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THE 2023

SHOP LOCAL

ISSUE

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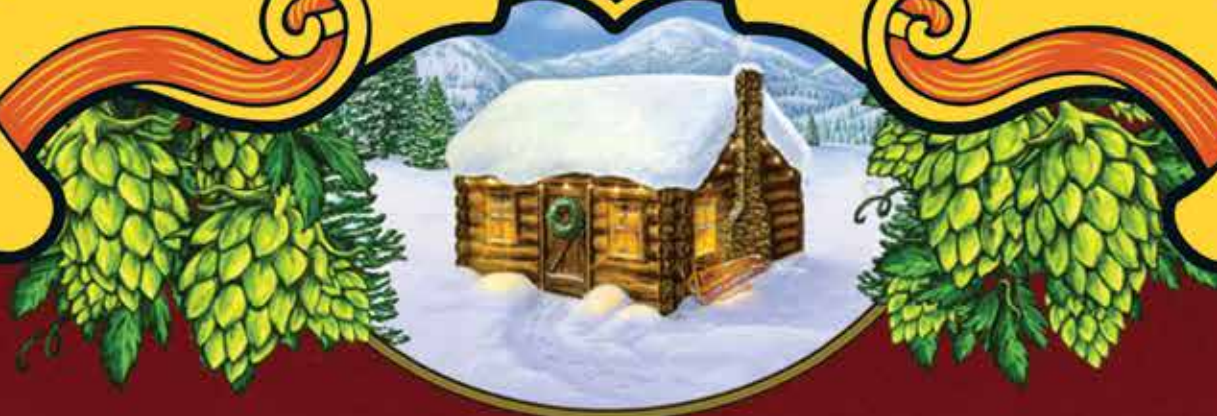
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From the Editors**Giving the gift of local****W**hat image do the words "holiday shopping" evoke for you?

Perhaps it's a nostalgic memory, which depending on your age could mean very different scenes. It could be snow crunching under your feet on Downtown Erie sidewalks as a child, marveling at the wonder of the Boston Store. Or if you're a child of the '80s, it could be a jam-packed Millcreek Mall, waiting in line to sit on Santa's lap, while filling your wishlist with trinkets from Children's Palace, KB Toy Store, or Toys R Us. Or maybe, if you're of a younger generation, it's as simple as clicking "add to list" to load up your online wishlist.

Some, whether by tradition or circumstance, may bristle at the sound of those words. Holidays are, at their core, supposed to mean spending time with family, being grateful for all we already have, giving to those who have less, and fulfilling family or religious traditions. For many others, especially now, times are tight and holiday shopping may need to be scaled way back in order to make sure essentials are provided.

For us at the Reader, in our November issue, "holiday shopping" always means shopping small by supporting local businesses, and we're here to help you out by providing our annual Shop Local Holiday Gift Guide. This year we've broken our list down to local shopping hot spots: throughout downtown, in the many local shopping plazas, and in burgeoning midtown, while also giving tips on shopping local pop-up markets, spending locally while shopping online, as well as a special section provided by the NWPA Innovation Beehive Network highlighting some regional makers they support.

Also featured within this issue are ways to support local farmers at Erie's new Westside Market on Powell, local fashion designers, local religious artisans, and traditional Polish immigrant businesses, as well as tips on expanding your shopping horizons at businesses created by Erie's current immigrant and refugee communities.

There are also ways to support local without spending a dime. Liking, commenting, and sharing the social media page of your favorite local business, artist, or musician doesn't cost a thing and can be a huge source of support — or better yet, vote for them for Best of Erie 2023 (voting is open until Dec. 11, visit bestof.eriereader.com to start your ballot).

Our contributing editor Jim Wertz would also remind you that supporting local doesn't just mean buying gifts locally, it means using your vote to truly make a difference in the way our county is managed. Our upcoming local election is on Tuesday, Nov. 7 and it is of grave importance to the future of Erie County — making sure you get to the polls is arguably the most imperative trip you make this holiday season.

Use your online voice, use your vote, and use your money wisely to make "holiday shopping" this year mean a little bit more to your entire local community and, while doing so, help create new nostalgic memories that those words will evoke for the next generation.

Erie at Large: Municipal Elections

Nov. 7 presents ample opportunity to correct course

By: Jim Wertz

There has never been a better opportunity — or a greater need — to correct the course of county government than there is now, at this moment, with this election.

Nov. 7 is election day. Voters have an opportunity in this municipal election year to elect a majority of Erie County Council, with four seats on the ballot, and to reset the system of checks and balances on a roughshod riding county executive. Voters will select a county controller, the person who serves as a fiscal watchdog in county government ensuring that light is shed on corrupt or corrosive practices. And voters will put a new judge on the Erie County Court of Common Pleas, a court that grinds judiciously in the background of our community, until one requires an intervention of justice, whether the victim or the accused. And across Erie County you'll elect school board members who respect the traditions of public education in our country and our communities, or you'll give those seats to people who will radically transform our schools by banning or burning one book at a time.

At the state level, we'll elect a new justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, two new judges of the Pennsylvania Superior Court, and a new member of the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court. If you care about abortion access, the future of school funding, and the administration of free and fair elections — these races are key because the United States Supreme Court, most strongly in the *Dobbs* decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, has shifted the mandate of formerly federally protected rights back to the states.

Each election in the past few years has felt more consequential than the one before. For the reasons outlined above, November 2023 is no different.

The county executive likes to tout his bipartisan leadership and wrangling of the current county council, which, by party registration, has a Democratic majority. But as we've documented previously in the *Erie Reader*, that majority is a fickle figment of our imagination. "Democrat" Jim Winarski has voted almost exclusively with the Republican minority to secure control of council leadership and to advance the policy whims of the county executive, an election denier, against the will of Erie County taxpayers. Among those caprices: a proposed Fairview business park, which spawned a bipartisan coalition against the project and spoiled what goodwill the county executive may have enjoyed in western Erie County; and the EMS Authority, a proposal that has largely been met with an abundant lack of support by the municipal stakeholders who bear the burden of financing and executing the plan. These are county issues that loom large at this moment, and this election could very well be a referendum on the actions, not the rhetoric, of the county executive and his minions on county council.

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This upcoming municipal election is of grave importance to restore the checks and balances to Erie county government, while also deciding court seats and judicial positions. This is your chance to make your voice heard to a number of officials who have made decisions in opposition to the wishes of their constituents.

Perhaps no one fits that bill better than Council President Brian Shank, who is running for a second term in the Fifth Council District. Shank has a long history of election denialism and was the lead conductor of the Trump train during and after the 2020 election. If re-elected, Shank would serve on, and possibly lead, the Erie County Board of Elections — a body composed of members of council not on the ballot this year. In previous years, the unsubstantiated claims he's made about election security have largely been dismissed by the cooler heads of previous administrations and the model work and processes of our Erie County Election Office staff.

On Nov. 7, voters can remove that threat with just one vote.

Shank is challenged by first-time candidate Chris Drexel. He is a graduate of Gannon University, a local businessman and area manager for Verizon locations throughout Western Pennsylvania, including Harborcreek, where he lives with his wife and their children. Drexel says that "honesty and transparency are essential to building trust and accountability in government" — qualities that have been lacking during the past few years.

