan Burdick



Erie County Human Relations Commission

The Erie County Human Relations Commission (ECHRC) works to eliminate discrimination in employment, housing and public accommodations through identification, consultation, and investigation of complaints.

- The ECHRC provides a system of equal justice for employer–employee, landlord–tenant, business–patron, and lending institution–homebuyer.

ECHRC's Ordinance makes it unlawful to discriminate against protected classes that include:

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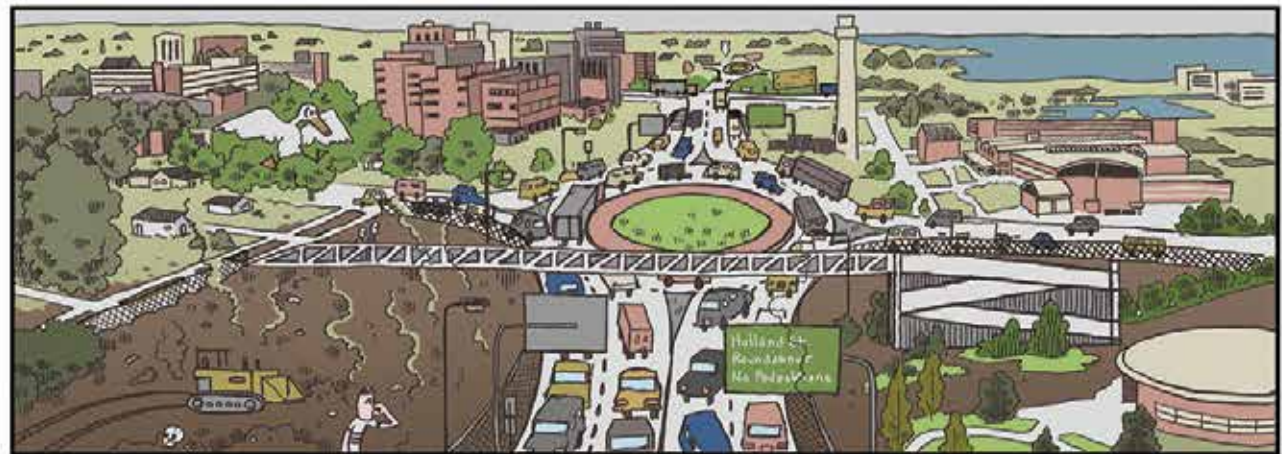
Bayfront Battle

In wake of proposed Bayfront Highway, a boulevard alternative boosts connectivity

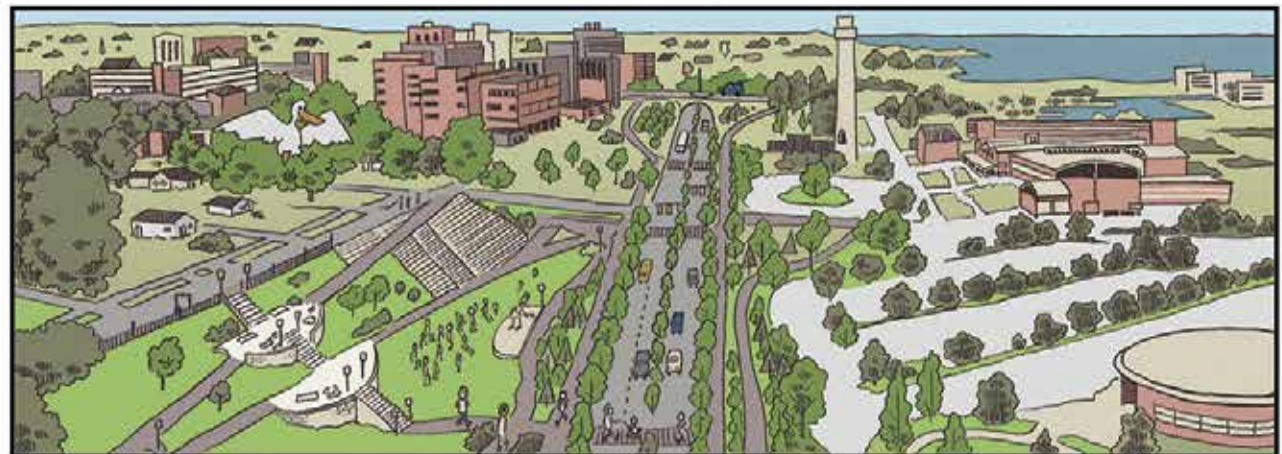
By CIVITAS.design and Connect Urban Erie members. Illustrated by Brad Pattullo.



