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From the Editors

A summery summary

From the outside, Erie is often characterized by its winters. If you live here, though, you know it's our summers that truly define us.

Yes, blinding blizzards and staggering snowfalls make for good storytelling, and there's no doubt that winter-hardiness is part of our collective identity. But those long, hot days surrounding the opposite solstice tend to have a greater role in forming our individual identities — what we're interested in, how we socialize and interact, and who we are in our most natural states without anything in particular to do or anywhere in particular to be. Ask any Erieite about their fondest childhood memories, and there's a high probability they'd be filled with the aromas of fairground funnel cakes and Smith's hot dogs at UPMC Park and the signature dings and "whacky" narrators of the Waldameer concourse, all silhouetted against the brilliant backdrop of a Lake Erie sunset.

Speaking of those, this year marks the centennial of Presque Isle, Erie's preeminent summer playground, as a Pennsylvania state park. Disproportionately blessed with both recreational and ecological opportunities, PI is truly one-of-a-kind — and so long as we continue on with conscientious resource management and stewardship — will always be ours. Jonathan Burdick examines what this milestone means for Erie, and how we can look forward to celebrating PI for centuries to come.

Regardless of how hard we try, though, swim out past the breakers and it will be forever clear to you who's really in charge. If the old journals of lighthouse keepers aren't enough to convince you that Lake Erie is a force to be reckoned with, perhaps diving in to catch a glimpse of the hundreds of shipwrecks strewn across its bottom would be. Matt Swanseger writes about how you can partake in this awe-inspiring experience — and a world of others — by becoming a certified diver right here in the Gem City.

Suddenly feeling hydrophobic? Don't despair — live entertainment is returning in 2021 nearly full-force after 2020's sweeping coronavirus cancellations. A concert-starved Nick Warren is quite eager to share a robust — although not exhaustive (that means there's more than we can print!) — list of events taking place throughout the region this summer. Several familiar favorites are back, including 8 Great Tuesdays, Discover Presque Isle, The Gathering at Chaffee's, The Erie County Fair, and more. With vaccination rates on the way up and mask orders on the way down, the end result should be a much-needed release for those who spent the past year patiently following precautions and protocols — and much better tan lines.

In Erie, summer is who we are and what we're all about. And we have a feeling it's about to be a good one.



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Progressives Push On to November

What do the May primary victories tell us about Erie politics today?



Progressive candidates fared well in May's primary election, with a number of young, diverse candidates who will be representing the Democratic party in the November general election. From left to right are Tyler Titus (nominee for Erie County Executive), Jasmine Flores (Erie City Council), and Lydia Laythe (Erie County Council). If Titus wins, they would be first openly transgender person to hold a county executive office nationwide.

By: Ben Spегgen

I can't tell you how many times writers, reporters, commentators, and pundits have invoked the words of Bob Dylan: *The times, they are a-changin'*. I can, however, virtually guarantee that given its timeless appeal ever since 1964, the iconic cultural anthem will continue to be referenced well into the future. And it can certainly be used right now.

The times in Erie do seem to be a-changin' following the May 2021 primary election, evidenced by the significant victories of progressive Democratic candidates. This includes the (surprise-to-some, affirming-of-the-changin'-to-others) outcome of the marquee Erie County Executive race, which drew added attention because the incumbent county executive, Kathy Dahlkemper, decided not to seek re-election, ensuring that no matter whether a Democrat or Republican emerges in November, Erie County will have a new chief executive.

First, it's important to note that the results of these races are based on the final unofficial vote totals as reported by the Erie County Courthouse. Precincts throughout the City of Erie have been adjudicated, meaning provisional and mail-in ballots have been counted, as well as write-in votes, but some boroughs and townships are still at work. Until the Erie County Board of Elections certifies the primary results, which must be done by June 17, results remain "unofficial."

Second, with the passing of Act 77 in 2019, Pennsylvanian voters can cast their ballots by mail without needing an approved reason for being absent at their polling place. With an uptick in mail-in ballots to count, election results take longer to report, meaning that it's less likely for races to be called the night of an election without substantial, insurmountable leads established by in-person voting. This was the case for the Erie County Executive race on the Democratic side.

On the Republican side, however, it

was easy to call the primary victory for Brenton Davis, who according to results as of May 27, had 10,171 votes over Shawn Wroblewski's 8,367. Davis led out of the gates and only widened the gap throughout the night and into the final unofficial count.

But from the Dems' perspective it was a hold-on-to-your-hat-if-you're-wearing-one kind of night, featuring four lead changes in a race featuring four candidates. But only two were contenders: Dr. Tyler Titus and Carl Anderson, who finished with 8,766 and 8,551 votes, respectively. Behind them, Dylanna Grasinger and Rita Bishop finished with 5,668 and 4,269, respectively.

When results first began to be reported, Titus, a mental health professional, small business owner, Erie School Board President, and 2017 "Erie's 40 Under 40" honoree, took the first lead. Upon the second batch of votes being tallied, Anderson, a self-employed entrepreneur, historical researcher and consultant, and Erie County Council President (rep-

resenting District 4), took the lead, only to lose it on the third round of reporting, regain it upon the fourth, and lose it again at the fifth. After that, Titus remained atop the vote count and ultimately declared victory the following day.

Anderson saw himself as the front-runner in the race, saying so during the Erie County Executive Democratic primary debate hosted at WQLN Public Media and moderated by Erie News Now's Eva Mastromatteo alongside two Cathedral Prep students. Anderson also out-fundraised all other candidates, amassing a political campaign war chest of more than \$137,000 -- \$85,000 of which came from just four donors — according to an Erie Times-News report.

Titus, on the other hand, campaigned on grassroots contributions, notching 563 individual campaign donations. Overall, they raised \$84,709.

In 2017, Titus was elected to the Erie School Board and made history as the first openly transgender person to be elected in Pennsylvania. Currently, they are the President of the School Board. In the same election, Anderson, who previously sought office as a Republican, won the seat to represent the fourth district of County Council. Today, he's the Council President.

So both Titus and Anderson currently hold another elected office and both hold leadership positions, which they'll both have to give up come January 2022. But one still has the shot of holding the county's highest office.

If Titus wins in November, they would again make history — this time becoming the first openly transgender person to hold a county executive position nationwide.

So, how did we get to the surprise-to-some, affirming-of-the-changin'-to-others outcome in the Democratic Erie County Executive primary race?

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NEWS & VIEWS

The answer may be one in the same.

May's primary was a win for Erie County United, a citizen advocacy and social justice group aimed at bringing together "people and organizations to run issue-based campaigns, grow grassroots political power, and build a sustainable progressive movement in Erie," according to its Facebook page. It's a member of the larger Pennsylvania United.

Erie County United put forth a three-person slate for Erie City Council and a four-person slate for Erie School Board. Jasmine Flores, who narrowly lost her 2019 bid for City Council, advanced through the primary for City Council as the second-highest vote-getter (Liz Allen came in first in her bid for a second four-year term), and Elspeth Koehle just missed the cut, falling 25 votes short of earning the fourth spot on the ballot.

Three of the four Erie County United-backed candidates for Erie School Board — Lauren Gillespie, Dr. Leatra Tate, and Zakaria Sharif — are advancing to November. Gillespie and Tate won on the Democratic ticket, while Sharif won on the Republican — in a race where candidates are eligible to cross-party file.

Two Erie County United co-op members also won their May bids: Dr. Tyler Titus and Lydia Laythe.

Laythe, a Democrat who's currently serving her first term on Washington Township Council, will represent the Dems in the Erie County Council District 6 race after handily defeating her primary opponent, Herbert Riede 1,667 to 518. One-term Republican incumbent Scott Rastetter lost his re-election bid to Samuel Bayle IV 1,730 to 1,679, meaning it'll be two new faces facing off for the seat in the fall.

What's worth remembering is that as in-person vote counts are reported throughout the night, results reveal themselves geographically. Ballots are driven to the courthouse — so the farther away from the courthouse, the later they are to report.

When Titus took the lead later in the night, southern Erie was beginning to report. When Laythe's numbers went up, so did Titus'.

While Anderson had support throughout the community — a mailer featuring a list of prominent Erie names supporting him hit mailboxes in the days leading up to the election — the progressives had the support of

each other on the ballot. Too, Anderson had photoshopped mailers that created the appearance that he was talking to prospective voters. Titus had a strong door-to-door campaign, and a strong web presence, and the better performance in the Democratic Erie County Executive primary debate.

The primary progressive victories aren't Erie's alone. Of the 25 who took the PA United 2021 Candidate Pledge — to no take corporate cash; to always stand with poor and working-class people, whether black, white, or brown, to make a better future for all of us; to commit to building a multi-racial, multi-generational grassroots movement — all but three advanced from the primary election to the general.

For further proof of the rise of progressive Pennsylvania candidates, one needn't look further than Pittsburgh's Democratic primary.

Pennsylvania State Rep. Ed Gainey upset two-term incumbent Bill Peduto.

As the Pittsburgh City Paper tells it: "Gainey has become a well-known progressive ally on issues like criminal justice reform, marijuana policy, labor, public transit, and the Black Lives Matter movement."

With a victory in November, he would become Pittsburgh's first Black mayor.

Heading into the fall in Erie, the Democratic party has already thrown its support behind Titus. In a post now making the social media rounds, Chair of the Erie County Democratic Party Jim Wertz wrote:

"I have long known Tyler Titus to be a committed steward of our community and last week Tyler also proved himself to be a skilled campaigner. I congratulate Tyler on crossing the threshold and I look forward to directing the full force of the Erie County Democratic Party behind their candidacy to be our next Erie County Executive."

The times — progressives besting perceived establishment candidates, incumbents losing seats (in races throughout the county covered and also in ones *not* covered here) — they are a-changin'. But it's worth remembering that just shy of 30 percent of registered voters determined those changes in May.

Will more be decided in the fall? The wheel, as has been said, is still in spin.

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

Life's a Picnic

12 pleasing places to unpack lunch or dinner this summer



Pack a picnic, read a book. The Erie County Library will be adding more picnic tables to Blasco, the main library, and also installing picnic tables at the Lincoln Community Center, Edinboro, and Iroquois branches this summer. The idea is to encourage patrons to read and to enjoy the outdoors at the same time.

but I set up a folding chair to watch the crashing waves and to eye the purple martin houses. I plan to return to the Walnut Creek Marina Sunset Garden, erected in partnership with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, some other evening.

Next up: The Friends of the Library's Bayfront Bookshelf gift shop at Blasco, then Blasco itself so I could check out three books on mythology to learn more about Minerva, the Roman god immortalized in a restored statue on the library's first floor.

Outside, on the library's east side, I stopped at a picnic table to admire the lush garden, especially the glorious irises. This place, I decided, is where I will re-read *Seed-folks*, by Paul Fleischman, a slim portrait of gutsy people in inner-city Cleveland who came together to nurture a community garden.

Day Two

The Millcreek Branch Library won't get a picnic table because of its location in a Millcreek Mall shopping plaza. But recently by chance, I discovered a place to commune with nature not far from the mall's acres of paved parking lots. After I checked out *Home Port Erie. Voices of Silent Images*, by Robert J. MacDonald and David Frew, from the "local interest" section at the Millcreek library, I headed to Bridger Park on Walnut Creek in Millcreek Township, at Zimmerly and West roads.

wooden picnic basket and set off to explore parks and public access points with views of Lake Erie or Presque Isle Bay.

When I learned that the Erie County Library will add picnic tables to Blasco and to the Lincoln Community Center, Edinboro, and Iroquois branches this summer, I figured I should book-it and brown-bag-it at the same time.

Over three days, I visited five libraries, a dozen parks or green spaces, and 10 eateries.

Here is my report on my picnicpalooza:

Day One

I bought a chocolate chip cookie from Teresa's Deli - Lakeshore (it was too early for one of its "famous giant subs"), then drove to Lincoln Community Center library branch at 1255 Manchester Road, where I checked out a young adult novel, *The Voting Booth*, by Brandy Colbert. From there, I headed north on Manchester to the Walnut Creek Marina.

I love visiting this rocky beach, where Lake Erie looks as ferocious as the ocean. I didn't see any picnic tables

This park has been developed near a noisy sewer treatment facility, but a two-minute walk on its trails takes you away from the racket and into a peaceful setting filled with wildflowers, birds and butterflies. There are several metal tables with built-in seats, but I'd probably picnic on one of the standalone benches, near the gurgling creek, to watch with wonder that nature can coexist so close to our region's retail hub.

Next stop was the Edinboro Branch Library, where I hoped to find *Bridget Jones's Diary*, by Helen Fielding, but it wasn't in the stacks. Randlee Gross, branch manager, said she picked up that book at a hotel in Hawaii when she forgot to bring something to read. It's the perfect vacation book, she said, because the diary format gives you "bite-sized" chunks of reading to enjoy, three pages or so at a time.

Rather than books, I checked out seeds for spinach and summer squash from the Edinboro branch. After planting the seeds and harvesting the produce, the borrower is expected to return dried seeds to replenish the inventory, stored in packets in an old card catalogue. Later this summer, maybe I will eat my homegrown veggies at Edinboro Lake, which has a lovely picnic pavilion. This is also a great spot to bring locally grown food items from the Edinboro Market or to indulge your sweet tooth with a treat from Edinboro Chocolate, both on Erie Street in downtown Edinboro, or the Dairy Supreme on Plum Street, which has an amazing variety of ice cream, frozen yogurt, shakes, sundaes, and sandwiches.

Back in Erie, I picked up my husband from the Y,

then took a drive with him to Joseph Walczak Sr. Park, which spreads out between East Grandview Boulevard and Alan Drive. The sky was cloudy, but the view of the lake, miles away, was still breathtaking. Some young eastsiders have even told me that you can see Canada on a clear day. In any case, with a playground and lots of ball-fields, there is plenty to do at this park, and the sheltered picnic area means you can eat out, rain or shine.

Day Three

I crammed a lot into this final day, starting at the Lakeside Boat Launch in Lawrence Park, which has a spectacular lake view from its benches and one picnic table, and winding up, many hours later, at the South Pier in the City of Erie.

Getting to the Iroquois Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave., can be a hassle now due to construction on East Lake Road, but the short detour through Lawrence Park is a welcome side trip. You'll see why Lawrence Park is on the National Register of Historic Places and discover local eateries that are worth a visit, including the old-fashioned Dairy Queen across from the library.

Before wending my way into the township via the detour, I stopped at Gary's Superette, 4703 East Lake Road, where owner Joel Faulhaber said his store carries lots of "grab and go" items, including warm garlic-Parmesan pepperoni balls, perfect for an impromptu picnic.

I might have also stopped for takeout at the My Way Bar and Grill, 2218 East Lake Road, specializing in Indian and Nepal dishes, but it was too soon for the early-bird menu, available at 1 p.m.

Instead, I made a mad dash

By: Liz Allen

Last summer, when the pandemic grounded us, the front porch became our perch.