In western Erie County, a historically Republican seat in the council's Seventh District may be up for grabs as a bipartisan coalition of residents in Fairview and Girard, the district's largest voting blocs, united against the county executive's proposed Fairview Business Park, which would have replaced a large

parcel of farmland with new industrial space. The incumbent, Republican Ellen Schauerman, would have been gifted a guarantee of re-election had it not been for that proposal and her support of it.

Now Schauerman faces Democratic challenger Lorraine Dolan, the former president of the Erie chapter of the League of Women Voters and chair of the local chapter of Fair Districts PA, who ran a write-in campaign in the primary to ensure that the incumbent didn't run unopposed despite the voter registration disparity in the district. Dolan's presence on the ballot this fall is fortuitous given the wholesale rejection of the county executive's Fairview plan and the ire directed at those who rubber-stamped it without the advice and consent of West County constituents. If West County voters remain angry, as it seems they might, the Nov. 7 election may prove to be a referendum on the county executive and those, like Schauerman, who do his bidding.

In Millcreek, First District incumbent Terry Scutella faces a challenge from first-time Republican candidate Cody Foust (no relation to the Foust political dynasty in eastern Erie County). After 12 years on the Millcreek School Board and spending the past two years trying to negotiate some calm on Erie County Council, Scutella is a known and trusted entity to Millcreek voters giving him a distinct edge with Millcreek's swing voters.

In the Third Council District, which includes areas in Millcreek township and most of southwest Erie



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City, Democrat Rock Copeland will face Republican Kim Hunter, an acolyte of Shank and Davis who has largely campaigned on disinformation and manufactured outrage over heavyweight topics like whether or not Rock is actually Copeland's real name. It is Copeland who was nominated by the Erie County Democratic Party after former councilwoman Mary Rennie resigned her seat and removed her name from nomination following the May primary. Copeland, who has proven himself to be a deft campaigner and someone who speaks with wonkish authority on county budget matters, holds a decisive upper hand in this historically Democratic district.

The only row office on the ballot this fall is for the Erie County controller, an office that former County Councilman Kyle Foust won four years ago by just 33 votes. Foust ran for re-election on what he sees as the non-political victories of his office. Foust isn't flashy or full of himself when it comes to the office, but often notes that his predecessors too often used the office to fight and diminish their political enemies. His, he would say, has been an era of good government in which the office functioned for the best interests of county taxpayers rather than in the service of a cause.

Foust faces Republican Wade Root, who has worked in various appointed capacities within the county executive's office and previously served as the treasurer of the county executive's campaign committee. He says he's running to ensure transparency in the

controller's office. One can't help but wonder what the definition of transparency is amongst the county executive's inner circle.

Perhaps someone should ask the residents of Fairview and Girard?

And in the race for Judge of the Erie County Court of Common Pleas, attorneys Pete Sala, a Democrat,

The people we elect this year will control the offices that oversee our elections. We'll elect the person who will hear the arguments about right versus wrong, and in the statewide races our candidates will make the decisions that will ensure that a woman's choice matters and that your vote counts, and they'll decide what version of history is told in our schools.

and Eric Mikovch, a Republican, both of whom cross-filed for both party nominations in the May primary, vie for an open seat on the county bench. While voters may have some ideological motivation to vote for one candidate over another, in races like this


there are few endorsements that matter more than judgment of the candidates' professional peers. Both candidates participated in a rigorous review by the Erie County Bar Association in which 53 percent of the Bar's 403 members participated.

In that review, Sala was "Highly Recommended" and Mikovch simply "Recommended." Additionally, Sala outscored Mikovch in all four ratings of professional qualifications: competence, integrity, temperament, and experience. Those ratings, coupled with Sala's strong showing on both the Democratic and Republican tickets in the May primary — just 233 votes shy of winning both party nominations — make a strong case for Sala's candidacy heading into the general election.

This is just a snapshot of all that rests on your ballot. The people we elect this year will control the offices that oversee our elections. We'll elect the person who will hear the arguments about right versus wrong, and in the statewide races our candidates will make the decisions that will ensure that a woman's choice matters and that your vote counts, and they'll decide what version of history is told in our schools.

Municipal elections matter, perhaps more than we've ever acknowledged. Make sure you know what your vote supports on Nov. 7.

Jim Wertz is a contributing editor. He can be reached at jWertz@ErieReader.com and you can follow him on X @jim_wertz.



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Add Erie's History to Your Shopping List

A sweep of local neighborhoods offers plenty of food for thought

By: Liz Allen

When you patronize Erie businesses this holiday season, think about visiting your own store of memories, because shopping is more than a retail exercise. It's also a great opportunity to take in Erie's sights, sounds, and scents.

That is why I asked Bobby Sulecki and Mary Jo Sulecki (Bobby's mother) for some ideas on their favorite places to soak up Erie's culture. The Suleckis aren't shopaholics. Rather, Bobby, 34, is an "old soul," in his mother's words, who fell in love with the Boston Store at age four after watching a WQLN special, even though the store closed 10 years before he was born. "I was so happy that it was saved," he said about the Boston Store, which now houses apartments, radio stations, and a brew pub.

But I didn't interview Bobby because of his fascination with the Boston Store. Instead, I talked to him because he has extensive knowledge about Erie's Polish history, and it is the immigrant community, from Poland and elsewhere, that founded and continues to establish many flourishing businesses here.

I first wrote about Bobby in 2005, when he was a 15-year-old hosting his own Polish show on a low-watt radio station. I learned then that although he was born with cerebral palsy, his intellect is sharp and his creativity is boundless. In 2012, I caught up with him for a column about his interest in film stars from the golden age of Hollywood. Then, in 2016, I wrote about his work in documenting the history of Erie's Polish neighborhoods, with a focus on four Erie Catholic churches, including St. Stanislaus (the "mother church" of Erie's Polonia), city neighborhoods, the service of Polish soldiers from Erie in Haller's Army in World War I, and other intriguing topics.

His mom is his devoted partner in exploring Erie's Polish heritage and in providing transportation. Bobby uses leg braces and a wheelchair to get around but can't drive. He shares his research and stories at EriePoloniaHistory.com. We've also become collaborators of sorts, with Bobby making use of a series of stories I wrote in 1989 about Erie's Polish history — when he was still an infant!

The impetus for my series back then was an announcement by the Catholic Diocese of Erie that it intended to close St. Stanislaus Parish at East 12th and Wallace streets, along with St. Stan's, St. Patrick's, and Holy Trinity elementary schools. The schools shut down, but St. Stanislaus Parish is still open. When St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception closed in 2015, it merged into St. Stan's and no longer exists. Founded by German immigrants, St. Mary's had previously absorbed Immaculate Conception, a predominantly Black parish.