The power elite want a Bayfront Highway to support and increase the 80% of current traffic using the Bayfront as a bypass through Erie. To build the highway, PennDOT skipped the NEPA Environmental Assessment. Residents and community groups protested. Earth Justice filed a Federal Lawsuit for the NAACP and PennFuture.



The Bayfront Highway plan features double-lane roundabouts & highway-style ramps and underpasses. To keep more traffic moving through the city, PennDOT will remove Holland Street sidewalks forcing Eastiders use a 9' wide pedestrian overpass that may not be open 24/7. PennDOT states that 80 percent of Bayfront traffic is using the Bayfront to cut across town and not to serve the Bayfront. PennDOT's current design will greatly increase such unwanted, induced cross-town traffic loads by implementing "Expressway" roundabout designs that prioritize continuous traffic flow. The unnecessary cross-town traffic will impede development with debilitating traffic congestion on the Bayfront and along the Bayfront Connector, Rt. 290. This crosstown traffic will increase threats and hazards to people walking and biking between the city and the Bayfront and along the Rt. 290 corridor. PennDOT's current design will fatally restrict Bayfront crossings and diminish the critical connectivity needed to support sustainable economic development. The best traffic and environmental planning is to encourage non-Bayfront destined traffic to use 12th Street and I-90 as the primary routes to get across town.



The Bayfront Boulevard plan offers abundant connectivity between the City and Bayfront. Connectivity is a social justice issue and is critical to Erie's future prosperity and quality of life. TAKE ACTION - SIGN THE RESOLUTION calling for PennDOT to adjust current plans and reduce the induced cross-town (east-west) vehicular traffic volumes by prioritizing north-south non-vehicular connectivity and traffic calming (over harmful "Level of Service" concerns for east-west vehicular traffic on the Bayfront) to protect the people, environment and economy of Erie, PA.

For more information, contact a member, call (814) 303-2248 or email: lisa@lisa-austin-pa.com.

FOOL'S GOLDBLUM BY BRAD PATTULLO

YOUR SCIENTISTS WERE SO PREOCCUPIED WITH WHETHER THEY COULD THAT THEY DIDN'T STOP TO THINK IF THEY SHOULD!



CNN

IAN MALCOLM'S EPIC ANTI-SCIENCE RANT RENOWNED "CHAOTICIAN" GOES FULL CONSPIRACY THEORIST



DR. HENRY WU: ISLA NUBLAR DINOSAURS LIKELY EVOLVED FROM BATS, ABSOLUTELY DID NOT ESCAPE FROM NEARBY DINOSAUR CLONING FACILITY

OPINION: IAN MALCOLM'S RANT IS A REMINDER: DON'T RELY ON CELEBRITIES FOR DINOSAUR THEORIES



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FDA APPROVES DINOSAUR VACCINE FOR CHILDREN UNDER TWO

"TO CRITICIZE ME IS TO CRITICIZE SCIENCE ITSELF"

Fish that Talk 203

THE YEAR IS 80 BCE, AT THE END OF THE OF THE ICE AGE, IN A WARM CAVE, IN THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION, A HOMO NEANDERTHAL HAD A CRUSH ON A SWEET THANG', FROM DENISOVA. "DENNY", AS SHE WAS CALLED, WAS TEACHING HIM SIMPLE CONCEPTS USING PHONETICS BECAUSE THE NEANDERTHAL COULDN'T SPEAK OUTSIDE A SIMPLE OCCASIONAL "GRUNT" LIKE "UGH", "MMHH" IN MONO SYLLABIC WORDS OR SOUNDS. HE LOOKED INTO HER BIG DARK BEAUTIFUL EYES, AND THANKED HER FOR HER KINDNESS.