We ate most meals out there on an antique porcelain table, rescued from the dusty basement. The table sat next to a wobbly wooden bench, where I grew potted herbs to snip for our dinner entrees, usually eaten after a fierce game of Scrabble.

To decorate, I draped fairy lights under the eaves and arranged wildflowers in Mason jars.

Lounging on the porch swing, I read poetry and gardening books I had stored in an old crate.

In the evening, we'd greet neighbors strolling to the sunset. Sometimes, we tuned into a Pittsburgh Pirates' game on the radio.

We lived as idyllic a life as possible during the time of COVID, but by this May, fully vaccinated, I was ready to vacate the porch for some micro-vacations, with two conditions: The destination had to be low-cost and close to the water.

Instead of a suitcase, I packed my grandmother's

NEWS & VIEWS

throughout the afternoon and evening to finish off my checklist.

Chautauqua Park, at the foot of Chautauqua Boulevard, has a pretty picnic shelter and a charcoal grill. Here, I discovered the cascading waters of McDannell Run tumbling into the lake. The James N. Thompson Land Lighthouse Park, at the end of Lighthouse Street, offers a covered shelter, a grill, a playground, and access to the Lighthouse on Saturdays and Sundays (for a fee) and for free on the first Tuesday of the month.

The Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority has covered metal picnic tables at the South Pier; there are also portable restrooms and a bike rack. The port also has one available covered picnic table close to the dock area between Donjon Shipbuilding and Repair and DaVita Erie Dialysis on the Bayfront

Parkway. This is a great spot for a close-up look at Erie's working port.

Nate Levy-Jaycee Park, along East Second and East Third between Holland and German streets, only offers a small glimpse of the waterfront, between the treeline, but what you get in exchange is the chance to play chess or ping-pong on the game tables. There's also a playground and tennis courts.

At Bayview Park, you can pose for pics at the new Erie sign, pump the new metal swings, picnic in the covered pavilion, or walk east on the bluffs to another picnic table.

In between park visits, I stopped at Trawka's Market, 712 Payne Ave., where owner Tom Walsh recommended any of his specialty sausages or homemade salads for a picnic. I didn't have time to cook sausage, so I bought a jar of Nathan's sweet horseradish pickles for my husband, a na-

tive New Yorker. At Franco's Café in the Renaissance Centre, owner Larry Franco said his chicken salad on croissant, salads, and paninis are big take-out items. Thelma Blanks, who co-owns Café 710 at 7 West 10th St. with her daughter Mabel Howard, says any of her homemade baked goods would be a big hit at a picnic, including the cookies, banana bread swirled with chocolate and peanut butter, or her new made-from-scratch cheesecakes.

I was so busy visiting parks, I didn't really eat much. But I have three months of summer to hit "pause" and enjoy some peaceful picnics.

Liz Allen is going to spring for \$3 for a "mystery brown bag" of books the next time she visits the Bayfront Bookshelf operated by the Friends of the Library. You can reach her at lizallenerie@gmail.com

Picnic at the library

Sometime this summer, likely during June, the Erie County Library will install colorful metal picnic tables at the Blasco, Edinboro, Iroquois, and Lincoln library sites.

"They'll be perfect for library patrons and anyone in the area to enjoy while reading a good book, taking advantage of the free Wi-Fi at all our libraries, or just basking in the good weather," said Sheryl Thomas, acting library director.

"Making better use of our outdoor green space is a priority, especially as a way to support the county's Blue Zones initiative to promote healthy lifestyles," she said. "The pandemic has also emphasized the need for more outdoor areas to enjoy, even as restrictions are easing."

As for a favorite book she would recommend, Thomas said it's hard to choose but



LIZ ALLEN

The Edinboro Branch Library offers seed packets, housed in an old card catalog, for patrons who borrow the seeds for planting, then return dried seeds from the produce they grow. The Iroquois Branch Library also has a seed library.

suggested *The Perilous Gard* by Elizabeth Marie Pope. "It's a Newberry Honor Book and a retelling of the Scottish ballad of Tam Lin. Wonderfully atmospheric with a likable heroine, a good dose of enchantment and a dash of the macabre, its setting in a rainy castle and underground passages make it the perfect mix for a sunny day outside." – Liz Allen

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Erie Can Build Our Region's Economic Future

How the American Jobs Plan will lay the foundation



President Joe Biden's proposed American Jobs Plan will specifically target infrastructure, and will address much more than just road and bridge repair. Things like access to lead-free water and broadband internet are not a given for all Americans, especially those in the lowest income brackets.

can Jobs Plan can help lay the foundation for a more prosperous, equitable, and inclusive Erie. The bill contains investments in jobs of the future, like producing green energy, modernizing power grids, and building technological infrastructure in public schools and community colleges. It also provides funds to reconnect neighborhoods that were separated by past infrastructure projects, and incentives to eliminate exclusionary zoning laws and promote new housing.

A new approach to urban planning will encourage economic development and make Erie more livable for all its residents. The American Jobs Plan can help fund such a transformation. Its provisions include \$20 billion to fund local plans and improvements that will help make roads safer for cyclists and pedestrians. The bill also proposes \$5 billion to transform former industrial sites into economic hubs. Such investments will encourage residents and visitors to stop, shop, dine, and spend more time in the community, benefiting both new businesses and the neighborhoods where they are located.

Erie's forward-looking leaders and activists have the vision for a community where workers of all education levels can find good-paying jobs building our region's economic future. What we need now is a substantial federal investment in that vision. Most congressional Republicans, including Erie's Rep. Mike Kelly, have already expressed skepticism toward President Biden's infrastructure bill, citing their opposition to higher taxes on major corporations. But the American Jobs Plan is well worth the cost of higher taxes on the wealthy. Erieites should call on Congress to support communities like ours by passing this plan.

Andrew Dolan is an Erie native and international trade specialist. His writings have appeared in the Erie Times News, and the Falls Church News-Press.

By: Andrew Dolan

President Joe Biden pledged that he would be the White House partner that communities like Erie need to build an inclusive 21st-century economy. His proposed American Jobs Plan will make a substantial down-payment on that promise if Congress passes it. Erie is a vibrant, talented city that was once an economic magnet for people from across the region and, indeed, the world. Today, too many Erieites are forced to look elsewhere for opportunity. Some of those who cannot or do not want to leave struggle to find decent, family-sustaining work. In recent years, local leaders have stepped up to lay the groundwork for urgently-needed progress. The American Jobs Plan will make forward-looking investments at the scale needed to realize their vision.

It is necessary to examine whether any major national investment plan will benefit people on the ground in Erie. Will such a plan create jobs in communities like Erie? If so, will they be jobs readily available to current Erie residents? The evidence strongly suggests that the American Jobs Plan is a good fit for our local needs. As of 2019, more than 70 percent of Erie County residents did not have a bachelor's degree or higher level of educational attainment. According to a recent study from Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce, fully 75 percent of the jobs created by President Biden's infrastructure bill will not require an associate's or

bachelor's degree, and 53 percent will require no formal or vocational education beyond a high school diploma. What's more, researchers predict that the plan will create more than half a million jobs in Pennsylvania alone.

Infrastructure is not just roads and bridges. Bringing broadband internet to every American is just as important to education and economic development as electrification was a century ago. Though most Erieites north of I-90 have access to broadband, just 25 percent of the southern, rural part of the county was covered as of 2020. The American Jobs Plan will invest \$100 billion to make broadband access universal and affordable.

The continued presence of lead in our water supply is a moral disaster that disproportionately affects lower-income Erieites, especially people of color. As Erie City Council candidate Kendrick Tate recently noted, a 2016 Reuters special report found that up to 40 percent of children in some city neighborhoods were exposed to elevated lead levels. President Biden's bill includes funding to replace 100 percent of America's remaining lead water pipes and service lines. The American Jobs Plan will help hire Erie residents to upgrade our water infrastructure and end the injustice of lead contamination.

There is no going back to the Erie of past generations. Even if we could revive the old economy, we should not want to. For all the Erieites who enjoyed good jobs and vibrant communities, many others were left out. The Ameri-



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FEATURE

100 Years of Presque Isle State Park

Celebrating Erie's lakeside peninsula playground



JESSICA HUNTER

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WHITE THORN GAMES

By: Jonathan Burdick

On June 10, 1921, Otto G. Hitchcock, vice president of Hays Manufacturing Company, spoke at an event about the Pennsylvania state legislature's authorization to create a state park out of the Presque Isle peninsula on Lake Erie. He was thrilled, because the peninsula, Hitchcock declared, was a "veritable playground of unsullied nature along the shore" and the most important attraction in Erie.

"Governor [William Cameron] Sproul recently signed a bill making the development of the peninsula possible," he explained. "It will all take time. It is a big job, but within a few years right here at Erie, you will have one of the finest 'back to nature' parks on the Great Lake."

This had been made possible, in part, by the efforts of State Senator A. Elverton Sisson, a well-known Erie attorney and politician who had also been essential in securing funds for the public dock at the foot of State Street in 1907 and the raising and restoration of the U.S. Brig Niagara from the depths of Misery Bay in 1913.

"Presque Isle Peninsula [is to be] preserved, maintained, improved, enlarged, and forever held as a public park, to be known as Pennsylvania State Park at Erie," the official dedication read.

The story of Presque Isle is a story of many such changes, from its designations, to its physical transformations, to the people who lived around, explored, and utilized it. For centuries, the land surrounding the 11,000-year-old peninsula was populated by those indigenous to the region. This included the Iroquoian

Whether you're standing in an unoccupied lifeguard's chair or sitting on the beach, Presque Isle State Park's sunsets are some of the world's most breathtaking.

group known as the Erielhonan people who were, as Harry Forrest Lupold wrote in his 1975 book, the "masters of the south shore of Lake Erie." They lived in nearby fortified villages among the still primeval forests and the peninsula was an important source of food.

As erosion changed the shape of the peninsula — including becoming an island on numerous known occasions — so too did the makeup of those who lived around it. The French, who gave the peninsula its current name, built nearby forts, followed by the British. Violence forced many of those native to the area westward while some, such as Odawa leader Pontiac, resisted and went to war against the intruders. Then in 1795, the town of Erie was surveyed to be centered specifically near Presque Isle with the natural harbor of Presque Isle Bay as its most important asset.

Since then, there have been many attempts to protect Presque Isle from its shapeshifting, particularly at the peninsula's neck. A Presque Isle watchman was often charged with reporting any significant erosion. In the late 1800s, hundreds of thousands of dollars were invested in breakwaters and jetties and plant growth, but the viciousness of lake storms made erosion difficult to combat. Between 1896 and 1898, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers helped plant 1,000 Carolina poplars, 200 Wisconsin willows, 200 Scotch pines, and 2,000 honeylocust trees, which helped anchor the land.



JESSICA HUNTER

A great blue heron — one of 339 bird species to be recorded at Presque Isle State Park — shows off its graceful profile on the shores of Presque Isle Bay.

By 1991, with the peninsula now established as a leisure destination for millions of visitors each year, the building of 58 modern control breakwalls was underway. Sand replenishment, or “beach nourishment” as it was sometimes called, had also become a major focus. Over the following two summers, with crews working around the clock seven days a week, half a million tons of sand was dredged and pumped from miles out in the lake and spread out across Presque Isle. This added as much as 75 feet of width to some beaches. As the Erie Times-News reported at the time, such projects held “a potential for conflict between recreationalists and environmentalists.” In this case, the environmentally conscious worried that this, along with other artificial changes, would disturb the “ecological balance” of the park.

That ecological balance has always been important to maintain across its 3,200 acres, specifically with so much human encroachment and interaction. Geologist Helen D. Deland concluded in 1991 that “careful planning” and “wise recreational use” was required in order to “balance the demands of maintaining public access ... against the possibilities of damaging the complex system of interacting forces.”

This complex system involves six distinct ecological zones throughout Presque Isle, each with its own “specialized plant and animal community.” These zones are the lake, bay, and shoreline; the sand plains and new ponds; the dunes and ridges; the old ponds and marshes; the thicket and sub-climax for-

est; and the climax forest. Altogether, they include over 339 species of birds, nearly 50 mammals, and over 30 kinds of reptiles and amphibians.

As this year marks the 100th anniversary of Presque Isle being designated a state park, the Tom Ridge Environmental Center recently unveiled a historical exhibit that will be on display until Aug. 23. The Erie Times-News has also reported that there will be “events, activities, programs, and park enhancements” over the following year to celebrate. Whether you are there to soak in some rays, walk or bike the trails, picnic, boat, fish, or even simply watch the wildlife, it is a unique and special place and one that Erie is fortunate to have, free of admission costs, which keeps it accessible to more families.


Eugene Ware, author of the 2013 book *A History of Presque Isle* and the recent children’s book *Tucker and Ripley’s Adventure on Presque Isle*, described the peninsula as “an ecological and recreational paradise” and “a place where guests can enjoy solitude, reflection, and the wonders of nature.” It is, as Otto G. Hitchcock proclaimed a century ago, Erie’s most important playground.

Just always remember as you play: respect the wildlife, be considerate of others, and leave no trace.

Jonathan Burdick runs the historical blog Rust & Dirt. He can be reached at jburdick@eriereader.com. Find him on Twitter @rustdirt

MEN'S HEALTH

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Erie's Land Lighthouse: The Stories We Want to Tell

At over 200 years old, historic structure has much to say



[left] Erie's Land Lighthouse was built in 1867 of Berea Sandstone. The light room at the top was reconstructed in 2004 by Fiske and Sons. [bottom right] This conical, decorative cast iron staircase wends its way up the tower of the Erie Land Lighthouse (ca. 1867) to the overlook and light room.

evolution: "The Confederate military had three or more skillful commerce raiders that cruised all along the eastern seacoast. In fact, the Confederate raiders Shenandoah and Alabama destroyed over 46 New England whalers. If you take those losses and add them to all the other losses during this period, over 50 percent of all American whalers were sunk."

The original lighthouse built in 1818 didn't last too long. It was built on soft, sandy soil, often described as quicksand, and the tower itself had a simple and insufficient foundation. Over time the tower started to lean dramatically and in 1857, they built a new tower with a slightly better foundation, but in the same

spot. As you may have guessed, this one also started to falter. So 10 years later, they made the sound decision to move the tower south about 200 feet from the edge of the bluff and constructed a very sturdy foundation. This 1867 structure is the same one we see today. It is made of Berea Sandstone to aid in its structural integrity (and in its timeless beauty) and its Fresnel lens had a reach of 15 nautical miles. Not long after this lighthouse was completed, the construction of the Presque Isle Lighthouse began, and with the North Pier light in operation, the Land Lighthouse became unnecessary and was decommissioned in 1899. And yet it still stands, right in the midst of an active neighborhood in Erie, waiting for someone to make it necessary again.