Because of the priest shortage and a drop in attendance after COVID, the diocese has recently proposed more mergers, partnerships and changes in church status, affecting many parishes beyond the Polish ones. Under the new plan, Holy Trinity would be a



CONTRIBUTED



(Clockwise from left): Bobby Sulecki has taken a deep interest in Erie's history, especially the early Polish neighborhoods. This stained glass panel resides in the sanctuary of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, which was once known as the "Mother Church of Erie's Polonia." Jo Clarke, a local artist and Benedictine oblate, helps to run Chapter 57.

secondary mission church of St. Stanislaus, meaning it could still have Mass on Sundays, holy days, and the eve of holy days. Our Mother of Sorrows, already a cluster of St. Ann, Holy Family, and St. Casimir parishes would merge into St. Stanislaus and become a secondary parish, with Mass permitted for funerals, baptisms and weddings. St. Hedwig, home to Erie's Latin Mass community, would also merge into St. Stanislaus.

I am Catholic but still need a spreadsheet to keep track of all these changes. But you don't have to be part of my faith tradition to wonder how diminished parish life might affect the City of Erie, especially as Erie's civic leaders strive to revitalize neighborhoods. And to know where our community is headed in the future, we need to understand and appreciate Erie's past, including the role that churches played in cre-

ating neighborhood identities and supporting entrepreneurship.

When I wrote the Polish stories in 1989, I also did a series about Erie's Italian neighborhoods. As a journalist, I knew Erie's geography, from the central city to the suburbs and out to the rural parts of the county. But as a west-side resident for much of my life, I wasn't as familiar with the commerce that once thrived in these ethnic neighborhoods until I wrote my Polish and Italian neighborhood series. That's when I met the people and their descendants who had started butcher shops, taverns, bakeries, dry-goods retailers, hardware stores, photo studios, printing presses, restaurants, and movie theaters that served immigrants for decades.

Now, I like to make note of the New American businesses that have opened, often on the same blocks

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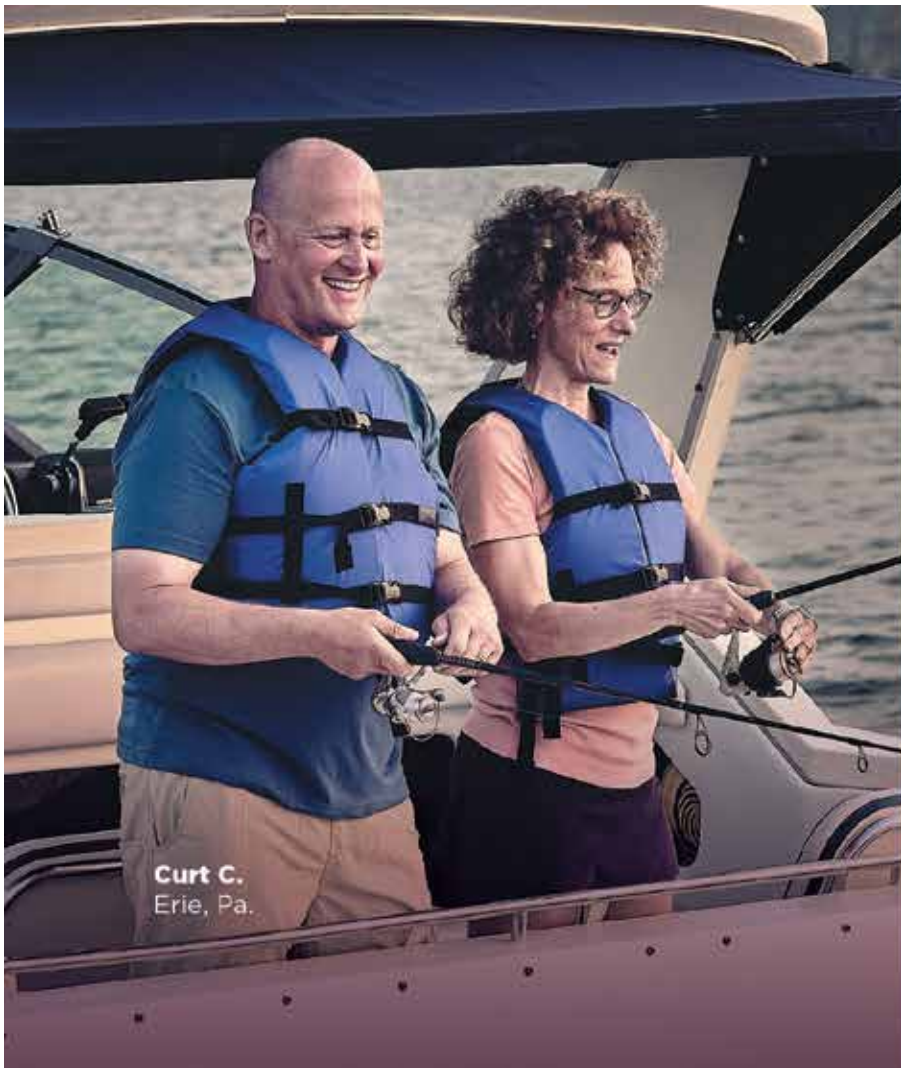
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where earlier immigrant stores operated. The UK Supermarket at 1115 Parade St. is worth a stop just for the aroma. Also on Parade Street, I'm a regular at Kraus Department Store, a browser at Cobb's Second Time Around Thrift Shop, and an occasional shopper at Nickel Plate Mills. I don't have a dog or a cat, so I don't buy the holistic pet food that is Nickel Plate's specialty. But the flower and vegetable seed packets from Botanical Interests, with lovely four-color illustrations, make great stocking stuffers (the seeds are in a separate room during the off-season for gardening).

For the Suleckis, a favorite place to shop is Urbaniak Brothers, at East 24th and German streets. Urbaniak's sells meat, cheese, fish, beef jerky, horseradish, and fruit and vegetables. You can also find homemade jarred goods, such as jams and relishes, barbecue sauce, and branded merch, including T-shirts and aprons. Herb & Honey Bakery is also located inside the store.

Bobby and Mary Jo are also excited that Adrian and Nadia Pop, the new owners of Trawka's Market at East Seventh and Payne streets, plan to carry items from their native Romania along with familiar Erie

on the other.

"Erie Refocused," the city of Erie's 2016 comprehensive plan, designated 17 neighborhoods for attention. Some of the plan's neighborhoods, like Little Italy, are recognizable. Other names don't resonate with Erie residents. But until I consulted Bobby's work, I didn't realize that Erie's Polish neighborhoods were named after four Catholic churches.

"Erie's first Polish neighborhood was called 'Stanisławowo,' in the approximate area from East 12th to East 18th streets," when St. Stanislaus was dedicated in 1885. Holy Trinity was established in 1903, with the neighborhood between East 19th and East 24th streets called "Trójcowo," he said. The neighborhood for St. Hedwig, established in 1911, became "Jadwigowo," from about East 2nd to about East 5th streets. In 1914, St. Casimir's was established, with the neighborhood called "Kazmierzowo" and bounded by East 6th to East 11th streets and Hess Avenue, Lynn Street, and Payne Avenue.

The upcoming holidays mark the seasons of thanksgiving and giving back. I am thankful for everything that I've learned so far from Bobby, and happy to pass along his appeal for readers to share your stories for

"When you patronize Erie businesses this holiday season, think about visiting your own store of memories, because shopping is more than a retail exercise. It's also a great opportunity to take in Erie's sights, sounds, and scents."

foods such as Polish sausage, ox roast, and Smith's hot dogs.