LOVE WAS IN THE AIR.



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 - * DO YOU LIKE TO SING?
 - * ARE YOU A BIRD?
- * IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT BE A MAGPIE!

SARAH BROWN 2021

JUST TOYIN' WITCHA — BY B. TOY

From the mouths of babes:
ASK SALLY
Pumpkin Spice Edition

Doug from Cambridge Springs asks:

"Every time someone orders anything flavored with pumpkin spice, I fly into an uncontrollable rage. What can I do to stop them?"

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- The Pittsburgh Steelers
- Mask Nusers
- Thin Blue Line Flags
- Rainbow Flags
- Napping in the library
- Loud Children
- Hags
- Pajamas at Walmart
- Blue Hair
- Critical Race Theory
- Robert E. Lee Statues
- The Protoun "They"
- Mask Mandates
- Early Christmas Decorations

THEN YOU JUST NEED TO LIVE AND LET LIVE, CHILL THE HECK OUT AND QUIT BEING A JUDGMENTAL, UPTIGHT JAGOFF!

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ALBUM REVIEWS

Drake

Certified Lover Boy
Republic Records



On Drake's sixth official LP, *Certified Lover Boy*, pop's go-to singer and rapper takes an overlong victory lap with middling results. Of course, anyone familiar with Drake's work should have seen this coming; since 2016's *Views*, the artist has been overstuffing his projects to ensure successful streaming numbers, and while most fans wouldn't complain about more material, the problem is how much of it fails to live up to his 2011-15 creative peak.

Certified Lover Boy is standard in the strictest sense of the word, a collection of enjoyable albeit half-baked Drake songs that sound a lot like watered-down versions of better Drake songs. While it works as background music for Drake fans, the moments actually worth celebrating here are few and far between; "Way 2 Sexy" gets by on the sheer irreverence of its sample and Future's hook, while "You Only Live Twice" is carried by Rick Ross and the best Lil Wayne verse in over a decade. On "No Friends in the Industry," Drake actually tries his hand at something fresh and exciting for the star; it's just a shame it takes 46 minutes to get there. — Aaron Mook



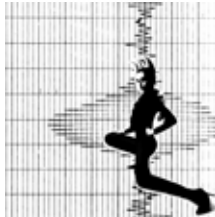
Poppy

Flux
Sumerian Records



Over the past two years, Poppy has emerged as not only one of the most exciting artists in metal, but in music as a whole. Shedding much of her YouTube persona and (U.K. record label) PC Music ties, last year's *I Disagree* marked a new path for the singer and performer, one that blended hyperpop with nu-metal guitar riffs (and led to a tour with Deftones and Gojira).

Now, a little over a year later, Poppy reclaims her creative control with *Flux*, an album executed just as strongly, but lacking some cohesive vision. Recent fans will want to know that her screams are sparse here, used strictly to underline particularly tense moments. Still, she swaps genres between tracks like an ever-changing rack of costumes, from the standard alt-rock of the opening title track to the skate-punk of "Lessen the Damage," and the "Lithium"-aping power-pop of "So Mean" to the grunge of empowering single "Her." Unfortunately, about half of the LP feels a bit aimless, offering songs that sound nice but failing to present anything as exciting as her most recent releases, including memorable hooks. *Flux* is a pleasant album for listeners interested in seeing the artist grow in real-time, but it may leave some fans wanting more. — Aaron Mook



Turnstile

GLOW ON
Roadrunner Records



Atop contender for album of the year, there's little doubt that Turnstile's third studio album is one of the best rock albums of 2021. *GLOW ON* is a groove-based hardcore masterpiece that's accessible enough for nearly everyone, including the most pretentious and discerning indie fans. With 15 tracks clocking in at nearly 35 minutes, it's a magnum opus for the genre. Existing somewhere between the indie sounds of Title Fight and the shoegaze hardcore of Fucked Up, it elevates the genre. With nearly unanimous praise from critics and fans alike, *GLOW ON* is a record that demands to be heard. Frontman Brendan Yates has a powerful delivery that harkens back to classic, genre-defining bands like Gorilla Biscuits and Youth of Today, backed by a progressive onslaught of sound that's perfect for head-bobbing and circle pits alike. The band employs rhythms that reference everything from worldbeat to Latin to extreme success. There's true emotion in every one of these tracks as well, something that's not lost on the listener. Quite simply, it's an objectively fantastic record, one that deserves spins from not only hardcore kids, but music fans in general. — Nick Warren