As I drove down Lighthouse Street, just past East Middle School on Erie's east side, I noticed what a charming street it is: full of older homes of

By: Erin Phillips

When one thinks about the historic lighthouses in Erie, the Presque Isle Light Station and the North Pier Light are usually the first that come to mind. And with Presque Isle State Park receiving upwards of 4 million visitors a year, they're two lighthouses you can't really help but see, even if you're not seeking them out. But Erie's first lighthouse is often overlooked. Originally constructed in 1818, the Land Lighthouse, at the foot of Lighthouse Street on Erie's east side, was the first lighthouse put into operation on the Great Lakes. The lighthouse has a long and interesting history, and has had many caretakers over the 200+ years of its existence.

Nowadays the Land Lighthouse has the fortunate distinction of falling under the care of the new director of the Presque Isle Light Station, Emily Butler. She has a close connection to the Land Lighthouse, as the grounds are now

her home and she has exciting, progressive plans for the future of the light to help keep its history relevant into the future. And for the first time in many years, it will be open regularly for public tours.

In the very early days of Erie's settlement, the waters of Lake Erie along the peninsula were some of the most dangerous waters in the Great Lakes. Many ships were capsized in unpredictable weather or were run aground due to unexpected land masses close to shore. It was around 1800 when Daniel Dobbins (ever heard of him?) started lobbying Congress to fund a lighthouse, to help make Erie a more viable port city (which would also greatly benefit his own business ventures). As it stood, navigating the channel between the lake and the bay was nearly impossible for a larger cargo ship. There were multiple sandbars and the land of the peninsula shifted yearly, making navigation inconsistent and unpredictable. Most

ships had to unload their cargo onto smaller vessels to get through the narrow passage, which was difficult (especially in Erie weather), costly (a lot of cargo fell into the water), and took a lot of time.

So in 1818, around the same time that sandbars were removed from the channel, the original Land Lighthouse (then known as the Presque Isle Lighthouse) was built and lit on the bluff at the entrance to the channel. The land where the lighthouse sits was donated by John Kelso, who owned large tracts of land in that area. At that time, the original lighthouse was a 20-foot wooden rectangular tower constructed very close to the bluff. Its array of lights, which had a reach of up to 10 nautical miles, would have been originally fueled by sperm whale oil until after the Civil War, when most lighthouse lamps switched to kerosene. Eugene Ware, in his book *Pennsylvania Lighthouses on Lake Erie*, makes an interesting connection to this fuel source



ERIN PHILLIPS

ERIN PHILLIPS



Lighthouse keeper Emily Butler stands atop Erie's Land Lighthouse, with the lake, Presque Isle, and the North Pier Light visible in the background.

ERIN PHILLIPS

varying styles. At the street's foot is a large, well-maintained public park and playground overlooking the lake, and off to the west sits the towering and strikingly beautiful Land Lighthouse. The iron fence surrounding the property is open and as I get out of my car, I see Emily Butler emerge from the caretaker's house, which was built around the time of the current Land Lighthouse and is now Butler's home. Her jubilant pup, Grover, barrels over to greet me first and after a few slobbery snuggles, Emily catches up. She starts by telling me her own journey to becoming the new steward of Erie's lighthouses.

Emily was born in Pittsburgh and got her undergraduate at Temple University in Philadelphia. After finishing school there, she went on to receive her Masters in Historic Preservation from Tulane in New Orleans. From there she worked for two different Frank Lloyd Wright house museums, one

here in Pennsylvania, then most recently in Arizona at Wright's summer home, Taliesin West. Once the pandemic hit and museum life drastically changed, she decided that moving back to her family's side of the country made sense and she applied and was selected for the director position of the Presque Isle Light Station. Around the same time, the Port Authority, who has ownership of the Land Lighthouse and has been responsible for its meticulous and expensive restoration, agreed to give management responsibilities of the Land Lighthouse over to the Presque Isle Light Station.

And with that agreement comes a great opportunity. Butler is very excited to include the Land Lighthouse in her education committee's plans moving forward to bring programming and educational opportunities to the public, and more specifically, to the neighborhood where the Land

Lighthouse resides. "We are in a community here on the east side. I think it is a great benefit to make people in this neighborhood feel proud that they have this great resource next to them. We want to get their buy-in, get them to be involved in it, make it a place where they can come and learn about history and be active in it. That's really what I'm going to work towards. Energizing neighborhoods, that's what preservation can do if it's done responsibly."

When Butler speaks about the Presque Isle Lighthouse and the North Pier Light, she points out that their continuing function helps in their preservation: the fact that these places are still in use as active aids to navigation give them a leg up for their future care. Why get rid of something that is working and useful? But for a place like the Land Lighthouse, that is no longer working in its intended purpose, historians and preservationists have to shift their thinking: "Because it's not functional, we have to take a different avenue to make sure it's preserved and I think that avenue is making sure that it's a community resource." And opening the lighthouse for tours is the first step. The Land

Lighthouse is now open for tours every weekend, Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Lighthouse will also offer a free community day the first Tuesday of every month. "I'm really excited to take it to the next level and figure out what kind of stories we want to tell. Our first question is always: 'What do we want people to leave here feeling and thinking about?'"

As we walk up the striking cast iron spiral staircase leading to the top of the Lighthouse, Emily speaks about the restoration work the Land Lighthouse has gone through, most notably the work done in 2004 by Erie-based Fiske and Sons Inc. The Port Authority also spent upwards of \$400,000 to make sure that the Land Lighthouse will stand tall, and as it was intended, for another 200 years. The most noticeable change was the reconstruction of the 6,300-pound copper lantern room and the addition of a functional light, making the lighthouse impressive by night and day. The view from the top of the lighthouse rivals any in Erie and is much like it would have been 100 years ago: an unobstructed, bird's eye view of Presque Isle, the North Pier Light, and Perry Monument.

As we wrap up and head back down the staircase, our conversation turns to preservation in general, how historic preservation in Erie is becoming more of a priority, and how we can keep places like the Land

Lighthouse protected and relevant into the future. Butler believes that the key is sparking an interest in children, often outside of just the general history of a place: "I think that in preservation we get into this cycle of just talking about dead rich white men. There are so many stories that buildings can tell over and above what a traditional museum can tell, and that's always at the top of my mind. Yes, these people were important people in history and we tell their stories, but what does this building speak to today? So with the lighthouses we can talk about things like engineering and how they were built. There's also so much maritime history in Erie, so we can ask: how do the Great Lakes function today? And how is climate change going to affect that? What is the lake going to look like in 20 years? It's a jumping off point to tell a lot of important stories over and above just the history, which is important, but I always like to make history relevant to today."

For more information on Land Lighthouse tours, or if you'd like to volunteer to help, please visit presqueislelighthouse.org

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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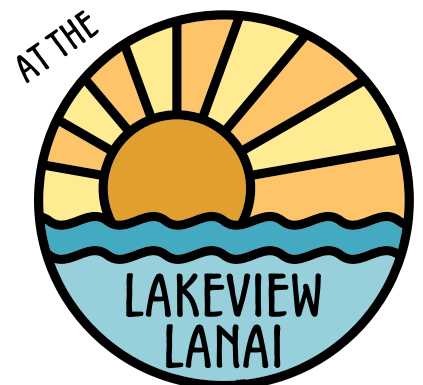
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Generations on the Lake

Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio the perfect 'baby-steps' getaway



Contributor Jeff Bucki ziplines over Cowles Creek at the Lake Erie Canopy Tours aerial adventure park, located in Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio, about an hour's drive west of Erie.

By: Jeff Bucki

If you grow up with the Northeast's four seasons, you tend to earn a great appreciation for summer. The most laidback season of all, when the required dress code is no more than a t-shirt, shorts, and flip-flops.

Personally, I feel immense optimism in May when summer is right ahead and a tinge of sadness in September when it wanes. As someone who has lived all my life right off Lake Erie, I can attest to the appeal of summer. And summer is always magical on the lake.

Geneva-on-the-Lake, Ohio is one of those summer lake places. In fact, it is regarded as Ohio's first summer resort town. For 151 years, people have flocked to this little community by the lake to enjoy simple summer charms. Nestled in the heart of Ohio Wine Country, Geneva-on-the-Lake is just a little more than an hour from Erie. If you've been cooped up

in your home too much over the past year (raises hand), this lakefront town delivers peak summer.

The prototypical summer town of your dreams likely features a generous helping of water. And Lake Erie comes through for Geneva-on-the-Lake in numerous ways. The Great Lakes are terrific places for boating and fishing, and they also do some magical things for our soil. The fertile soil in the Great Lakes region is absolutely spot-on for agriculture, including grapes.

Naturally, Geneva-on-the-Lake is home to more than 20 wineries. There's no shortage of standouts. South River Vineyard is a picturesque one, as it's built on the grounds of a century-old church. Wine tours are a big deal in town, and The Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake offers convenient shuttles to more than a dozen vineyards.

The undisputed gathering place in Geneva-on-the-Lake is known as The Strip. It's the

part of town that really comes alive in summer. Restaurants. Mini golf. Even a Ferris wheel. People have been flocking here for generations to get a piece of that fleeting summer sun. And, oh, what diversions are found in its glow.

I can just barely remember Crystal Beach, a legendary Ontario amusement park that was right over the border from Buffalo when I was a kid. Thinking back now, it probably felt like this. If you spend even five minutes on The Strip, you can understand its timeless appeal. This is the place to get together. This is the place to get ice cream. Quite simply, this is the place.

Geneva-on-the-Lake is like a mythical summer scene from a Springsteen song, or maybe it's the American equivalent of the lakeside park Rush spoke of. It echoes with the good kind of nostalgia, that sense of something happy and familiar that you can never quite place.

If there are things here that

feel like throwbacks to yesteryear, maybe that's because they are. One such example is the carnival game of Fascination, which has been a hotspot on The Strip since the Truman Administration. The game is a bit like bingo, but you're trying to roll a rubber ball into holes in a wooden table. And the game in Geneva-on-the-Lake is one of only a dozen remaining in the world. Fascination is a living relic of a simpler time.

As a curious sidenote, Geneva-on-the-Lake is home to the most covered bridges in the country, a total of 19 in all. The town also lays claim to America's shortest covered bridge, which spans a mere 18 feet.

We rented a lakeside cottage at The Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake to celebrate my wife's birthday in the fall. These cottages are more like little houses. Our four kids were in heaven to have such a nice hangout for the weekend, right by the lake and just down from Geneva State Park. Each cottage has two bedrooms, a fireplace, and a covered porch. You really have everything you need.

It's very pretty along the lake. There are a number of hiking trails – some that take you through the forests, and some that are paved that lead you right along the water. If you're a hiker, biker, or runner, you've come to the right place.

The beaches near the park are also quite nice. They were much sandier than I expected, and a lot of fun to explore. We walked along the beach, looked for washed glass, and found a hawk in the woods. It was a sunny but chilly fall day. In summer, when Geneva-on-the-Lake is in full flight, it must be amazing.

We also spent some time at Cowles Creek, which is a big hub of activity in summer. We saw some people fishing, and my fish-obsessed sons immediately asked why we didn't bring our poles. Smallmouth bass and walleye are caught in the area, which is also a nice place to take out a kayak.

A few years back, I spent an afternoon at Lake Erie Canopy Tours. This aerial adventure park soars through forests and right over Cowles Creek. It's a zipline course that features both single and tandem zips where you can race your friends and family. Spoiler alert: the heavier person is likely going to win the race.

It's a really cool experience as the course winds right through the woods. I'm a bit afraid of heights but I felt secure in my harness. Maybe I was just distracted by the incredible scenery. It makes for a memorable day. Anybody over 70 pounds can participate, and there's also adventure courses for both adults and kids.

When we visited in November, my fearless 12-year-old daughter was bummed to learn the Canopy Tours weren't open because of the pandemic. The good news is that the 25-acre attraction next to The Lodge at Geneva-on-the-Lake will be reopening this summer.

Geneva-on-the-Lake is the perfect, baby-steps getaway for those venturing out of the house on vacation for the first time in a year. This summer town is close by and a can't-miss. The world is beginning to come back from COVID. But in Geneva-on-the-Lake, the joys of summer never left.

Jeff Bucki is a father of four, and a freelance writer for the Buffalo News. His work has appeared in Buffalo Magazine and Discover Magazine. He can be reached at mav1668@yahoo.com.

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JEREMY BANNISTER

The wooden barquentine *Indiana* — also known as “the stone wreck” because of its paving stone cargo — rests 95 feet below Lake Erie’s surface. Diving to such depths requires special training and equipment beyond the scope of a basic certification course.

By: Matt Swanseger

Widely known fact — most of the world is underwater. Little known fact — your passport into our mostly underwater world can be obtained right here in Erie, Pa.

It’s called a diver’s certification card — or “C-card” — and you won’t want to lose it. C-cards are issued by various diver certification organizations such as PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors), SSI (Scuba Schools International), NAUI (National Association of Underwater Instructors), CMAS (Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques), and Scuba Diving International (SDI) and are a prerequisite for booking dives, renting scuba equipment, filling tanks, and in some cases employment.

Unlike your regular U.S. Passport, you can’t just mail in for one — but you don’t have to subject yourself to any painfully awkward photo sessions at your local post office either. What you’ll want to do instead is pay a visit to the comparatively much more pleasant Diver’s World at 1111 Greengarden Blvd. and enroll in one of their beginner-level training courses. There you’ll likely cross paths with head instructor and owner Matt Dickey, who will let you know exactly what you’re in for before you’re in over your head.

“You can’t just go diving without proper instruction, because there’s some risks associated with the sport,” says Dickey. “What we try to teach you is that if you have a problem, you can solve it underwater.”

During a beginner-level diving course, you’ll learn to become what’s known as an “autonomous diver” — which means you can manage yourself and your dive equipment without any hand (or breath) holding. The course is delivered in a combination of classroom and pool sessions with some e-learning on the side, and can unfold at a pace consistent with the pupil’s working terrestrial life. No matter whether you schedule shorter week-day classes or longer weekend classes, there’s no diving in open water until the initial certification is earned (Diver’s World is affiliated with NAUI and SDI).

After that, it’s all about the *where* and *why* you want to dive, and how serious you want to get — this will influence what equipment you will rent or buy, as well as what certifications you will pursue next. “So kind of the basics — you need a mask, fins, and some boots that fit you properly. The other stuff you can usually rent if you go somewhere if you don’t want to haul it or invest in it,” Dickey explains.

A specialized dive shop is much better prepared to advise you in these matters than a general sports department store, and to also initiate you into the local diving community, which segues pretty naturally into a global diving community, as recently-minted divemaster Nicole Tupek can attest.

“Once you’re a certified diver, you can hire a divemaster and a charter boat, get yourself a group together, and dive ... you just find someone that’s

qualified and been there before and they can help you out,” she explains. A divemaster (DM), also known as a dive guide, is a tier below dive instructor in scuba education level — something like a graduate assistant to the professor.