Their mention of the two food stores made me think about Serafin's Food Market, at East 24th and Ash streets, which boasts that it is Erie's oldest grocery store, dating to 1926. Go for the pepperoni balls, stay to chat with owner Dan Serafin, who is also a steward for the neighborhood, then check out Holy Trinity Catholic Church, at East 22nd and Reed streets.

From Bobby, I learned that the Holy Trinity rectory was originally a Baptist church and that the church displays many statues and pieces of art, all labeled with name and background details. One of his favorites is a portrait of St. Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Franciscan friar who was executed at Auschwitz.

"Any ethnic church has its own personality, including which saints are important to them," explained Mary Jo Sulecki. Churches also reflect immigrant stories of resilience, thrift, and reuse. The exterior of St. Hedwig, for example, at East Third and Wallace streets, was built from street cobblestones. Bobby also recommends checking out the stunning stained-glass windows that grace St. Casimir Church, near East Seventh Street and Hess Avenue, with the Nativity on one side and the Resurrection

his ongoing research project, which he has expanded to include St. Mary's and Holy Family parishes.

"I am interested in hearing about recollections of growing up in the Polish neighborhoods, the schools, and your families. What was so special about it? What did it mean to you? What were the Polish businesses, stores, clubs or taverns you went to? Who were the priests or nuns or special people in your life?" he asks. He's interested in photos, too — class group pictures, communion and wedding shots, family portraits, and corner stores. He will scan any loaned items and return them.

Harking back to his radio days, he's also hoping to scrounge up tapes or information about the Polish radio shows hosted by Joseph Zdunski and Peter Garrownski. He cautions, though, that he can't do genealogy research or compile travelogues. You can contact him at suleckibobby@gmail.com or by calling 814-899-2731.

By the way, he's just started volunteering at the Hagen History Center, helping to organize its extensive collection of Polish-related items. In your gift-searching expedition, Hagen History Center is also a good place to shop.

Liz Allen is a well-known shopping procrastinator. You can reach her at lizerie@aol.com.

On the same page with local artists

I like wordplay and books, so I keep my eye out for clever names, including titles of cozy mysteries (*Buried in the Stacks*, by Allison Brook) and book/gift shops (the Bayfront Bookshelf run by Friends of the Library at Blasco, for example). But I didn't know why the gift shop at Mount St. Benedict (6101 East Lake Road) is called Chapter 57 until Sister Valerie Luckey, OSB, director of Emmaus Ministries, explained its origin. (I am also a freelance writer for Emmaus.)

"It got its name in a contest that the late Sister Mary Lou Kownacki won for naming the store. It's taken from Chapter 57 of the Rule of Benedict about the 'artisans of the monastery,'" Sister Val said. "Paraphrase: The artisans are supposed to practice their craft with humility and not overcharge for anything, lest they get too prideful!"

But I will boast that I am delighted I spent some time at Chapter 57, which offers much more than books on religion, spirituality, and poetry, written by Erie Benedictines and by other noted authors of works on religion and spirituality. The shop specializes in glorious original art in all sorts of media, including photography. Artwork is sold on its own and is also incorporated into cards, tiles, mugs, woven baskets, bags and clothing items. Art by children from the Neighborhood Art House is also available, with proceeds benefiting that Benedictine ministry.

Jerry Williams was browsing at Chapter 57 with her friend, the Rev. Rebecca Cartus of the Federation of Christian Ministries. The two women, from Sewickley, had attended a retreat at the hermitages at the Mount. Williams described the art as "incredible" and said that the Benedictine rule of hospitality was practiced everywhere, including in Chapter 57, where Jo Clarke, an artist and Benedictine oblate, was waiting on customers.

Chapter 57 is the brainchild of Sister Margaret Ann "Peggy" Pilewski, an accomplished artist. It is open on Sundays from 10:30 a.m. to noon and also by calling 814-899-0614 to make an appointment with Sister Margaret Ann.



Chapter 57 art contributor Jo Clarke interacts with customer Jerry William at the East Lake Road location of their gift shop at Mount St. Benedict.

Erie's Shop Local Holiday Gift Guide 2023

Keeping it home for the holidays

By: Erin Phillips

Folks in Erie from older generations love to wax romantic about holiday shopping in their childhood. The magic of getting dressed up, going downtown in the lightly falling snow to ogle at the windows of the Boston Store, all done up for Christmas. Sitting on Santa's lap under the clock, the hustle and bustle, the twinkling lights, tinsel, and holiday music making memories to last a lifetime. As it went with many American towns, the magic of downtown started slowly dying with the advent of shopping malls and mega-centers that siphoned consumers away from downtown shopping districts and sent them miles away toward the highways, for centralized, corporate shopping. And, as we've seen in recent years, those too seem to be slowly dying as the younger generations prefer to shop online, making a one-stop shop with huge shopping conglomerates like Amazon, while our once jam-packed Millcreek Mall slowly becomes a ghost town.

But, just like most things in life, we tend to come full circle. In 2010, the first Small Business Saturday was introduced and ever since, there has been a real push to support local small businesses, especially around the holidays. And Erie is poised to provide nearly anything you could possibly need for your holiday shopping and to provide those items in a way that supports our local economy. And while the magic of a trip downtown may look a little different than it did in the mid 20th century, and while you may have to travel around a bit to find all those items on your lists, the small businesses of Erie have your back this holiday season.

So, let's make this yuletide as local as possible, while celebrating and supporting those who took the plunge to build their businesses in Erie. There are many ways to do this, and for our Shop Local Holiday Gift Guide this year we've broken it down for you by district. So if you happen to be downtown, we've got you covered. If you're nearby one of many local shopping plazas, we've got you covered. If you're hovering around midtown, we've got you covered. If you'd like to get out with the community at a pop-up market, we've got you covered. And if you still prefer to shop online, we've found a way to keep that local, too.

So check your lists (twice, if you'd like) and make an effort to find your gifts right here in Erie. We think you'll find it feels a bit better to keep your money home for the holidays.

Shop Downtown

The resurgence of shopping downtown has never been more apparent than it is now. With newbies from the Erie Downtown Development Corporation alongside old favorites, the heart of the Gem City is becoming more and more like what it once was: a walkable shopping district. Take a stroll with the holiday lights aglow, stopping from store to store: it will feel a little like walking back in time.

If you're looking for **unique clothing** you won't find



(Clockwise from top left): Shop downtown at Louis Gerimita's **Primo Tailoring** for all your menswear needs, grab a bag of beans, a mug, or gift card at **Ember + Forge**, give a gift membership to the **Experience Children's Museum** for year-round fun, or grab a unique vintage find at the **Dollhouse at Pointe Four**.

literally anywhere else, downtown shopping is where it's at.

The Dollhouse at Pointe Four Boutique, 423 State St.

Vintage goodies with everything from knitwear to accessories, casual sportswear to formal gowns — the longstanding vintage clothier has got something for that fashionista on your list.

Erie Apparel City Supply, 431 State St.

Did you hear? It's okay to love Erie! Get your Erie-centric garment fix at Erie Apparel's downtown location — City Supply.

Isaac Baker Menswear, 1001 State St.

One of the oldest menswear shops in Erie, Isaac Baker offers classic styling, suits, ties, and all the accessories necessary.

Primo Tailoring, 421 State St.