Illuminati Hotties

Let Me Do One More
Hopeless Records/Snack Shack



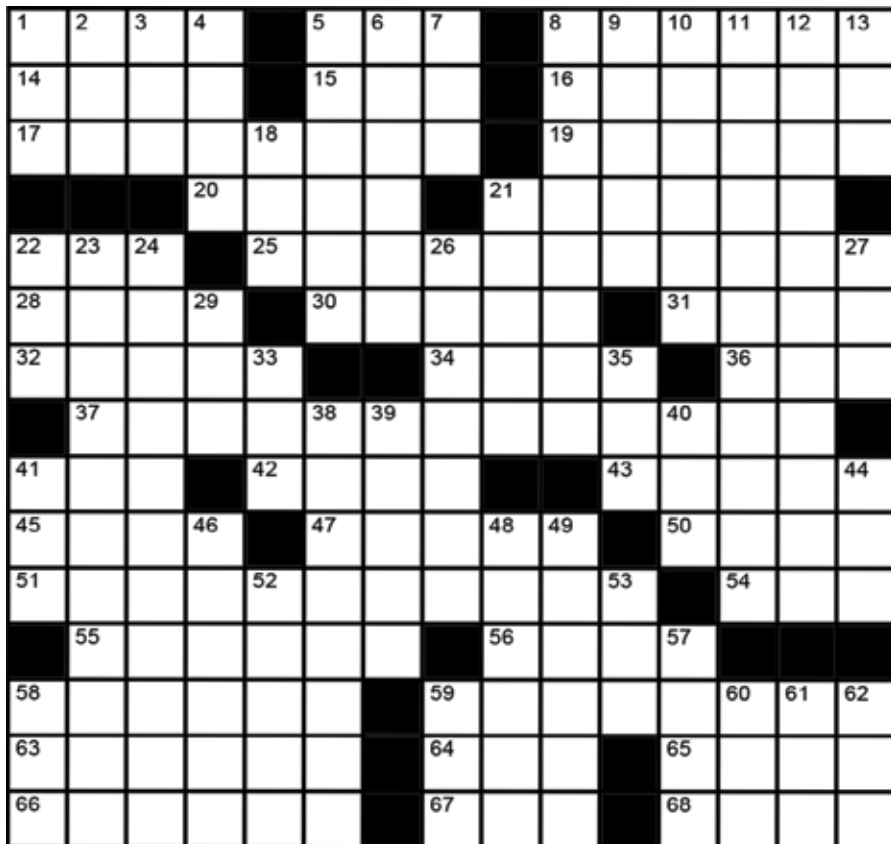
The third album from Illuminati Hotties finds the band (essentially comprised of songwriter Sarah Tudzin) returning to the glory of their nearly flawless debut album, *Kiss Yr Frenemies*. While 2020's *FREE I.H.: This Is Not The One You've Been Waiting For* was a noble venture, it simply didn't rise to the great heights of Tudzin's debut effort — its status even debatable for inclusion in the band's catalog, according to Spotify at least. In *Let Me Do One More*, we see a varied roller coaster of emotions that truly balance out the album and see it rising above simple pop rock. The Beach Bunny-esque sing-along choruses and earworms of the opening track "Pool Hopping" and the classic punk sounds of "Joni: LA's No. 1 Health Goth" paired with the final track "Growth" showcase the amazing versatility Tudzin has on tap. An accomplished producer, she's able to perfectly capture the sounds the band needs for every moment. Even reading the track titles above, her tongue-in-cheek humor is perfectly clear, oxymoronic coexisting with passionate and heartfelt cuts that paint a full picture of an artist at the top of her game. — Nick Warren