Wherever you go — Diver’s World coordinates diving trips all over the world — you’d better come correct with an environmental suit rated for the prevailing conditions you’ll be diving in (a topic that is covered at length in advanced scuba classes). In warmer waters at shallower depths, you might get away with your standard swimsuit and a **rash guard** (underwater shirt) or a **dive skin** — these are more so intended to buffer you from scrapes and stings than offer insulation. As you get into deeper, colder waters for longer durations, **wetsuits** are a must. The closed-cell construction of a wetsuit’s neoprene foam material traps body heat in tiny air bubbles to prevent hypothermia. If you should ever plan on plunging into extremely frigid environments, **drysuits** are designed to be utterly water-impenetrable.

Those wishing to #DiveLocal consistently — and there are literally hundreds of reasons to do so, as Lake Erie is one of the world’s wreck diving meccas — would be well-advised to invest in a thicker wetsuit (7 mm or 9 mm) and/or a drysuit. That’s because in order to view all the most pristinely preserved wrecks, you need to dive below the **thermocline**, a thin, shimmering layer of fluid distinctly separating warmer (and therefore less dense) water heated by the sun from the colder water below. During an Erie summer, the temperature differential might surpass 40 degrees.

Tupek describes passing through the thermocline with the wonderment of someone who’s swum through a portal into another dimension. “The water goes from murky and hard to see to perfectly clear visibility — you can see *everything* at the bottom.”

Dickey elaborates: “If a ship goes down in salt water, it’ll degrade quite rapidly. But if it goes down cold, fresh water, it’ll last a long time. We have some very unique shipwrecks from the 1800s and early 1900s in the Eastern Basin, and they’re quite deep. They look like they’re right out of a Disney movie — they’ve got crow’s nests, masts spread out, ropes and netting hanging off of them. They’re unbelievably beautiful. Those are a little beyond recreational diving limits, but they are something that you can experience in Lake Erie that you can’t experience anywhere else in the world.”

Historically, these are the kind of sights divers would have — and often did — die for.

Life Before Scuba

Mankind’s first crush may have been the sea.

In our earliest days, we just held our breath and went for it, whether the “it” was oysters, sponges, or dinner — occasionally equipped with a 100 percent plant-based snorkel, if you *reed* my meaning. But as time wore on, we placed ourselves under significantly more pressure to know our crush on a deeper level — and come up with something other than ruptured eardrums, popped eyeball capillaries, and/or burst lungs. Wouldn’t it have been much nicer to have emerged with some booty?

Apologies to all you romantics out there, but for most of human history, we’ve been far less interested in the mysteries of the deep than its economic opportunities — yes, *I am* sayin’ we a gold digger. Commercial diving preceded recreational diving by many centuries, with salvage of shipwrecks being especially lucrative. And since naval conflict and maritime trade were once so prevalent, the seafloor was ripe for these pelagic pickup artists. While there were successes in the shallow end, the deep sea rejected their advances one after another, and sometimes quite brutally.

You see, tremendous forces are exerted on divers as they descend further into a body of water. First off, there’s **atmospheric pressure**, which comes courtesy of Earth’s atmosphere and clocks in at 14.7 pounds per square



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inch (psi) at sea level. Then there's the **hydrostatic pressure** of the water squeezing in on the diver from all sides. For every additional 33 feet of seawater or 34 feet of freshwater a diver puts on top of them, the hydrostatic pressure increases by one atmosphere (14.7 psi). Thus the **absolute pressure** (atmospheric + hydrostatic) at those depths would measure two atmospheres.

Weird, harmful, and potentially lethal things start happening when the pressure *inside* the body's air spaces (lungs, ear canals, sinuses, etc.) is out of equilibrium with the pressure outside. This, aside from the obvious need to breathe every so often, were the fundamental inconveniences salvors had to work around. Open-bottomed diving bells, first devised in the days of antiquity, were of some utility — the top of the bell trapped a bit of compressed air that divers could return to in a pinch, but they could only go so deep before their air pockets popped, and did nothing about the carbon dioxide buildup when divers exhaled.

Up until the late 1600s, it appeared we were out of our depth. But thanks to scholars such as Professor George Sinclair (diving bell theorist), Sir Robert Boyle (behavior of gases under pressure), and Abbe Jean de Hautefeuille (author of *The Art of Breathing Underwater*), we finally began to comprehend what we were dealing with. Englishmen Sir Edmund Halley (same dude the comet's named after) and John Smeaton both improved on French physicist Denis Papin's idea of using hoses to pump fresh air from above into submerged bells, with Halley's 1690 innovation correcting the Papin design's pressure equalization flaw, and Smeaton's 1788 updates streamlining the equalization process and bolstering safety features.

The modern diving bell has proven

indispensable in underwater salvage, construction, engineering, and repair. Still, genuine free rein of the deep was always the dream (including one of da Vinci's). Attempts to make that a reality manifested in scores of zany contraptions and outlandish costumes drawn up by whimsical inventors, at turns hilarious and terrifying. Most were as epic failures in practice as they were in theory, but every so often shit stuck.

For instance, Englishman John Leithbridge's 1715 "diving engine" was essentially a man-sized wooden canister (manister?) with the outward appearance of an underwater cigar. But by golly, it had armholes, thus outclassing all previous underwater cigars in the element of dexterity. This was one of the first examples of what might be considered a diving suit. In 1797, a German named Karl Heinrich Klingert designed an underwater cigar with both arm and leg holes, and waterproof trousers almost became a fashion trend. Almost.

Diving suits became much more practical in the 19th century, with the 1828 release of "Deane's Patent Diving Dress." This stunning ensemble consisted of a helmet with generous viewports, weighted shoes to counteract buoyancy (essentially the opposite of Air Jordans), and a heavy fabric bodysuit to insulate the wearer from the scourges of the environment. It was great, but if you were the type of diver that liked to get your lean on, your helmet would flood with water and you would drown. Oops.

Contemporary Augustus Siebe literally closed the gap on his competitors in 1840, wisely sealing the helmet to the suit of his passive-aggressively titled "Siebe Improved Diving Dress" and also implementing an upgraded exhaust system. Siebe became the official outfitter of the 1839-42 salvage of the HMS

Royal George in England's Portsmouth Harbor, a seminal campaign in the evolution of modern commercial diving. Salvors used underwater explosives for the first time, instituted a dedicated buddy system, and thoughtfully planned emergency medical procedures. It was tight.

Although these early diving suits offered greatly enhanced underwater mobility, they did not provide legitimate free rein because their attached, surface-fed umbilical air supplies kept divers on a leash. Armor-like **atmospheric diving suits**, while intriguing in concept (think climate-controlled, seafloor-stomping mech suit) and charming in their Stay Puft chunkiness, were too clunky to be considered practical in most applications.

The revolution in underwater independence instead arrived with the **self-contained underwater breathing apparatus**, or **SCUBA**, and in particular Jacques-Yves Cousteau and Émile Gagnan's **Aqua-Lung**, the first safe, successful, and commercially available open-circuit scuba system, patented in 1945. The key innovation here was the on-demand breathing regulator (held tightly in the diver's mouth), which converted high-pressure breathing gas from a diving cylinder (carried on the diver's back) to the ambient pressure of the surrounding water.

What Can Scuba (Duba) Do For You?

In an open-circuit scuba system, exhaled breathing gas is vented out of the system rather than recycled with a rebreather, a vital component of closed-circuit scuba systems. With less equipment to lug around and less to think about, the Aqua-Lung and its descendants have made diving accessible to just about anyone, ushering in the era of recreational diving.

Not content to just enjoy the scenery, people were soon taking just about any hobby they had on land with them underwater — snapping photos and shooting film, playing poker and board games (with weighted cards and game pieces), sculpting and even spelunking (for the more daring types).

All you need to join them is:

1. The essential wardrobe discussed earlier (mask, fins, boots, wetsuit)
2. A **buoyancy compensation device (BCD)** to hold your life support gear in place (and adjust your floatiness)
3. An optional (but highly recommended) **dive computer**. These wrist-mounted devices give readouts of depth, total dive time, ambient pressure, and remaining air, and also schedule decompression stops. Decompression stops help prevent the dreaded decompression sickness or "the bends," which is caused by ascending too quickly after breathing compressed air at depth.
4. Sufficient training for your desired diving niche (some can be quite technical), demonstrated with a C-card from a qualified diver certification organization

And there you go. You're (scuba) set. The *whole world* — not just the continental trial version (with a pretty lame 29 percent of the map unlocked) — is your oyster. Just remember to clear your ears.

To learn how you can try scuba, visit *Diver's World* in-person at 1111 Greengarden Blvd. or online at scubaerie.com

Matt Swanseger (mswanseger@eriereader.com) has ample treasure diving experience in the form of picking aquarium rocks off the bottom of his family's now-dismantled backyard pool.

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Ready Or Not, Here Comes Summer

The vaccinated thousands are ready to people again



By: Nick Warren

What some thought would never happen is coming to pass. COVID-19 effectively canceled nearly every single event in the summer of 2020. This year? Not so much. Pennsylvania's restrictions have officially been lifted as of Memorial Day (Monday, May 31), and masks are no longer required for vaccinated individuals. That'll change on June 28, when the mask mandate is fully lifted, or possibly before if 70 percent of adults become vaccinated, but we all know that stands a snowball's chance in ... well, June 28.

"We have made great strides throughout the commonwealth to stop the spread of COVID-19," said Gov. Tom Wolf. "As we lift mitigation orders, it is important for eligible Pennsylvanians to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Getting vaccinated is our best defense against this virus and ensuring individuals and their loved ones remain safe as we reopen Pennsylvania."

Throughout the month of May, Erie County has averaged more than 30 cases per day. That's a lot. Currently, 44.2 percent of county residents over 10 years old have been fully vaccinated,

with another 8.9 percent partially covered, tipping the vaccinated into the majority. The CDC cites the national average at 59.8 percent of all those over 12 being partially vaccinated, so maybe that's not as impressive. But even so.

TLDR: Summer is happening. Get ready.

Or more importantly, *don't*. If you don't feel safe, staying home is still an option. Focusing on outdoor activities in small bubbles wasn't all that bad in retrospect.

But good lord, do I miss concerts.

What I wouldn't have given to see even the most banal blues band or esoteric EDM set last year. In 2021, you just might get to see your favorite band if you buy tickets fast enough.

Live events are the lifeblood of summer. And possibly to break kayfabe, they're the lifeblood of alt-weeklies like the one you're reading now. In March of 2020, we had four-and-a-half pages of events in our print edition, with that amount *doubled* the previous summer.

As with seemingly all aspects of life, that kind of coverage is returning to normal again as well.

Some events are not happen-

ing, like Celebrate Erie, while some are still tentative, like Erie's Blues & Jazz Fest. Some community festivals like Cherry Fest and Greek Fest are operating on a drive-thru-only basis, while others are at full capacity. The Great Blue Heron chose to separate one large festival into several weekends over the summer to spread the love throughout the season and keep crowds down.

This is another year where adaptability shines.

Note: This is not a complete listing, and many returning events are still being planned. Go to our online calendar at ErieReader.com and pick up future issues for more things to do.

Live Music & Special Events

Altered State Distillery
1535 W 8th St. // Fridays, and Saturdays 7 to 10 p.m., Sundays at 1 p.m., Altered State Improv Jam Night every Thursday at 7 p.m. // alteredstatedistillery.com/events/

- June 4 - Adwela and the Uprising
- June 5 - Tim Vitullo Band
- June 6 - Ron Yarosz and the Vehicle Unplugged
- June 11 - First to Eleven

Live music will return in abundance during the warmer months, with a smorgasbord of summer concert series on tap throughout the region.

- June 12 - Sunday at the Station
- June 13 - The Doug Phillips Quartet feat. Eric Brewer, Adam McKillip, and Jim Dowds
- June 18 - Eric Brewer & Friends
- June 19 - Optimus Riff
- June 20 - Phunkademic Unplugged
- June 25 - Smilo and the Ghost
- June 26 - Division Street Machine
- June 27 - Eric Brewer & Friends
- July 2 - RM Delta feat. Rodger Montgomery and Mark Dolak
- July 3 - Jeff Fetterman Band
- July 9 - Phunkademic
- July 10 - Blue Sky
- July 11 - Stephen Trohoske's Unplugged Frequency
- July 16 - The Sweet Life
- July 17 - Big Logic and the Truth Serum
- July 23 - Riff Riders
- July 25 - Rodger Montgomery Blues Band
- July 30 - The Mighty Good Times
- July 31 - The Probables
- Aug. 7 - Stephen Trohoske's Basses Loaded
- Aug. 8 - Jeff Fetterman Band
- Aug. 13 - Waiting on Mongo
- Aug. 15 - Stephen Trohoske's Unplugged Frequency
- Aug. 20 - Higher Education
- Aug. 21 - Vibe Supply
- Aug. 22 - Phunkademic
- Aug. 27 - Peak
- Aug. 29 - Eric Brewer & Friends
- Sept. 3 - Darksider
- Sept. 4 - Small Town Rollers
- Sept. 10 - John Welton & the Awakening
- Sept. 11 - Derek Woods Band
- Sept. 12 - Derek Woods Acoustic
- Sept. 17 - Cosmic Rhythm
- Sept. 18 - Jeff Fetterman Band
- Sept. 19 - Abigail
- Sept. 24 - Phunkademic
- Sept. 25 - Blue Sky
- Sept. 26 - Touch of Grey
- Oct. 1 - Yurt Alert
- Oct. 2 - Big Logic and the Truth Serum
- Oct. 8 - Tim Vitullo Band

Coconut Joe's: 15th and Final Season

28 North Park Row // Fridays, Saturdays, plus a few extras, bands 6 to 10 p.m., DJs 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. // facebook.com/coconutjoeserie

- June 4 - Black Widow
- June 5 - The Breeze Band
- June 11 - Refuge
- June 12 - Geek Army
- June 18 - The Groove
- June 19 - 100 Proof
- June 25 - Flight
- June 26 - Porcelain Bus Drivers
- July 2 - Phoenix Rising
- July 3 - Geek Army
- July 9 - The Groove
- July 10 - The Earthquakers
- July 16 - Small Town Revolution
- July 17 - Flight
- July 23 - Refuge
- July 24 - The Groove
- July 30 - Black Widow
- July 31 - Small Town Revolution
- Aug. 6 - The Earthquakers
- Aug. 7 - 100 Proof
- Aug. 13 - Geek Army
- Aug. 14 - Flight
- Aug. 20 - Small Town Revolution
- Aug. 21 - Country Redford
- Aug. 27 - Black Widow
- Aug. 28 - The Pop Rockets
- Sept. 3 - New Wave Nation
- Sept. 4 - The Groove
- Sept. 10 - Geek Army
- Sept. 11 - Small Town Revolution

Erie Bank 8 Great Tuesdays

Highmark Amphitheater & Liberty Park, 828 W Bayfront Pkwy. // Tuesdays 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. // porterie.org/8-great-tuesdays/