Nothing compares to a well-tailored suit, and Primo Tailor proprietor Louis Geramita has everything for the one who prefers stylish menswear in your life.

She Vintage, 419 State St.

2023 40 Under 40 honoree Alexandria Ellis has your style problems solved at She Vintage. She advises, "if you stay ready then you never have to get ready." Get everyone on your list ready at her unique shop.

Get creative! Give the gift of art! **Locally made art**, gifts, crafts, and more can all be found downtown.

D' Hopkins Denniston Gallery, 5 W. 10th St.

Local fine art, photography, and more is available to purchase at this downtown gallery.

The Erie Art Museum Gift Shop, 20 E. 5th St.

Grab a local art book, a piece of locally made art, and more at the gift shop within the front lobby of the Erie Art Museum. Or better yet, give a membership so the art lover in your life can get inspired whenever the mood strikes!

Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St.

This mainstay downtown shop is known for featuring local artists. Buy a painting, a sculpture, some hand-made glass or pottery, jewelry, or unique gifts like puzzles and socks.

Does your holiday table include cookies? How about that early morning cup of coffee as you watch your children unwrap their presents in the breaking dawn light? Downtown Erie's got **food and drink** aplenty!

Ember + Forge, 401 State St.

Shopping downtown in the Erie cold pretty much requires a stop into our well-established local downtown coffee shop, Ember + Forge. Grab some locally roasted beans or a mug for the coffee lover on your list, while browsing local art and locally made products for sale.

Purrista Cat Cafe, 30 W. 8th St.

Coffee and cats — what more does one need in life? Stop in to Erie's cat cafe and grab a gift card for the feline-obsessed in your family, so they can enjoy a visit with the kitties available for adoption (and maybe even take one home)! Or, grab some locally roasted coffee or a cat-themed gift item to make your giftee purr.

Ye Olde Sweet Shoppe, 402 State St.

Why waste precious hours around the holidays baking your own cookies when Ye Olde Sweet Shoppe does



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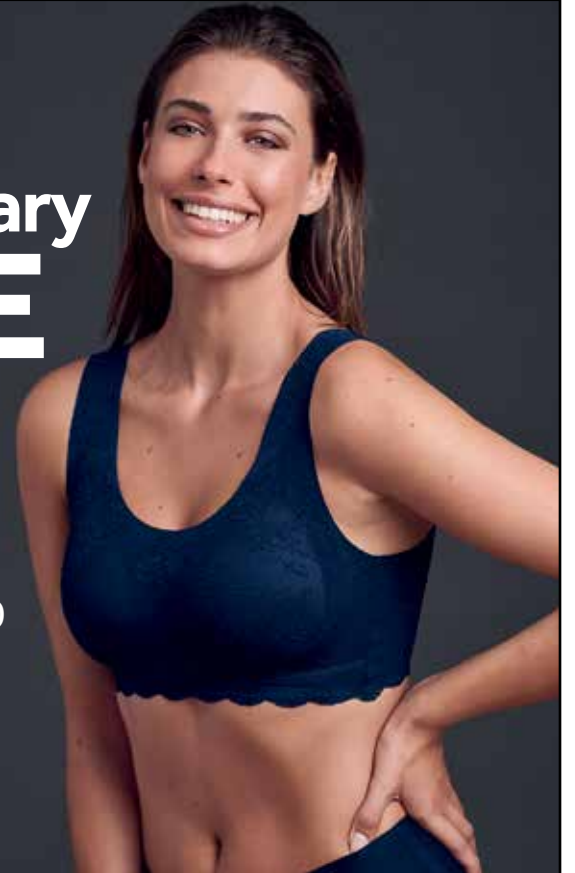
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it so much better? Stop in for cookies, cupcakes, and sweets galore or send a cookie mug to the sugar lover on your list.

If you're one to prefer the gift of life, consider **giving an experience** to get your loved one out and doing something new and fun in Erie.

Brig Cigar Lounge, 419 State St.

If cigars are your giftee's thing, a new experience in Erie pops up on Fridays and Saturdays near the historic Cashier's House that the humidorian on your list will appreciate.

The expERIENCE Children's Museum, 420 French St.

You can get a gift membership for the kiddos and they can think of you every time they have a blast at the newly expanded children's museum. Also consider stopping in to their gift shop for some unique toy finds whose purchase will help support the nonprofit.

Golf Evolution, 5 W. 10th St.

If you've got a golfer in your life, help them improve their game through a Golf Evolution membership, class, or virtual swing improvement session.

Maritime Museum Gift Shop, 150 E. Front St.

Give the gift of history through Erie's Maritime Museum — a gift membership or one of the many nautical history-related gifts available through their shop adjacent to the Blasco Library.

Monacella Massage, 1001 State St.

Help facilitate some deep relaxation around the holidays, or anytime, with a gift card for a massage at Monacella.

Local Theater Tickets for Dramashop, the Erie Playhouse, or the Warner Theatre (Erie Philharmonic)

Grab some tickets to an upcoming performance and enjoy some local theater or music: it's the gift that keeps on giving (and will also help support the nonprofits that bring this unique entertainment to Erie).

Support all of the local downtown businesses at once this year with an electronic gift card from the Erie Downtown Partnership (EDP).

In years past, the nonprofit tasked with supporting the growth of Erie's downtown has provided gift cards that encompass dozens of local businesses and this year, they're coming back better than ever. EDP Director Emily Fetcko mentions, "Last year we sold \$80,000 in gift certificates and over the course of the pandemic we've sold over \$250,000! There continues to be demand." The EDP hopes to launch the sale of these all-encompassing gift cards in early November, so keep an eye on their website and social media for more information. Fetcko continues, "We think this will energize people in a new and more flexible way to support downtown's small businesses."

Shop the Plazas

Stopping by and casually wandering through the many shops that make up the various shopping plazas in Erie is nearly akin to experiencing that Main Street shopping magic. With plenty of stops in between for refreshments and to warm up, you can make a day out of it!

The Shops at the Colony, 2580 W. 8th St.

One of the largest and most unique of the shopping



The opportunities to support small businesses and nonprofits abound this holiday season. Consider any of the following for those loved ones on your list. (Clockwise from top left): consider tickets to an Erie Philharmonic performance, a book is always a great gift and Werner Books and Coffee has plenty from which to choose, Romolo Chocolates are never unappreciated, or give the gift of snuggle time with kitties at Purrista Cat Cafe.

plazas in Erie, the Shops at the Colony really is a one-stop shop for most of your gifting needs. From crafting supplies, clothing, soap, candles, art, gourmet snacks, and toys: one trip ought to do it!

Allen Stoneware Gallery

Everyone loves a mug, especially a handmade one-of-a-kind mug. Or vase, bowl, plate, jar — you name it. Or give a pottery-making class to help your giftee learn a new artistic skill.

Inside the Jelly Jar / New Beginnings

With the demise of Toys R Us, where are you supposed to find the magic of a dedicated toy store in Erie? Inside the Jelly Jar is where we should have been going all along! With high-quality toys for kids of all ages, books, baby gear, and educational materials: Inside the Jelly Jar is childhood holiday magic defined.

Kada Gallery

Kada Gallery's rotating collection of local art provides a great opportunity to give your loved one something truly creative.