TOMMY IN TOON — BY TOMMY LINK



CROSSWORD



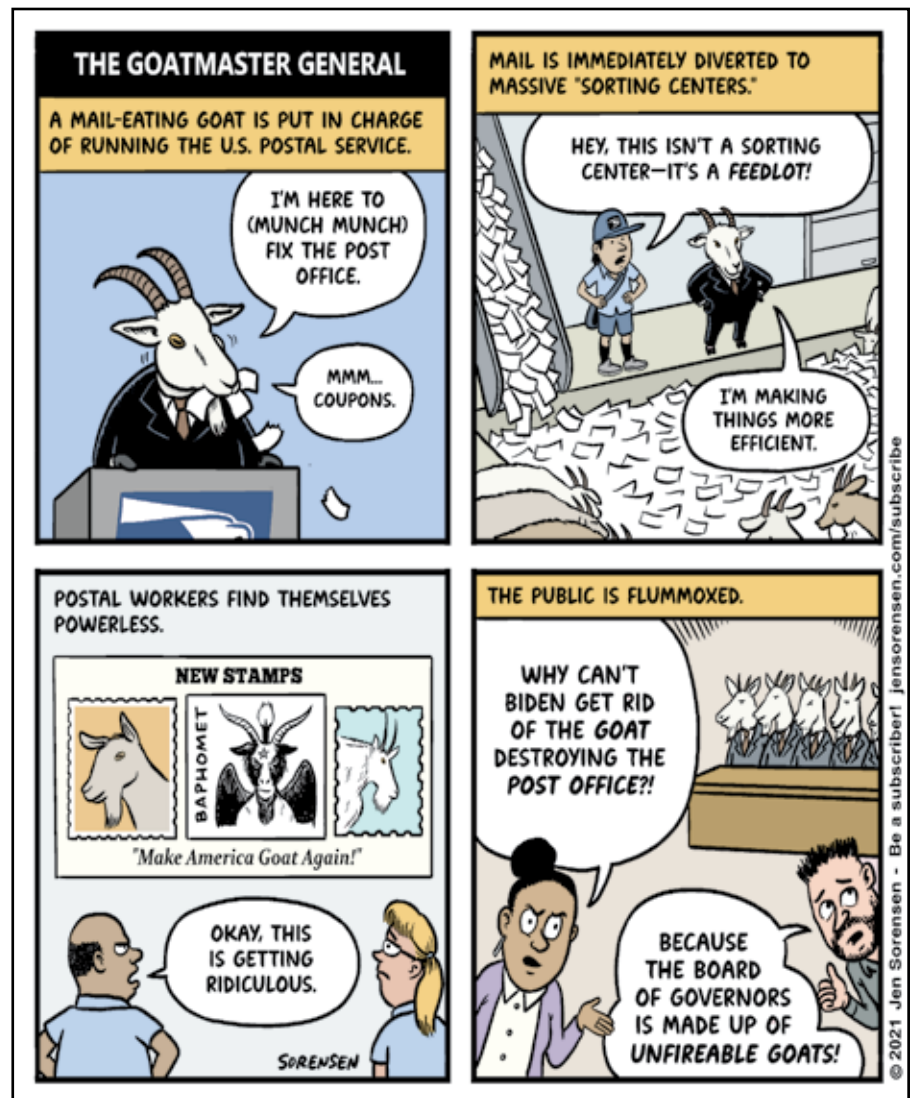
Across

1. Title for Horatio Magellan Crunch, on cereal boxes
5. ____-mo
8. Alternative to 7Up
14. Math measurement
15. When repeated, "So-o-o funny"
16. Mete out
17. "You got me tickets so I can hear 'Truth Hurts' and 'Juice' live?!?! Squee!!!!!"
19. Like some taxes and questions
20. Speck
21. Judged
22. Beach lotion abbr.
25. Book that includes "The Godfather," "The Sicilian" and "The Last Don"?
28. Reformer Jacob who wrote "How the Other Half Lives"
30. Former Finnish coin that sounds like an American copper coin
31. Hickey spot
32. "The Fox and the Grapes" fabulist
34. Former prime minister Barak or Olmert
36. Dissenting vote
37. Brunch dish that includes Spanish pork sausage?
41. One of two answers in Twenty Questions
42. Part of NYU
43. Title role for Jude Law in a 2004 remake
45. Regarding