- July 6 - TBA
- July 13 - TBA
- July 21 - TBA
- July 28 - TBA
- Aug. 3 - TBA
- Aug. 10 - TBA
- Aug. 17 - TBA
- Aug. 24 - TBA
- Five & 20 Spirits & Brewing: Sunday Sesh returns**
8398 W. Main Rd. (Rt. 20), Westfield, N.Y. // Sundays 1 to 4 p.m. // fiveand20.com/events/
- June 2 - Jay Baumgardner

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UPCOMING MUSIC & EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Friday, June 4 | Acoustic Duo – 6:30pm |
| Saturday, June 5 | Rodger Montgomery – 6:30pm |
| Sunday, June 6 | Sunday Brunch w/ Mark Morris – 12 noon |
| Thursday, June 10 | Open Mic w/50 Miles to Empty – 6pm |
| Friday, June 11 | Touch of Grey – 6:30pm |
| Saturday, June 12 | Ripper Acoustics - 4:30pm |
| Saturday, June 12 | Jr. Miller Blues - 6:30pm |
| Sunday, June 13 | Breakfast w/ Jesus – 11am |
| Sunday, June 13 | Sunday Brunch w/ Tony Kellogg 12 noon |
| Friday, June 18 | Fred Oakman – 6:30pm |
| Saturday, June 19 | Jesse James Weston - 5pm |
| Saturday, June 19 | Rick McGee & Roadhouse Rockers 7pm |
| Sunday, June 20 | Fathers Day – “Meatfest” – Call for reservations |
| Sunday, June 20 | Brunch w/Justin Moyar 12 noon |
| Friday, June 25 | Jeff Glover 6:30pm |
| Saturday, June 26 | Salmon Frank 6:30pm |
| Sunday, June 27 | Breakfast w/ Jesus 11am |
| Sunday, June 27 | Brunch w/ Rodger Montgomery 12 noon |



Complete listing of events can be found on the Venango General Store website or by visiting French Creek Music Series available on FCMS.ROCKS

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VISIT VENANGOGENERALSTORE.COM/EVENTS FOR DETAILS

SUMMER EVENTS



NICK WARREN

June 13 - Fred Oakman ft. Sarah Peters
June 20 - Doug Phillips
June 27 - 50 Miles to Empty
July 4 - Jordan (and Jon) Maillet
July 11 - Paoello and Gone
July 18 - The Buttermilk Falls Gang
July 25 - The Rooftop Project Band
Aug. 1 - Adam McKillip
Aug. 8 - Chris Ehrich and Tony Kellogg
Aug. 15 - Division Street Machine

Goodell Gardens: Summer Music Series - Socially Distanced

221 Waterford St., Edinboro, PA // Fridays (and one Saturday) 7 to 9 p.m. [facebook.com/GoodellGardensandHomestead](#)

June 11 - Jess Royer
June 25 - Rodger Montgomery Blues Band
July 2 - Seann Clark & Friends
July 16 - Salmon Frank
July 24 - Mambo Jazz
July 30 - Patchouli & Terra Guitarra
Aug. 6 - Tiger Maple String Band
Aug. 13 - Slim & Red
Aug. 20 - Tiny Paper Boats

French Creek Concert Series

Voodoo Brewery Production Facility, 834 Bessemer St., Meadville, PA // [Facebook @Justin Moyer Events](#)

June 19 - Stormalong Scoundrels, Deep Fried and Dipped in Honey, Michael McFarland, The Band Hannah
July 17 - Cold Lazarus, LUCiD, Elektra Kings, Mike Sopko Duo

Aug. 21 - Clever Norman, Rodger Montgomery Band, Gary Prisby, House of Rhythm
Sept. 25 - Tail Light Rebellion, Fred Oakman and the Flood, Oak Compass, Samantha Sears

The Heron Summer Series

2361 Wait Corners Rd, Sherman, NY // [theheron.org/the-heron-summer-series](#)

June 5 - Orange Corner and Wave Trails
June 11 - Ryan Montbleau, The Bones of J.R. Jones, and more
June 19 - PA Line and Mark Min-carelli
June 26 - Slyboots Circus
July 2 and 3 - Little Blue Heron: The Probables, Sim Redmond Band, The Jakobs Ferry Stragglers, Richie & rose, Rose and the Bros, Tiger Maple String Band, Cats on Holiday, Oak Hill Drifters

July 9 - Bluegrass Zydeco Folk-faces, Black Rock Zydeco, Blind Owl Band, The Honey Smugglers, Dirty Blanket
July 16 and 17 - DY Jonny Cobra
July 18 - An Evening with Keller Williams, Dr. Bacon
July 23 and 24 - Americana Folk, Driftwood, The Arcadian Wild, Danielle Ponder, Joe and Sans, Mikaela Davis
July 31 - Rebecca McIlvain, Someday Maybe Band, Josh Fox, Tyler Wescott

Aug. 13 and 14 - Dave McDonald Heron 5K, Steve Davis Group, DJ Jim Bloomquist
Aug. 20 and 21 - Leroy Townes Band, Uncle Ben's Remedy
Aug. 27-29 - Caribbean Vibe, Carlos Jones & the PLUS Band, Mosaic Foundation, Sim Red-

mond Band, Orquesta I Muralla, Vibe Supply
Sept. 3 and 4 - Funky Soul, Smackdab, Plastic Nebraska, Funktional Flow, Cold Lazarus
Sept. 17 and 18 - Lights Out: Wild Adriatic, Lazlo Hollyfield, Sonny Baker Band, BEu, TVMTN, Bearhunter, Fever Hawk, Tines, Hot at Bats, Trip the Deuce, Handsome Jack

Hill District Artisan Fleas: Erie Hill District Collaborative Sidewalk Sundays

Peach St., 26th St. to 24th St. // 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. // [shopsonthehill.org](#)

June 27 - TBA
July 25 - TBA
Aug. 29 - TBA
Sept. 26 - TBA

PACA: [LIVE!] Concert Series

1505 State St. // [paca1505.org](#)

June 7 - Jumper Jamboree
June 13 - Erica Snowden-Rodríguez
June 20 - Drippy Clouds
June 21 - Fujiwara • Halvorson • Bynum Trio Tour
June 27 - Hard Luck Story
July 4 - JC Nickles
July 11 - Mala Sangre
July 18 - Jeff Fetterman Band
July 25 - Liss Victory

Peek'n Peak: Music at Bistro 210

1405 Old Rd, Clymer, NY // Fridays (mostly) 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. // [pknpk.com/events](#)

June 25 - The Highlife
July 2 - The Acoustic Jukebox
July 9 - Erika & Jesse
July 17 - Tui Osborne
July 23 - Ron Yarman

The Gathering at Chaffee's music festival was one of few *not* to be canceled in 2020, although it hardly resembled its usual self. This year's festival should better replicate this scene from the 2019 Gathering, which captures lighting engineer Sam Edwards at work while ekoostik hookah plays before a large crowd.

Picnic in the Park - North East

2 Gibson Street, North East, PA // Thursdays 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. // [northeaststarts.org](#)

June 17 - Erie Heights Ensemble
June 24 - The Bubble Gum Machine
July 1 - Mad Man of Magic
July 8 - Juggler Howard
July 15 - Jungle Terry
July 22 - Hoola Hoop Kinetic Energy
July 29 - Harry's Wizardry Guide
Aug. 5 - Ventriloquist Kevin
Aug. 12 - Crazy Kitchen Kemitry
Aug. 19 - Elvis Impersonator Mark Carr

Presque Isle Downs:

Churchill's Bourbon and Brew
 8199 Perry Highway // Fridays 5 to 7 p.m. // [presqueisledowns.com/entertainment](#)

June 4 - Doug Phillips
June 11 - Justin Moyer
June 18 - TVM Unplugged
June 25 - SASS Acoustics

Riverside Brewing Company

1 Fountain Street, Cambridge Springs, PA // Thursdays through Sunday // [riversidebrewing.co/entertainment](#)

June 3 - Kevin Wilson, 6 to 8 p.m.
June 4 - Jay Bird and Haley B, 5 to 8 p.m.
June 5 - SASS Acoustics, 6 to 9 p.m.
June 6 - Matt Crays, 3 to 6 p.m.
June 10 - Amy Shallenberger, 6 to 8 p.m.
June 11 - Elias Khouri, 5 to 8 p.m.
June 12 - Bartlow Brothers, 6 to 9 p.m.
June 13 - Jenn and Scott Acoustics - 3 to 6 p.m.
June 17 - Rodger Montgomery,

6 to 8 p.m.

Skunk & Goat Tavern: Music every Wednesday

17 West Main St., North East, PA // Wednesdays from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. // [skunkandgoattavern.com](#)

June 2 - Ron Yarman
June 9 - ABIGAIL
June 16 - Jesse Smith
July 21 - ABIGAIL
July 28 - Erika & Jesse
Aug. 4 - ABIGAIL
Aug. 18 - Hamilton
Aug. 25 - Erika & Jesse
Sept. 1 - Ron Yarman

Venango General Store

21747 Cussewago St, Venango, PA // Thursdays 6 to 8 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays 6:30 to 9 p.m., Sundays 12 to 2 p.m. // [venangogeneralstore.com/events](#) for full schedule

June 4 - Acoustic Duo
June 5 - Rodger Montgomery
June 6 - Mark Morris
June 10 - Open mic
June 11 - Touch of Grey
June 12 - JR Miller Blues, Ripper Acoustics
June 13 - Tony Kellogg, Breakfast with Jesus, United Methodist Church
June 18 - Fred Oakman
June 19 - Rick McGee and the Roadhouse Rockers, Jesse James Weston
June 20 - Father's Day Meatfest with Justin Moyer
June 25 - Jeff Glover
June 26 - Salmon Frank
June 27 - Breakfast with Jesus
Aug. 10 - Tony Kellogg, Kevin Wilson
Aug. 11 - Jesse James Weston, Breakfast with Jesus
Aug. 18 - Breakfast with Jesus
Aug. 23 - Wildwood Express
Aug. 24 - Touch of Grey

Voodoo Brewery Erie:

Continuing from early May
 101 Boston Store Pl. // Every Friday on the Patio from 5 to 8 p.m. // [facebook.com/voodooerie](#)

June 4 - Matt Crays
June 11 - Mike Edgerly
June 18 - The Jeebies
June 25 - Paper Matches
July 2 - Michael McFarland

July 9 - Bigg Wash Presents
July 16 - Mike Sopko Duo
July 23 - Slim and Red
July 30 - Justin Moyar
WQLN Sounds Around Town
 8425 Peach St. // Fridays 7:30 to 9 p.m. // wqln.org/Watch/Sounds-Around-Town

July 9 - Erie Philharmonic Brass Ensemble
July 16 - The Riff Riders
July 23 - Tiny Paper Boats
July 30 - Smilo & The Ghost

Festivals

Riverside Music Festival
June 25 - 27
 1 Fountain Street, Cambridge Springs, PA // riversidebrewing.co
 Friday: Rick Magee and the Roadhouse Rockers, The Band Hannah, The Vics
 Saturday: Mayflower Hill, Fred Oakman & the Flood, Cold Lazarus, Shoefly Soul, Lamb Lion, Me and the Boy, Lore, Oak Compass
 Sunday: Mike Sopko w/ Joe Tomino, Josh Travis Band, Chuck

Wimer, Chelcie Gette
Erie Food Truck Festival
July 12, 3 to 8 p.m.
 Former G.E. fields in Lawrence Park, 800 Water St. // eriefoodtruckfestival.com

French Creek Music Fest
July 16-18
 Venango General Store, 21747 Cussewago St, Venango, PA // facebook.com/events/1807048789447383/

Waterford Heritage Days
July 16 - 18
 Fort LeBoeuf Heritage Center, 108 High St., Waterford, PA // waterforddays.com

Discover Presque Isle
July 21 - 25
 Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. // discoverpi.com

The Gathering at Chaffee's
July 23 and 24
 8296 Mill St., Girard, PA // thegatheringatchaffees.com
 With: Mungion, ekoostik hoo-

kah, Joe Hertler & the Rainbow Seekers, Doctor Lo Faber, Eric Brewer & Friends, The LEC, Phunkademic, Matty & the Pickles, Stephen Trohoske & the Art Groupies, Yurt Alert, Cosmic Rhythm, Paper Matches, Aria & the Voiceless, Shoefly Soul, The Jeebies, Dom & Colette, Chris Ehrich, Jess Royer, Fresco, with MC Matt "Broke" Boland

Dan Rice Days
Aug. 5-7
 34 Main St W, Girard, PA // danricedays.com/schedule

North East Firemen's Cherry Festival
July 13 - 17 (Drive-thru only)
 31 N Lake St, North East, PA // facebook.com/necherryfestival

St. Paul's Italian Festival
Aug. 6 - 8
 1617 Walnut St. // erieitalianfest.com/

Zabawa Polish Festival
Aug. 27 - 29
 Holy Trinity Parish, 2220 Reed St. //

holyltrinityrc.org/zabawa.html

Erie's Wild Rib Cookoff & Music Festival: Aka Ribfest
Sept. 15 - 18
 Perry Square, Downtown Erie // erieribfest.com

Resonance Music and Arts Festival
Sept. 16 - 18
 Cooper's Lake Event Venue and Campground, 205 Currie Rd, Slippery Rock, PA // resonancemusicfest.com/lineup
 With: Tipper, Lettuce, Emancipator, Keller Williams, and more

North East Wine Festival
Sept. 24-26 (Gibson Park only)
 2 Gibson Street, North East, PA // nechamber.org

Panegyri Greek Festival
Oct. 24 (Drive-thru only)
 Assumption Greek Orthodox Church 4376 West Lake Rd. // www.erieorthodox.org

County Fairs

Cochranton Fair

Aug 2-9
 Cochranton, PA // cochrantonfair.org

Warren County Fair
Aug. 10 - 14
 Pittsfield, PA // warrencountyfair.net

Crawford County Fair
Aug 21-28
 Meadville, PA // crawfordcountyfairpa.com

Erie County Fair
Aug. 29 - Sept. 4
 Wattsburg, PA // wattsburgfair.com/index.php

Spartansburg Community Fair
Sept. 5 - 11
 Spartansburg, PA // facebook.com/SpartaFairPA

Waterford Community Fair
Sept. 6 - 11
 Waterford, PA // waterfordfair.org

Albion Area Fair
Sept. 14 - 18
 Albion, PA // albionfair.com

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Go 'Rogue' with Rogues' Gallery at PACA

John Patrick Shanley's monologues examine things that haunt us



Krista Perry stars in the PACA production of *Rogues' Gallery*, a collection of 10 monologues written by Pulitzer-prize winning playwright John Patrick Shanley.

John Patrick Shanley, the shutdown of theaters and the new limitations for the cautious openings months later during the COVID-19 pandemic, were a similar call to action.

So he wrote *Rogues' Gallery*, a collection of 10 monologues of varying lengths, which allow for minimal interaction during rehearsal and were even presented as a series of Internet videos that have the look and feel of a Zoom chat.

Thanks to an increasingly bright public health forecast in Erie County this summer, the Performing Artists Collective Alliance (PACA) will be presenting these monologues over the course of three weekends, to stream, and — yes! — for live, in-person, in-theater viewing.