Lake Erie EBikes

Help your loved one get around, get outside, get active, and use fewer fossil fuels as they enjoy a ride on a new eBike. Or provide the cycling enthusiast in your life with a gear refresh.

Les Crago Jewelers

Les Crago has been an Erie tradition since 1950. Quality, service, and timelessness makes their well-made

jewelry an easy holiday win.

Polliwogs Gym

Gift the littles in your life a fun session at Polliwogs Gym, or enroll them in one of their weekly gymnastics classes (they offer multiple for different ages).

Rustic and Refined

Have a knitter or crocheter in your life? Skip the mass-produced, box store yarns and opt for something more special — perhaps a locally made skein from Three Tulips Yarn Company.

scent. / Candlebox

Soaps and candles are the quintessential go-to gift for the hard-to-shop-for person on your list. Find unique fragrances and beautifully handmade items inside.

A La Carte / Peter James by Lollie / AJ's Classic Clothing / Lollie & Co. / The Preppy Pickle

With five, yes FIVE total clothiers in the Shops at the Colony, you're sure to find something interesting, different, and not-at-all cookie cutter. Why shop at a big box store for clothes that everyone else already has? Go local and get something of higher quality and a bit more interesting for the fashion-forward on your list.

The Juice Jar / The Original Popcorn House / Brew Ha Ha / Presque Isle Wine Cellars / The Colony Pub / The Colony Pizza

One can never go wrong with an item or a gift card for some delicious food, snacks, coffee, wine, or juice. Give the gift of a new food experience!

SHOP LOCAL

yogaErie / The Village of Healing and Wellness / Sandcille Spa

If you're of that "experience gift" mindset, you can't go wrong with a yoga class, a meditation or Tai Chi session, or a spa day. Give the gift of health and relaxation.

The West Erie Plaza, 800 West Erie Plaza Dr.

While the plaza at the edge of the city looks a little different than it did decades ago, the facelift has also brought an interesting smattering of new businesses and restaurants that will give you plenty of gift-giving options from which to choose!

Achilles Running Shop

Support local while also supporting the healthy habits of the athletes on your holiday list.

Claytopia

A fun experience gift for young and old alike. Help facilitate a creative experience that will end with a keep-sake memento.

E Lane

Interesting, unique fashionable pieces that are hand-curated and not like anything you'll find in the chain stores.

Vintage and Soul Design Company

Furniture, lighting, rugs, and pillows: if interior design is your giftee's jam, then make a stop at Vintage and Soul for something that will set them apart.

The Cork 1794 / Bar Ronin / Lucero / Icing on the Lake Vending Machine

Treat your loved one to a fancy dinner and cocktails on you, or a treat they wouldn't normally splurge for themselves.

Liberty Center, 3407 Liberty St.

There may no longer be a robust and bustling plaza on Liberty, but what is there is definitely worth stopping for.

Erie Gymnastics

Help the kids in your life harness that endless energy of youth by paying for a gymnastics session. With classes from toddler up to advanced, there's a program for any age.

Fred's Furniture and Mattress

Local, small, and of the highest quality: if you're looking to give your loved one a good night's sleep, send them to Fred's for the best in furniture, mattresses, accessories, and design advice.

Triple D's Tasty Grill

Breakfast, brunch, lunch, or dinner: the gift of a hearty meal is never unappreciated.

Werner Books and Coffee

You can never go wrong with a book as a gift. Give a book you enjoyed, or ask one of the knowledgeable staff members for a recommendation. Or grab a gift card for both books and coffee — if you have a book-worm on your list it's guaranteed to be appreciated.

Greengarden Place, 1535 W. 8th St.

A relatively new plaza on the Erie landscape — Greengarden Place, adjacent to Frontier Park, offers high quality gift-giving spots all in one place.

Altered State Distillery

Interesting spirit blends made locally — a bottle of something is never unappreciated. Or opt for a gift card and give the experience of an artful cocktail served

JESSICA HUNTER



Erie has plenty of plazas full of local small businesses. Make sure to stop into one this holiday season. (Clockwise from top left): Popluck at Greengarden Place will have you swapping out that tired old tin with some fresh, gourmet selections, you'll have plenty of choices from one of the many shops in Village West, scent. in the Colony Plaza has some great stocking stuffers, and the recently renovated West Erie Plaza offers a multitude of gifting options.

alongside a tasty meal.

Buona Cucina Oils and More

Gourmet, quality oils, vinegars, custom seasonings and more. Grab a sampler pack and give the gift of good taste.

Popluck

Update that tired old metal popcorn bucket with some truly gourmet flavors that are locally made and perfectly fresh.

Pressed Books and Coffee

Offering the best in new releases, classics, children's literature, and unique gifts ranging from stationary to games, mugs, and art, while also offering a full service cafe: a gift card to Pressed will never disappoint.

Romolo Chocolates, 1525 W. 8th St.

While not technically in the plaza but so close it may as well be, we'd be remiss not to mention that everyone loves some chocolate in their stockings this time of year.

Trellis

Unique home goods, decor, and furniture — you'll find something for the would-be interior designer on your list.

Village West, 3330 W. 26th St.

Nestled conveniently off of West Ridge Road, Village West looks like a tiny winter... well... village and offers an array of inviting shops to browse through to find that perfect gift.

Accurate Performance

Give the gift of song! Have a budding musician on your list? Encourage them to take the next step by giving lessons in virtually any instrument, voice, acting, and more.

Braserie Dearie!

There is no gift that will get more mileage than a comfortable bra and that's a fact. Get a gift card to make sure your loved one will get themselves measured for the perfect fit.

Board and Brush Creative Studio

Get all your besties a session to sip and paint: catch up while making some art!

Buzz N' Bees Aquarium and Pet Shop

Don't leave out our furred, or finned, or feathered friends this holiday season! Stock those stockings with treats, toys, and grooming supplies.

Kelly's Sewing Corner

Quilters, clothing designers, crafters — this is a spot that will cater to those folks on your list.

Lake Erie Variety

Celebrate our sense of place with Erie-themed souvenirs and gifts that will give everyone heart eyes for our gem on the lake.

Lavender Rabbit

Flavored dipping oils and gourmet vinegars make great stocking stuffers. If you've got someone on your list who doesn't like to eat their veggies, try roasting them in some bacon oil and you'll turn them right

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Shop the midtown area of Erie (between 12th and 26th Streets) and make sure to hit up (clockwise from left): Copper Carriage antiques for perfectly curated curiosities with a local edge, City Gallery for a piece of handmade jewelry or some new art, Grasshopper Boutique for all your hipnique requirements, or Tippy Bean for some handmade pottery, coffee-related decor, or a bag of local roast.

around.

Nest by Lollie

An extension of the clothing company in the Shops at the Colony, Nest by Lollie brings that same sense of smart style to your home with unique gifts and decor.

Ralph Miller Jewelers

The tri-state area's oldest jeweler, Ralph Miller provides consistent quality and customer service so your loved one can shine their brightest this holiday season.

Sterling Rivers Spa

Give a day of pampering and your stressed-out loved one will definitely appreciate the thought.

Stoneworks Wellness Center

Rocks, stones, crystals, fossils, salts, minerals, jewelry, and gifts — give the gift of balance, healing, and meditation.