Down

1. Ripken with a record 2,632 consecutive games played
2. Pop star Grande, to fans
3. ____ dispenser
4. The Soup ____ ("Seinfeld" character)
5. Grew suddenly
6. Class for expectant mothers
7. Part of a nonprofit's web address
8. Pricing model for many apps

9. NFL player with a black helmet
10. Brightest star in Draco
11. Secondary advantage
12. It's been offered at Yale since 1969
13. "Then what happened ...?"
18. "Alley ____!"
21. Hawaiian singer with many 1960s-'70s TV guest appearances
22. Spanish Mrs.
23. Some after-dinner slices
24. They're bogus
26. Bogey
27. Something to look up to
29. "Hamilton" Tony nominee Phillipa ____
33. Aetna rival, informally
35. Justice Dept. branch
38. Entangled
39. Nada
40. Honorary deg. for an attorney
41. Nickname on the 1960s-'80s Red Sox
44. Rough no.
46. Code of silence
48. Cough drop brand
49. Busybodies
52. "____ to recall ..."
53. Quarterback Brady
57. Duck sauce ingredient
58. '60s protest grp.
59. Zig's partner
60. Texter's "If you ask me ..."
61. Miami-to-Orlando dir.
62. Some MMA victories



Answers to last puzzle





THE JEFFERSON EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY'S GLOBAL SUMMIT XIII

2021 AT A GLANCE • Monday, November 1 – Friday, November 12

WEEK ONE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1 AT 7:30 P.M.

Labor and civil rights leader **Clayola Brown**, president of A. Phillip Randolph Institute in Washington, D.C., will discuss the impact of systemic racism in communities of color in a program moderated by union leader **DeWitt Walton** of Pittsburgh.

The Impact of Systemic Racism in Communities of Color

JES, 3207 State Street



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3 AT 7:30 P.M.

Jeffrey Rosen, an American academic, author, and commentator on legal affairs, leads the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, a nonpartisan nonprofit whose mission is to educate the public about the U.S. Constitution.

An Evening with Jeffrey Rosen, president of the National Constitution Center

Gannon's Yehl Room, 124 W 7th Street



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4 AT 7:30 P.M.

Camille Busette, a Brookings Institution scholar and an expert on policy reform at the local and national levels, will address public policy reform to address systemic issues that have driven racial inequities for decades. With a focus on Erie, Pennsylvania, Dr. Busette will examine data and trends in Erie and comparable metros.

The Power of Policy Reform to Address Racial Justice in Erie

JES, 3207 State Street



WEEK TWO

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8 AT 7:30 P.M.

Three distinguished panelists – **Barbara Perry**, **Stacy Cordery**, and **Anita McBride** – will discuss several former First Ladies in a Global Summit program in partnership with American University, the First Ladies Association for Research and Education, and the White House Historical Association.

The History and Role of First Ladies

Gannon's Yehl Room, 124 W 7th Street



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9 AT 7 P.M.

American President Night

Including **Governor Tom Ridge**, **Senator Pat Toomy**, and **Global Summit Chairman Steve Scully**.

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10 AT 7:30 P.M.

Former White House Chiefs of Staff **Andrew Card** and **Mack McLarty** will offer their insights on the men and presidencies of George W. Bush and Bill Clinton, respectively.

A Conversation with Former White House Chiefs of Staff

Gannon's Yehl Room, 124 W 7th Street



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11 AT 7:30 P.M.

Presidential historian **Doris Kearns Goodwin**, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author and internationally acclaimed speaker, is making her third appearance at the Jefferson Global Summit.

The New Deal to Great Society: FDR and LBJ

Gannon's Yehl Room, 124 W 7th Street



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12 AT 7:30 P.M.

Robert Pape, a political scientist at the University of Chicago, is the 2021 Thomas B. Hagen Dignitas Award recipient. Dr. Pape, an Erie native, is a specialist in international security affairs.

Holding the Line: Political Violence in America and the Implications for Democracy

Gannon's Yehl Room, 124 W 7th Street



Reserve your seats today at www.jeserie.org (limited capacity for all programs)