"We had been limiting seating for in-person, but I believe we will be returning to full capacity for this run," said Jeff Rodland, one of the PACA founders and a regular actor, director, and producer with the theater.

He continued, "Diggit Dave Schroeder switches camera angles as the show progresses. The actors have a designated area to stay within, so that they can always be in view [for online streaming]. I have not seen the online version myself, but I hear it is a totally different experi-

ence than seeing it in-person."

The actors are all directing each other; Rodland is performing "I Was Right About Everything," and directing the "always-fabulous Lara Schaaf in 'Ditto,' which is a crazy coincidence story about a woman and her failed engagement to the man of her dreams," he said.

"It is a group of people that are all flawed in various ways," Rodland explained. Robert E. Martin for Review Magazine narrowed it down further, asserting that the collection of individuals — none of whom, or whose monologues, are related to the other — are all exploring "the things in life that haunt them."

The stories are bizarre at times, frank, funny, the characters unlikeable in some cases but charming, electrifying, real people you want to know more about. People you'd have questions for over a drink (or five).

The other cast members include Eli Coppock, Kirsten McCain, Gabriel Martinez, Steve DeJohn, Char Newport, Austin Kulyk, Krista Perry, and Michael Meyer, and the production was coordinated by JR Fabin and Lisa Simonian.

Live theater is getting back to normal in Erie, and the only question left is: To be or not to be there? — Cara Suppa

8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays, June 4-19 // 1505 State St // \$15 live, \$10 streaming // For more info or to buy tickets: paca1505.org

FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS, JUNE 4 - 19

In an excerpt from the book *1606* by James Shapiro, published for the Guardian, the author theorizes that William Shakespeare's personal experiences of that titular plague year (a horrible breakout of bubonic plague killed his own landlady), and then the move to fully indoor theater come winter, influenced the content and tone of the playwright's work from that period on.

The creation of art — and creators' reaction to extreme external forces — has changed so little in 400-some years. The restrictions, the upending of the world (a world, in our case, completely unprepared for pandemic life, unlike the people of Shakespeare's time, for whom plague could be a yearly event) engender new ideas and new stories, innovations and ingenuity.

For Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright

Monday Music in the Woods Making a Comeback

Popular series set for seven dates in June and July



See the forest — and live music — through the trees at Asbury Woods' popular Monday Music in the Woods concert series.

After a year of being given the *xylem* treatment, the music will again be *phloem* in the Celebration Garden outside The Andrew J. Conner Nature Center (which will be open to explore), with a variety of sounds to get your trunk swaying. Lavery Brewing Company will be on-site to pour locally cultivated ales and lagers if you need help limbering your timber (\$1 of each draft sold will be donated to Asbury Woods, a nonprofit). All you'll need is a lawn chair — and to preregister.

Because we're not quite out of the woods yet with COVID-19, attendance will be limited to 200 guests for each performance. Pre-registration for each Monday concert will open the preceding Tuesday, giving you nearly a week to determine your intentions. If you're a long-term planner, here is the complete schedule:

- **Jesse James Weston (6/14):** Covering rock, alternative, pop, and blues through the decades.
- **Buttermilk Falls Gang (6/21):** Bluegrass from the banks of Walnut Creek
- **Rankin and Schell (6/28):** Acoustic guitar and bass duo hailing from Erie
- **Matt "Broke" Boland (7/5):** Energetic rockabilly from "Matty B" of Dirty Pickles fame
- **Bass/Drum/Bass Trio (7/12):** Unpretentiously named Jazz/Latin combo consisting of Stephen Trohoske (bass), Ian Maciak (drums), and Tony Grey (the other bass).
- **Riffriders Lite (7/19):** Pared down acoustic version of the Riffriders featuring Amy Shallenberger and Sean Seth, playing rock and blues.
- **The Maillets (7/26):** Acoustic pop, country, and rock

The woods are calling — are you listening?
— Matt Swanseger

Summer Answers MIAC Live Casting Call

Mercyhurst Institute for Arts and Culture's live performance series set for comeback



The 2021 MIAC Summer Series — as is the standard for the Mercyhurst Institute for Arts and Culture — features some of the brightest stars of stage and screen in Erie. Appearing at the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center this summer will be (from left to right) *Glee* star Matthew Morrison (July 22), illusionist Mike Super (June 16), the "Voice of Broadway" Betty Buckley (Aug. 7), and Broadway baritone Brian Stokes Mitchell (July 11).

By: Matt Swanseger

For months, Spring 2021 had been groomed for the role of the resurrected MIAC Live. And Mercyhurst Institute for Arts and Culture director Dr. Brett Johnson, for one, was eager to let Erie see it play out — as one.

"Livestreamed performances and other virtual offerings have played an important role in helping us navigate the complexities of the past year. At the same time, many of us have missed the communal nature of live performance, in which our heartbeats synchronize and we laugh, cheer, and cry as one."

Synchronicity and timing is everything in the performance arts, and those things are difficult to pin down when the actors are taking cues from multiple directors — local, state, and federal health authorities and a very temperamental virus. So, ultimately, Spring had to sit this one "as one" out.

Fortunately, Summer 2021 has a much clearer direction — Dr. Johnson's — and equally as much talent in store. It should readily excel in the unifying role Spring could never quite get a feel for. "We look forward to gathering once again in the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center and experiencing the life-affirming artistry of these world-class performers."

Those world-class performers include some of Broadway and musical theater's best and brightest, "remarkable artists whose charisma, vitality, and joy of performing are infectious." The MIAC summer series will consist of four acts (three rescheduled from the spring) leading up

to the 2021-22 MIAC season, which coincides with the 25th anniversary of the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center.

"To commemorate this milestone, we've programmed what I think is our most exciting lineup to date — a slate of legendary entertainers, musical icons, and audience favorites. I can't wait to share the names with everyone!" Johnson enthuses.

Until then (check a future edition of the Reader for a full preview), we can share these names:

Mike Super 2.OH!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

Celebrated illusionist Mike Super successfully made all available tickets for his July 2019 performance disappear based on the merits of his award-winning act, which has won him a slew of honors from various outlets, including Entertainer of the Year, Best Performing Artist of the Year, Best Novelty Performer of the Year, and America's Favorite Mystifier on the NBC TV show *Phenomenon*. If you attended that show, expect the freshly unexpected in his all-new 2021 encore.

7:30 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center // Adults \$35, Seniors \$30, Students and Youth \$25

Brian Stokes Mitchell

SUNDAY, JULY 11

Blessed with a burly baritone with crossover appeal, Brian Stokes Mitchell has commanded stage and screen for a career that has spanned over 40 years. He got his start in TV before taking off on

Broadway in the 1990s. He has won Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Circle awards for his lead performance in *Kiss Me, Kate* and received Tony nominations for roles in *Man of La Mancha*, *King Hedley II*, and *Ragtime*. Catch the New York Times' "last leading man" in one of two performances this July.

3 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center // Adults \$35, Seniors \$30, Students and Youth \$25

Matthew Morrison

THURSDAY, JULY 22

A name that should be familiar to "Gleeeks," Morrison starred as glee club director Will Schuester in the Fox hit musical comedy series *Glee*. You may have also spotted him in *The Good Wife*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *American Horror Story: 1984*. His breakthrough role, however, was as heartthrob Link Larkin in the Broadway perennial favorite *Hairspray*. Since then, he has received awards buzz for roles in *The Light in the Piazza*, *10 Million Miles*, *South Pacific*, and *Finding Neverland*. He'll find Erie for one night only, so make sure to reserve your seat.

7:30 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center // Adults \$40, Seniors \$35, Students and Youth \$30

Betty Buckley

SATURDAY, AUG. 7

"The Voice of Broadway" will make her voice heard in Erie for two performances — to add to the thousands already logged throughout a long, illustrious career. She garnered praise for roles in *1776*, *Pippin*, *Song and Dance*, *The Mys-*

tery of Edwin Droid, *Carrie*, and *Triumph of Love* and notched a Tony win for her role as Grizabella in Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*. Her acclaimed portrayal of Norma Desmond in the London production Webber's *Sunset Boulevard* put her in the running for a prestigious Olivier Award across the pond — truth be told, she tends to shine wherever she goes. And that's without even mentioning her film career (most recent highlight: a Saturn Award nomination for her appearance in *Split*). The Buckley stops here — and we're lucky to have her.

5:30 or 8 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center // Adults \$40, Seniors \$35, Students and Youth \$30

"Livestreamed performances and other virtual offerings have played an important role in helping us navigate the complexities of the past year. At the same time, many of us have missed the communal nature of live performance, in which our heartbeats synchronize and we laugh, cheer, and cry as one." — MIAC director Dr. Brett Johnson

Upon checking into the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center this summer, you may find some things changed. "We've implemented a number of COVID-19 policies — masks, socially distanced seating charts, digital tickets, intermission-less performances, and more — in an effort to keep our patrons, staff, artists, and community safe."

However, the caliber of program you've come to expect from the MIAC will be the same as ever. Consistency, too, is the hallmark of any great performer.

Matt Swanseger can be reached at mwsanseger@eriereader.com

SUMMER EVENTS

Sunset Grill Serves Up Edinboro Summer

And early fall too



NICK WARREN

[left]: Singer and guitarist Justin Moyer (middle) performs with son Gavin (left, drums) and violinist Louis Nicolia at the Sunset Grill in 2019. [bottom right] Jay Baumgardner strums a chord at the 'Boro's beloved lakeside haunt in 2020.

tally laid-back but not dusty, perfectly situated for epic sunset views, and as close to the lake as you can get without being in it) is always worth the trip.

Doesn't hurt that the Sunset is also at Edinboro Lake Resort, where a bevy of tourists and townies' guests make cool, quaint, modern lakeside rental cabins their homes away from home throughout the summer. Hell, my wife and I have gotten away there ourselves, and our house is just down the road.

All that makes and keeps the Sunset a pretty inviting spot, no doubt.

But another big part of what makes the place cool is its extensive, season-long live music series, an elbow-deep run that brings an abundant cast of fine-skilled local and regional singer-songwriters and bands onto the little stage by the lake.

It's been going on there for years now, with a chock-full slate of live music to chill by and get down to. And as usual,

with an act set up every Thursday through Sunday from now all the way through the beginning of October, this year's lineup is no exception.

Here's what's happening at the resort a little ways south of the city throughout June:

June 3 - Adam McKillip; **June 4** - Fred Oakman; **June 5** - Shameless Hex; **June 6** - Justin Moyer; **June 10** - Rankin and Schell; **June 11** - The Highlife; **June 12** - Tommy Link; **June 13** - Josh Travis Band; **June 17** - Salmon Frank; **June 18** - Seann P. Clark; **June 19** - Fred Oakman and The Flood; **June 20** - Dionisio/

Colette Bone; **June 24** - Jay Baumgardner; **June 25** - Rachel Short; **June 26** - Tony Kellogg; and **June 27** - Jesse Weston.

To find out more about Sunset Grill's summer (and into-the-autumn) music series — including what's happening next month and the full slate of performances each week through September and early October — visit edinborolakeresort.com, call 434.3307, or take a drive (or stroll, or bike, or boat) out to 12690 Edinboro Road.

Ryan Smith can be reached at rsmith@eriereader.com.

By: Ryan Smith

Drive or bike or stroll or boat by it along the usually quiet Route 99 side of beautiful little Edinboro Lake on any/every given summer weekend evening — any/every given summer weeknight, too — and you'll see that the Sunset Grill almost always has what looks to be a packed-to-the-gills house and patio.

Even that old hack COVID couldn't really change that.

Sure, Sunset opened later than usual (over the Fourth of July weekend) last year, but that was because it was busy with pre-

planned further renovations. As the pandemic brought vast new limits to indoor seating regulations, "a lot of [bars and restaurants] were really struggling for patio seating," says Sunset co-owner Nick Russell, "but we're majority patio seating."

So "people felt safe and comfortable."

It's not just that Sunset served as an oasis during an existential dry spell.

They've been known for having a good menu to gather around, and a more-than-respectable revolving craft beer selection. And the atmosphere alone (to-



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ROGUES' GALLERY

BY JOHN PATRICK SHANLEY

PA CA

Fri & Sat **June 04-19, 2021**
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House of Sticks

New memoir from Ly Tran stuns and awes

In 1993, at just three years old, Ly (pronounced “Lee”) Tran and her family emigrated from a small town in Vietnam to New York City to begin a new life, made possible through a humanitarian program run by the U.S. government for prisoners of war. Her father, a former lieutenant in the South Vietnamese army, spent seven years in a POW camp barely surviving before escaping back to his hometown and eventually marrying Ly’s mother.

The family’s American dream did not turn out as planned, however. In this insightful and oftentimes heart-breaking new memoir, Tran details growing up as an immigrant in late ‘90s and early ‘00s America, the struggle to assimilate to American culture while still honoring the cultural expectations of her parents, and the impact it had on both her well-being and mental health.

Tran’s account of life as an immigrant in America can be jarring, especially to those unfamiliar with the absolute poverty that many immigrants find themselves in when first arriving in America and sometimes long after. An early scene in which a young Ly, not knowing better, plays with a cock-

roach — one of many that infest the family’s apartment — is unsettling, to say the least. For many, the squalor in which the family lives is unimaginable, but is a harsh reality for those who have limited options.

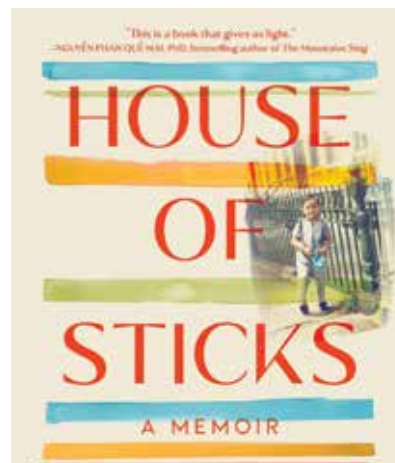
Compared to war-torn Vietnam, though, this is a new beginning for the family, and they strive to make it work. Starting with a pseudo-sweatshop in their own home making cummerbunds and ties to make ends meet, the family eventually buys their own nail salon, struggling to stay afloat. Tran grapples internally with her sense of duty to her parents, feeling as though she is betraying them when she goes to college and has to stop working with them at the salon.

One especially poignant moment where Tran’s moral dilemma impacts her is in her need for glasses. Her father, believing that glasses are a government conspiracy, refuses to even discuss the possibility of her needing them, stating that she and her school are lying. Wanting to obey her father, Tran spends years with blurry eyesight, unable to see the blackboard in school and causing health issues, including headaches and bruising in and around her eye muscles. It is not

until she attends college, living in a dorm, that she finally got corrective lenses, all the while burdened with thoughts of betraying her father.