Turn 2 Sports Cards & Collectibles

A local option for the sports fan on your list, Turn 2 has cards, collectibles, merch, and more!

Cellar 22 / Butch's Restaurant / La Bella Vita / Lake Erie Candy Company

Give a glass of wine, a hearty breakfast, a romantic dinner, or a sweet treat!

Shop Midtown

Downtowns get all the credit. But Erie has an interesting variety of shops smattered about our mid-town areas. Generally defined as the area between and around 12th and 26th streets, and including the shops of Federal Hill, we encourage you to widen your search parameters for interesting gifts.

The Shops on the Hill, West 26th and Peach streets (and beyond)

The Federal Hill district of Erie has that feeling of an organic, creative, interesting, walkable shopping neighborhood one tends to find in much bigger cities. With a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the businesses within their boundaries, The Shops on the Hill are poised to become a destination for local shopping opportunities.

Chicory Hill Herbs, 2516 1/2 Peach St.

Teas, blends, sage sticks, and more for the budding herbalist in your life.

Copper Carriage, 1909 Chestnut St.

While not technically in Federal Hill, their participation in the Hill District makes Copper Carriage part of the proverbial family. Find perfectly curated antiques, many with a local connection, and give a gift that doesn't exist anywhere else.

Federal Hill Smokehouse, 2609 Peach St.

Give the gift of the best barbecue in Erie (and, quite possibly, the best barbecue in the world). Just ask the people of Erie — they've voted Federal Hill Best of Erie's Best Barbecue for many years running.

Give a Crepe - La Creperie, 2431 Peach St.

2023's 40 Under 40 honoree and Give a Crepe proprietor Stephani Klassen hopes you'll spread the love of her crepes far and wide.

Grasshopper, 2518 Peach St.

Grasshopper was there before it was cool, man. This local staple hipnique boutique has everything that the counterculture consumer on your list could possibly want: tie-dyes, incense, pottery, music, handmade clothing and accessories, and other gifts that will have your loved one feeling totally far out.

Ink Assassins, 2601 Peach St.

Give that tattooed lady (or gentleman or nonbinary)

the gift they really want: more tattoos!

Tippy Bean Cafe, 2425 Peach St.

Stop in to this defining Federal Hill cafe and see why it was voted Erie's Best Coffee Shop in 2023. Grab a bag of beans for the coffee-lover in your life, while you're at it.

Other Midtown Businesses

While you're out and about on Federal Hill, venture a little further west or east to find these other midtown small businesses offering something a little bit different.

City Gallery, 1503 State St.

Find exquisite handmade jewelry, local art, mosaics, 3D printed ornaments, and more at City Gallery. If you've ever frequented Artlore Studio in their heyday, you'll find a similar vibe from the same owners Steve and Lena, who are creative, knowledgeable, and helpful.

Erie Food Co-op, 1342 W. 26th St.

With tons of locally produced goods like incense, apparel, soaps, and candles available for gifts, a gift card to the Co-op is always appreciated, for lunch at the cafe or to offset some groceries.

FEED TOO, 13th and State

A small commercial extension of the massive media art facility FEED, this shop currently features Statik Garments, which is running a pop-up shop of recycled and upcycled clothing.

Graham's Used Records and Tapes, 613 W. 26th St.

Go totally analog while going totally local at Graham's. Vinyl collectors and vintage music enthusiasts will alight at the sound of that needle hitting wax.

The Hippie and the Hound, 664 W. 26th St.

Those on your list with a medical card will appreciate your thoughtfulness as they acquire all the glass accouterments and accessories necessary to have them up in smoke.

Leadhead Creative, 1501 State St.

An easy go-to for custom made designs, silk screened by human beings. Give the gift of a custom t-shirt to the whole family this holiday season.

Nickel Plate Mills, 1932 Parade St.

Holistic pet food, greenhouse supplies, seeds, and gear: Nickel Plate Mills is a great place to shop for the green thumb or pet lover on your list.

World of Music, 1355 W. 26th St.

Grab that musician on your list a new set of strings, a shiny new instrument, or give the gift of lessons.

Kellar's, A Modern Magic and Comedy Club, 1402 State St. / PACA, 1505 State St.

Grab tickets to an upcoming touring comedian at Kellar's or an independently produced play at PACA and give the gift of laughter and/or inspiration.

Shop the Pop-Ups

There are plenty of opportunities to shop locally-made goods from folks who may not have a brick and mortar store. It doesn't get more local than this: local people using local goods to make local products and selling them at local pop-up markets with no middle-man. You're giving your support and money directly to the people making what you're buying. Bring your reusable bags and browse the artisan tables set up at any of the following holiday markets.

SHOP LOCAL

COPPER CARRIAGE / ERIN PHILLIPS / EDP



Erie often hosts a number of pop-up holiday market events each season. Make sure you check one or all of them out, and give your money directly to the vendors and makers selling their wares.

Copper Carriage Holiday Market, Saturday, Nov. 11 and Sunday, Nov. 12

Shop the incredible antique finds that Copper Carriage is known for, alongside over 40 other local vendors taking up two floors of the historic Masonic Temple (32 W. 8th St.). Expect to find something for everyone on your list at this unique market.

Small Business Saturday, Saturday, Nov. 25

The Erie Downtown Partnership is hosting their regular Small Business Saturday local shopping extravaganza again this year. With makers and local businesses set up within the lobby of the Boston Store, and spilling out throughout downtown and other areas (like nearby 10/20 Collective at 1020 Holland St.), this is a bustling market that makes downtown come alive. Providing live music, food vendors, and holiday shopping with

hundreds of local small and micro business vendors, this event will also mark the return of the skating rink in East Perry Square (which will then be open every weekend through February), and the Holiday Village shops set up throughout Perry Square. It is a true downtown holiday shopping event!

Downtown D'Lights, Friday, Dec. 1

This is Downtown's marquee holiday event which includes the giant Perry Square tree lighting, a visit from Santa, and horse carriage rides — with activities and vendors throughout Downtown and around the park, this is one certain way to make some unforgettable holiday memories.

Local Maker's Market & Holiday Jazz at the Boston Store, Friday, Dec. 15

This market is a last-minute holiday shopping event at the Boston Store which will feature live jazz and artist and artisan vendors. If you'd like something handmade, one-of-a-kind, and unique for your loved ones, this is your chance to do so and support our local artists. This will also be another chance to take a horse carriage ride through downtown to marvel at the holiday lights in Perry Square.

Shop Online

If you're still of the mindset that you'd rather turn to the internet for your holiday shopping needs, there's an easy way to support local makers and businesses while shopping online. By doing a search on etsy.com, you can shop specific locations by adding a custom filter into their search bar for Erie, PA. This will pull up thousands of locally made goods and gifts: t-shirts, jewelry, decor, pottery, ornaments, art, posters, apparel, magnets, stickers, keychains, stationery, candles, bags, custom pet portraits, knitwear, cross-stitchings, beach glass, embroidery, woodworking — quite literally everything. Why go out in the cold to support local when you can, easily, from the comfort of your home?