Throughout the book, Tran tells her coming-of-age story with such intensity and conviction that it is difficult to believe that she was once the very meek, voiceless child she describes, unable to articulate her feelings or even understand them. Each chapter brings incredible insight into the immigrant experience, what it is like to learn an entirely new culture, and what it means to forge a path of one’s own. — Ally Kutz

Scribner // 384 pages // Memoir



The 2000s Made Me Gay

Hilarious and thoughtful debut from Grace Perry

Grace Perry doesn’t *actually* think the 2000s made her gay; but the title was a lot shorter and potentially more relatable than *The 2000s Are to Blame for the Specific Kind of Gay Person I Am Today*, an alternative Perry mentions in the book’s introduction.

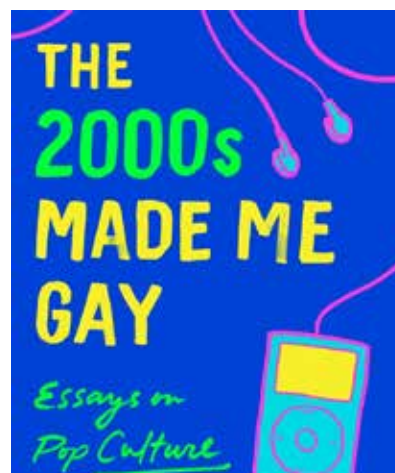
A witty and intriguing debut, Perry’s essay collection, *The 2000s Made Me Gay*, is more than meets the eye. At a glance, it seems to be a farcical look at early aughts pop culture and the queer representation — or lack thereof — it possessed. But a further dive into the essays collected in this book reveals a critical examination of the popular culture that many millennials grew up with, recognizing and identifying problematic themes as well as explaining the potential reasoning for them.

Perry goes further, though, acknowledging that although we can — and have — moved away from these problematic representations, we can also appreciate them for what they meant to us at the time and why we have so much nostalgia for them. Instead of completely disregarding our past, Perry allows for the consideration of remembering the time fondly while also seeing it through a critical lens of better representation for the LGBTQ+ community.

Split into twelve essays, Perry covers many of the most nostalgic parts of millennial teen culture: the *Harry Potter* series, *Mean Girls*, Katy Perry’s “I Kissed a Girl,” the Disney Channel, *Gossip Girl*, and Taylor Swift all feature in this wonderful, perceptive, and captivating look at how the aughts shaped the millennial generation.

So, maybe the 2000s didn’t actually make anyone gay, but they certainly defined what it meant to be a teenager at the start of this century. — Ally Kutz

St. Martin’s Griffin // 256 pages // Essay, Memoir, LGBTQ+



6 Can’t-Miss Books
Coming This Summer

Fox and I: An Uncommon Friendship

By Catherine Raven

After working at universities and teaching field classes, a woman builds a house on a remote plot of land in Montana and befriends a fox. What follows is a story of friendship, nature, and the fable-esque true story of Catherine Raven’s time in the wild.

Memoir // Spiegel & Grau // July 6th

Survive the Night

By Riley Sager

In 1991, college student Charlie carools with a stranger home to Ohio, grieving the death of her best friend to a murderer dubbed the Campus Killer. But the stranger’s suspicious behavior and holes in his story lead Charlie to wonder: is she driving with a serial killer? What comes next is a game of cat-and-mouse where Charlie’s main objective is to survive the night.

Mystery, Thriller // Dutton // June 29th

Couple Found Slain:

After A Family Murder

By Mikita Brottman

A double murder, a confession, and a ruling of criminal insanity: author and psychoanalyst Mikita Brottman examines the case of killer Brian Bechtold, his life leading to the murder, and what happens to the criminally insane in the aftermath.

True Crime // Henry Holt and Co. // July 6th

The Show Girl

By Nicola Harrison

In 1927, singer and dancer Olive McCormick moves to New York City with dreams of becoming a star in the Ziegfeld Follies. She meets Archie Carmichael, who wins her over and proposes marriage, leaving Olive to decide if she’s willing to sacrifice the life she’s worked toward and loves for the man she loves.

Historical Fiction // St. Martin’s Press // August 10th

My Heart is a Chainsaw

By Stephen Graham Jones

At first glance, this is a story of murder in small-town America; a closer look reveals a critique of American colonialism and Indigenous displacement as well as the story of a young woman who utilizes the horror film genre to mask the horrors in her own life.

Horror // Gallery/Saga Press // August 31st

Razorblade Tears

By S.A. Crosby

When Ike Randolph’s son Isiah is murdered alongside his husband Derek, he comes together with Derek’s father Buddy Lee on a quest for vengeance. Confronting their own prejudices about both their sons and each other, the ultimate goal is bringing justice to those who hurt their boys.

Mystery, Thriller // Flatiron // July 6th

PODCASTS

Our Monthly Podcast Picks

Digital delectations to feed your brain

The Press Box

Hosted by: Bryan Curtis // *The Ringer*

A must-listen for media junkies and journalism students, *The Press Box* is pleasantly hosted by Bryan Curtis and David Shoemaker (part of *The Ringer's* podcast network). The show employs a good balance of more serious



fare — Emily Wilder's firing from the Associated Press was a recent episode centerpiece — and pop culture/sports topics, ensuring they don't get swallowed up by the media industry's ongoing existential dread.

Let's go back to that Wilder episode (May 24). This initial discussion not only breaks down the situation for those uninitiated, but then talks about how the Associated Press is vulnerable to bad faith troll campaigns (like those who came after Wilder), and how reporters, AP or not, are expected to be robots, free of feelings or "bias." The back half of the episode is then a fascinating look at NBA studio shows, such as TNT's *Inside the NBA*. What's nice about the show's affiliation with *The Ringer* is that they can skew pop culture and sports for secondary topics, while they have plenty of experts on-hand.

Toss in segments like the "Overworked Twitter Joke of the Week" and "Guess the Strained-Pun Headline," and you get a nuanced yet entertaining twice-a-week program. — Christopher Lantinen

Talking Sopranos

Hosted by: Michael Imperioli and Steve Schirripa // talkingsopranos.com

These days, there are podcast hits like *Office Ladies* and *West Wing Weekly*, down to pandemic-fueled revisits like *The Darkest Timeline*. *Talking Sopranos* co-incidentally began in April of 2020, hosted by none other than Michael Imperioli and Steve Schirripa, who played Christopher Moltisanti and Robert "Bobby Bacala" Baccalieri Jr. *The Sopranos* is unquestionably one of the best — if not the single-greatest — television series of all time, and here we get an inside look into the show directly from the source. Like many, during the pandemic, I revisited some of my favorite television shows, and if you haven't gotten a chance to watch — or rewatch — *The Sopranos*, do it. It holds up shockingly well. *Talking Sopranos* follows an interview/rewatch format. Each show features a guest involved with the show, from the production crew to main cast members. Following that, Imperioli and Schirripa dive into the episode with scripts in hand, analyzing each scene and providing insight that's often hilarious. Each episode is also watchable on YouTube as they move through the series' 86 episodes, culminating in the release of their upcoming book, *Woke Up This Morning: The Definitive Oral History of The Sopranos* due in November. — Nick Warren



The P.O.D. Kast

Hosted by: Bryan Quinby and John Cullen // thepodcast.libsyn.com/

One major benefit of podcasting becoming a mainstream medium is just how niche they've become. Podcasting has also allowed us to revel in our guiltiest pleasures and share our love for bygone



eras with other nostalgic people, which can often lead to critical re-evaluations of all kinds of art we may have grown up with and dismissed.

If I'm making *The P.O.D. Kast* sound academic in any way, you can relax. Hosted by comedians John Cullen (*Blocked Party*) and Brian Quimby (*Street Fight Radio*), the show is simply about growing up in the age of nu-metal, a genre they still love, and revisiting the highlights of a largely maligned musical genre album by album. From the backwards 'R' in Korn to the 'Z' in Limp Bizkit, you can bet they'll cover the good, the bad, and the flat-out bizarre in this monthly podcast that is easy to binge. Every episode ends with a friendly competition often attempting to recreate a song or lyrics by the subject of the episode, followed by a poll listeners can vote on to decide the next album covered by the show. As this music reviewer would like to suggest, it's never too late to discover Deftones. — Aaron Mook

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MOVIE REVIEWS

Eternity and a Day: About Endlessness Concerns Everything and Nothing

★★★★★

Roy Andersson's last film *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence* explored the seemingly limitless depths of human cruelty in a surreal and dryly funny way. In his newest film *About Endlessness*, the Swedish absurdist uses that same bizarre style to examine the entirety of existence itself. The film covers both the spectacular and mundane aspects of life in a way that only Andersson can present, and although the end result is not as intriguing as something like his *Songs from the Second Floor*, it is enough to keep the audience engaged.

Less a story and more of a series of vignettes as seen from a seemingly omniscient narrator, we follow multiple stories covering various times in history. These stories include a priest suffering an existential crisis after losing his faith, a man who recently had an unpleasant run-in with an old classmate, a prisoner of war dreading his upcoming execution, a

seemingly dead couple flying above the ruins of a destroyed city, and even Hitler awaiting the inevitable in his bunker.

Every vignette is filmed in Andersson's typical style with flat, static cinematography that lets everything play out in a single shot and desaturated lighting that removes the slightest trace of color. The result puts every story — no matter how grand or banal — on equal footing in this never-ending flow of time, allowing the audience to reach their own conclusions about the importance of each moment. *About Endlessness* probably won't win any new converts to Andersson's alienating style, but for those with a taste for the uncomfortable and the oddly funny, this is one to seek out. — Forest Taylor

About Endlessness is currently playing in select theaters and is available on Amazon Prime, Apple TV+, Google Play, Vudu, and YouTube // Written and directed by: Roy Andersson // Starring: Jan-Eje Ferling, Kristina Ekmark, Martin Serner, Bengt Bergius, Anja Broms, Magnus Wallgren, Lisa Blohm, Thore Flygel, Tatiana Delaunay, and Anders Hellstrom // 78 minutes // Unrated // Magnolia Pictures



Viva Las Vegas?: Army of the Dead is Not as Fun as It Should Be

★★

The term "style over substance" often creates a false dichotomy in filmmaking — it makes it seem like there can be either one or the other. But in many cases, the style is the substance. Zack Snyder is an example of such a filmmaker and after spending the last several years trying to reinvent superhero stories as some kind of modern Greek tragedy, he is now going back to his roots. *Army of the Dead* promises all the ultra-violent, hyper-kinetic mayhem of his 2004 *Dawn of the Dead* remake (still his best film), but whether or not it delivers on that promise is another matter entirely.

After a military accident renders Las Vegas a zombie-infested wasteland, the city has been cut off from the rest of the country. However, mercenary Scott Ward (Dave Bautista) has been called up by a billionaire tycoon to assemble a team for a job. Their mission: recover hundreds of millions of dollars from

a casino before Vegas is nuked. But will they be able to make it past a literal army of flesh-eating ghouls?

After an energetic opening sequence and a fun sequence of assembling the team, the film settles into familiar territory and that momentum begins to slow over the needlessly long runtime. The story gets bogged down in multiple subplots that often don't really go anywhere and the action is obscured by the murky, blurry cinematography (Snyder worked as his own DP and he never learned to focus his camera apparently). The film doesn't have enough fun with its enticing premise and the story isn't compelling enough to hold interest, making both the style and the substance underwhelming. — Forest Taylor

Army of the Dead is currently playing in theaters and on Netflix // Directed by: Zack Snyder // Written by: Snyder, Joby Harold, and Shay Hatten // Starring: Dave Bautista, Ella Purnell, Omari Hardwick, Ana de la Reguera, Theo Rossi, Matthias Schweighofer, Nora Arnezeder, Garret Dillahunt, Tig Notaro, Raul Castillo, Huma Qureshi, Samantha Win, and Hiroyuki Sanada // 148 minutes // Rated R



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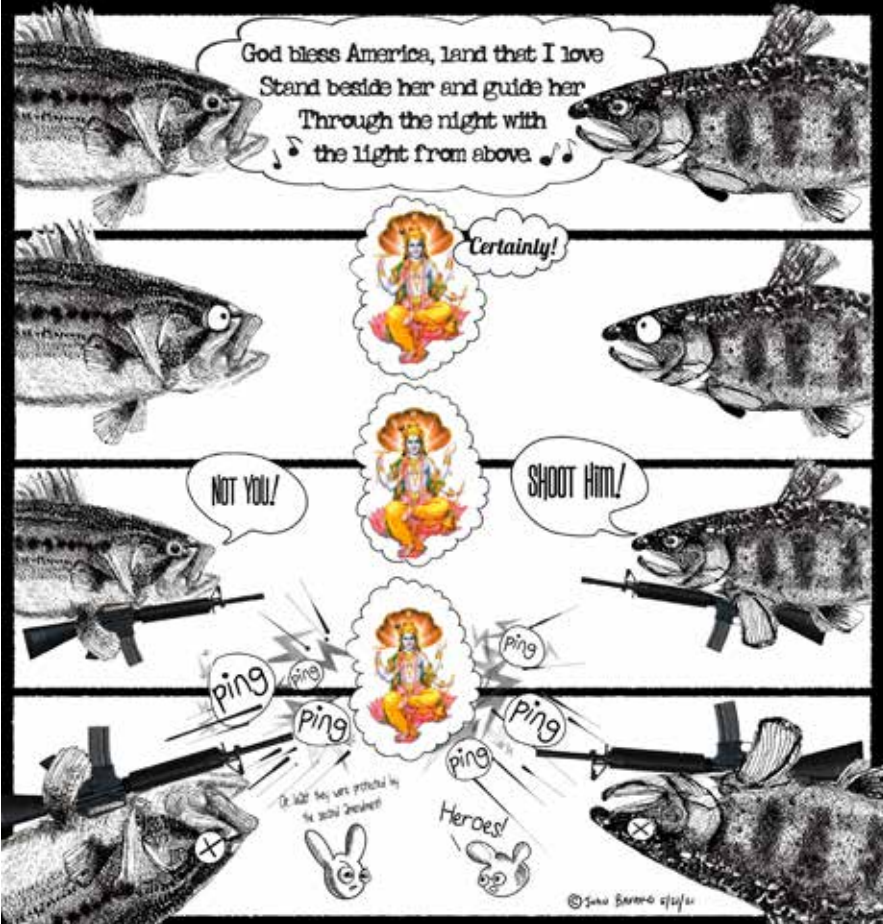
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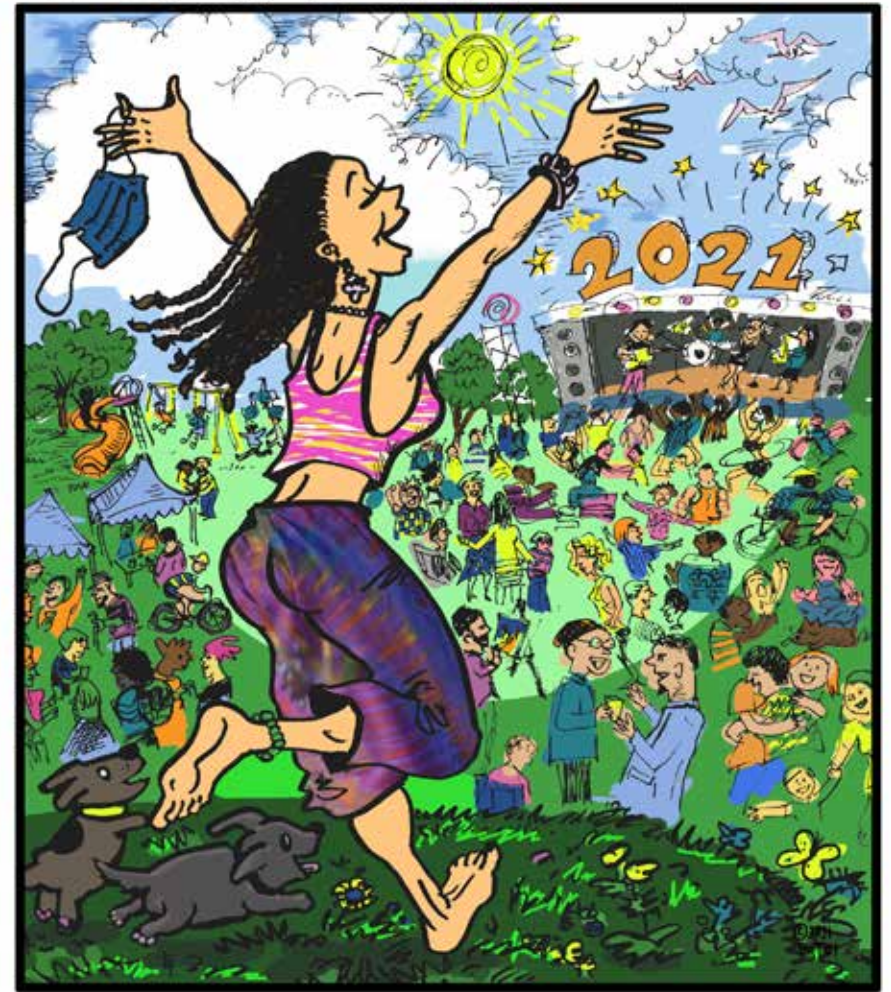
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ALBUM REVIEWS

Red Fang

Arrows
Relapse Records



The latest release from Portland, Oregon's most famous stoner metal band Red Fang is their first record in five



years. The album was recorded pre-pandemic, but the release was put on hold until the band could properly promote it. The band enlisted multi-instrumentalist Chris Funk, from the band the Decemberists, to produce the record. This is his third time working with Red Fang, after having also produced *Murder on the Mountains* and *Whales and Leeches*. His influence can be heard on the track "Fonzi Scheme," where they enlisted the Portland Cello Project to help fill the space between their crunchy riffs. *Arrows* is their most experimental record yet, with more ambient space, strings, and even drums recorded at the bottom of a drained pool. Despite the new sounds, they don't step too far out of their stylistic comfort zone. Although the album does boast stand-out tracks between the slow-opening "Take It Back" and the dynamically strong closer "Funeral Coach" — "Two High" with its catchy chorus, "Anodyne" which has the power dirge style of the Melvins, and the title track with its classic Red Fang feel — there was definitely a conscious choice to make *Arrows* flow as a whole piece rather than a collection of songs that ended up on the same record. — Larry Wheaton

J. Cole

The Off-Season
Dreamville Records



After three years of barely any social media presence, interviews, or updates, Fayetteville rapper J. Cole finally came out of hiding to release his latest album *The Off-Season*, which dropped May 14. The 12-track opus is filled with punchlines, various production credits, and surprise features that are not mentioned on the track list — a different pace for the rapper, considering his last three projects were mainly produced by and featured no other artist other than himself. If the Carolina emcee lost his touch in his absence, you wouldn't know it. He unapologetically revives himself here, sounding more alive than ever as he celebrates his success and reclaims his throne. Though the Roc Nation signee has been known for more conscious records, we receive a more bar-heavy and even boisterous side of him from the N.Y. banger "Applying Pressure" to the radio-ready "Amarri." But of course, *The Off-Season* still delivers tracks that are more on-brand, such as the ominous "Let Go My Hand" where Cole touches on his fear of conflict and raising his son to be brave. At this point, Cole could easily hang up his jersey and retire gracefully. But by the looks and sounds of it, the icon has more points to put on the scoreboard. — Charles Brown



Tommy Link

Grow
Self-released



Tommy Link is a dyed-in-the-wool troubadour of the highest degree. He's been honing his craft for years, from his full-band work with Strangers and Liars up to his latest solo album, *Grow*. Successfully funding the release of this album through a modest Kickstarter goal, Link exceeded his target, releasing *Grow* in physical form (as well as digitally via Spotify, Apple Music, etc.). There's an almost theatrical nature to this album in particular, harkening back to an older generation of singer-songwriters like Harry Chapin and Jim Croce. It's an album worth memorizing, and one that easily grows on you. Link is a well-seasoned storyteller beyond his years (who in full disclosure also happens to be a gifted cartoonist for this very publication), full of passion evident in nearly every one of *Grow's* ten tracks. Not content with just an acoustic guitar, there are hints of softly overdriven electrics, pianos, and tasteful percussion throughout the record. The first few tracks start strong, with extremely memorable hooks and choruses. One of the highlights is "The Badge," a politically-tinged standout. The passion stays true until the final notes of the titular track, showcasing one of Erie's best songwriters at the top of his game. — Nick Warren



Blunt Guts

Cranberry Blood
Self-released



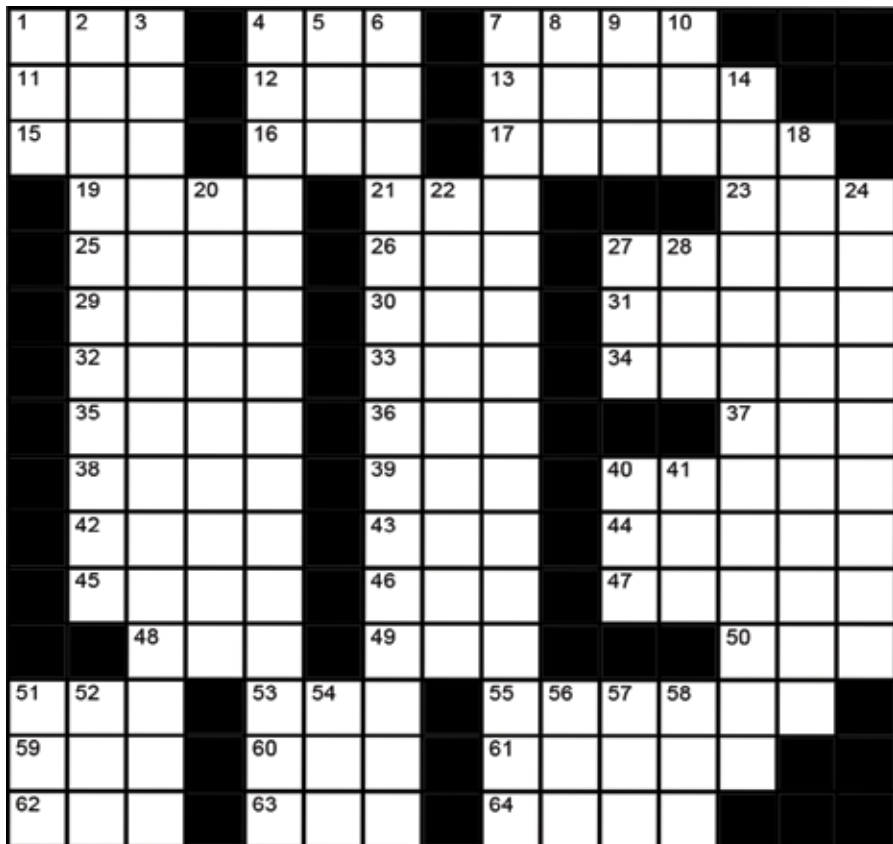
From the mind of Robert Jensen comes Blunt Guts. Most locals will know Jensen as the owner and operator of Erie's Basement Transmissions, but discerning members of the scene remember him as one of the driving forces behind Pegasus Unicorn and The Jargonauts (as well as his follow-up with Josiah Haughwout, Jensen & Three Sharks). Forget about that for a moment. Blunt Guts is unadulterated genius. "We had a particular sound," Jensen said, speaking of his previous bands, noting that "it was tough to leave that behind." *Cranberry Blood* is firmly planted in the future of music. Combining the electronic sounds of drum machines and synthesizer sequences with hazily blissful vocoded lyrics and samples, Jensen simultaneously pushes the envelope while making a record that's endlessly listenable. With help from local musicians Lil Avril and Austin "Chauncy Bill\$up" Smith, Jensen blends hip-hop with experimental avant-pop sounds. The seven-track album sees highlights like "Waves," "SLEEPER" (co-written by Lil Avril), and the closer "The Riddle." Fans lucky enough to land a handmade edition of the album were even treated to a pop-up book-like interior featuring Jensen's beautiful collage art, for one of Erie's best local albums of the year. — Nick Warren



TOMMY IN TOON — BY TOMMY LINK



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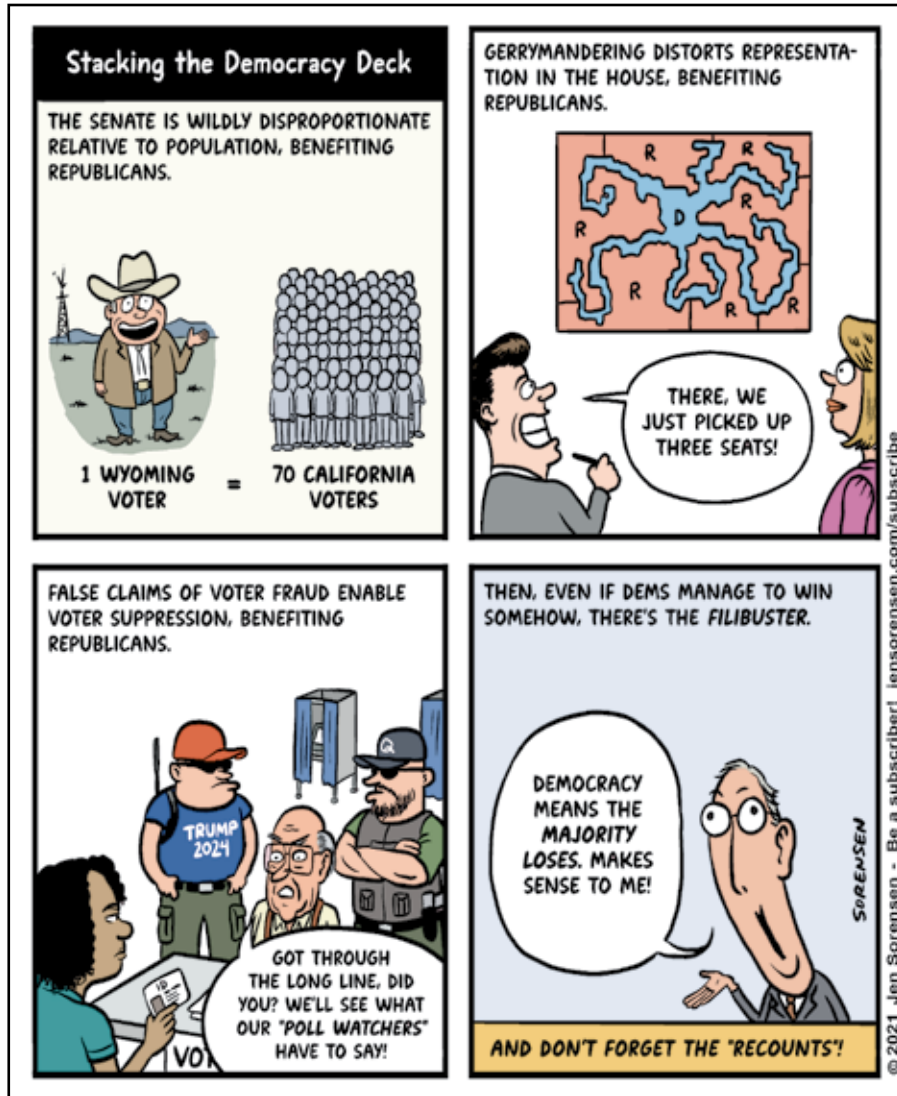
- 1 Beanball, on many diamond scoresheets
- 4 "Monsters, ____"
- 7 Civil rights org whose leaders included John Lewis and Stokely Carmichael
- 11 Slippery sea creature
- 12 "The Matrix" hero
- 13 What you may "drop" on Valentine's Day, with "the"
- 15 Goat's cry
- 16 Reason for seasonal shots
- 17 The "O" of AOC
- 19 Tickle Me Elmo toy-maker
- 21 Opposite of SSE
- 23 National econ stat
- 25 Glassmaker's oven
- 26 Smidge
- 27 Israel's Meir
- 29 Mild Dutch cheese
- 30 DDE's WWII command
- 31 Goody-two-shoes
- 32 Foal's mother
- 33 Like some sugar
- 34 Programmed to, as a thermostat
- 35 On the same side
- 36 1979 Sigourney Weaver film
- 37 Demolition material
- 38 Say ____ (refuse)

- 39 Hosp heart ward
- 40 Squiggly mark in "piñata"
- 42 ____ to one's ears
- 43 Highest-rated 17th-century Dutch painter Jan
- 45 Hindu god of fire
- 46 Dockworkers' org
- 47 Ceramists' needs
- 48 ____ Francisco
- 49 Part of DMV: Abbr
- 50 Ending with fluor-
- 51 "Thank you, Captain Obvious!"
- 53 Curling surface
- 55 Draws out
- 59 Support gp founded under FDR
- 60 The NBA's Magic, on scoreboards
- 61 Patty and Selma, to Bart, Lisa and Maggie
- 62 Cave dweller
- 63 Rival of BAL and BOS
- 64 Rx writers

Down

- 1 Skirt's edge
- 2 Fever that reached America in the mid-'60s
- 3 Put money on the underdog, say
- 4 Knowledgeable viewpoint
- 5 First word of Dante's

- "Inferno"
- 6 In a way that produces the opposite effect
- 7 What "Pay Toll 1 Mile" implies
- 8 "The Good Place" network
- 9 Mover's form for the USPS
- 10 There are 2 54 in an in
- 14 HBO series represented by some of the black (and two white) squares in this puzzle's grid
- 18 Miscellany
- 20 National Radio Hall of Fame inductee who was born Art Ferguson
- 22 2009 Grammy winner for her "Still Unforgettable" album
- 24 History is written in it
- 27 Lyft drivers consult it
- 28 Hematite, for one
- 40 "Have you no shame!"
- 41 "That's ____ quit!"
- 51 Do some voice work
- 52 ____ Today
- 54 Weep
- 56 Daft Punk, for one
- 57 Chapel Hill sch
- 58 The "75" of \$1 75: Abbr



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