Erin Phillips, who will be making a valiant attempt to shop as locally as possible this year, can be found at any of the above establishments or at erin@eriereader.com



Erie County Human Relations Commission

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

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

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

- Race; Color; Family Status; Religious Creed; Ancestry; Age; Sex; National Origin; Sexual Orientation; Disability; Gender Identity; Criminal History; and Source of Income.



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Shop the Innovators

By: Christopher Lantinen
Director of PennWest Edinboro Beehive

The NWPA Innovation Beehive Network is a free resource for business owners, start-up entrepreneurs, inventors, and more. With each local university contributing specialized services like market research, crowdfunding help, marketing and branding, and rapid prototyping, they remove barriers that prohibit business growth and innovation. Each of the companies in this section have worked with the Beehive to enhance some part of their business. But the innovative business concept, and the daily drive needed to succeed, should be credited to their entrepreneurial spirit. Enjoy shopping at these various "Friends of the Hive."

Borgia Artistry Studios

Local artist Brandon Borgia is most known for his *Crystal Ball* series, in which famed Erie landmarks and landscapes are cleverly observed through the titular sphere. These images come framed from the webstore. Meanwhile, Borgia's newest offering is a 3D barometric map of Lake Erie, a piece lasered out of wood and composed of eight total layers. It's truly stunning wall art, perfect for the boater, fisherman, or other outdoor enthusiast in your life. Visit borgiaartistrystudio.com.

Paper Owl Press

Paper Owl Press, the product line from local artist Megan Merz, is packed full of beautiful notecards, postcards, prints, and stickers. Most feature a delightfully colorful array of animals, including the best-selling *Mushroom Cat*. Others are more locally focused, like the clever *You Otter Visit Presque Isle* postcard. Lastly, make sure to check out the *Hidden Forest Oracle Deck*, a great divination deck for beginners that features Merz's distinctive work. Visit etsy.com/shop/thepaperowlpress.

Hopleaf Tea Company

This innovative Erie company combines fresh hops with loose-leaf tea, resulting in a variety of flavors that they sell online and at local locations (Voodoo Brewing Company, Tippy Bean, Luminary Distilling, and more). Their sampler pack is a great place to start, and they have a slew of seasonal flavors like "Gingerbread Black," "Imperial Pumpkin," and "Cinnamon Hops." If you want to fully dive in, they even sell tea pots and a mesh tea ball to put your materials in. Visit hopleafteaco.com.

Hikes and Hose

Local outdoor gear company Hikes & Hose creates hiking, biking, and general adventure gear that's sustainable and eco-friendly. Products like their biking tool bag are made from 100% recycled fabric, so that you can support the planet while traversing it. Their recycled firehose products — such as koozies, totes, billfolds, crossbody bags, and dog toys — are other examples of these strong values, all the while being extremely durable and eye-catching. Also, if you knit, they've teamed up with Three Tulips Yarn Company (another Erie organization) for a customizable yarn bag. Visit hikesandhose.com.

CONTRIBUTED



The NWPA Innovation Beehive Network supports a number of regional makers. Highlighting some for your holiday shopping this year, they've included, among others (clockwise from top left): Hikes and Hose, Paper Owl Press, Jake's Custom Shop, Eat Your Yard Erie, and Borgia Artistry Studios.

Jake's Custom Shop

One of the most innovative musical minds in the Erie community, Jake Lehotsky designs and sells synthesizers and individual modules to fellow creatives. Their signature product is the Modular Zero Complete Eurorack System, which features 11 modules and additional room to expand your sound (it's described as a "standalone analog instrument"). Venture into the musical unknown with Jake's Custom Shop. Visit jakescustomshop.com.

Your Sailing Adventure

It may not be sailing season, but that doesn't mean you can't purchase a warm-weather experience for your loved one, your employees, or anyone else on your gift-giving list. Your Sailing Adventure, founded by Erie's own Scott Hitz, offers several different sailing and adventure packages, all taking advantage of Lake Erie's natural beauty. When purchasing a gift card, it gives you the price of each experience — like "Sunset Sail," "Sommelier & Sailing," and more — so that your gift receiver can be ready for 2024. Visit yoursailingadventure.com.

Journeyman Hammocks

Journeyman Hammocks is all about connecting with local adventurers and making their camping trips more comfortable. Their signature product — the Journeyman Hammock Camp — is super easy to hang, waterproof and keeps you bug free. You can also grab their adventure kit/storage bag, which keeps your hammock dry on the way to the campsite. This will be a new, and eventually your favorite, way to camp. Visit journeymanhammocks.com.

Pineapple Eddie Southern Bistro Jerk Sauce

One of Erie's most celebrated dining experiences, Pineapple Eddie Southern Bistro is sharing a bit of their culinary magic through their packaged jerk marinade and sauce. The sauce is a perfect stocking stuffer for the home chef in your family, and it can be purchased at several local stores, such as: the Erie Food Co-Op, Gordon's Butcher and Market, and right at their restaurant.

Boho Basement

Mia D'Amato's Erie clothing company Boho Basement is shaking up your game day fits, complete with a sustainable and eco-friendly approach. The products are all upcycled from materials sourced secondhand, as she elevates them and mitigates any textile waste. The demand is so high that, 1) you have to pay attention to their website for the next product drop; and 2) custom orders open up periodically, so you have to stay locked into their Instagram. If you get on Boho's wavelength, you'll have the coolest (and most environmentally conscious) outfit come Sundays. Visit bohobasement.co.

Eat Your Yard Erie

Tess Frawley's Eat Your Yard aims to create food production in your "residential or commercial landscape." Their organization will first help you install a garden at your home or business, while then planting items like lettuce, carrots, broccoli, and tomatoes (whatever you want!). They have both subscriptions and a la carte options, and an email generally gets the process started. For a gift, contact them and see what you can set up for a friend or family member. Visit eatyouryarderie.com.

Supporting Immigrant and Refugee-Owned Businesses

Offerings to Erie economy as diverse as the people themselves

By: Jonathan Burdick

In 2019, Erie-Times News reporter Jennie Geisler wrote about a walking tour where they visited numerous international markets and grocery stores owned by refugees and immigrants around the city of Erie. It turned out to be both a rewarding and enlightening experience. She was introduced to new types of peppers, nuts, lentils, and halal meats, as well as shawarma, which in recent years has become a growing favorite found throughout the city.

“Let’s call a spade a spade,” she reflected afterwards about her hesitation to visit these stores on her own. “I was just afraid. ... And [after the tour] I felt silly and not just a little ashamed about feeling that way in the first place.”

Let’s be real: sometimes it’s simply easier to go to Wal-Mart or Wegmans than to go outside of our comfort zones — but outside of our comfort zones is often where one is enriched with new and rewarding experiences and interactions.

Kelly Armor as part of her residence with Erie Arts & Culture and with the assistance of USCRI International Institute of Erie recently compiled an updated and ever-growing list of refugee-owned businesses in the city. The pamphlet includes local businesses owned by entrepreneurs from Bhutan, Bosnia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iraq, Kosovo, Nepal, Palestine, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine.

Erie’s refugee and immigrant population continues to grow. The refugee population surpassed 10,000 residents and the number of refugee students in city schools has doubled over the past decade. As a result, their contributions to the local economy and the availability of goods and services not previously offered in the area continue to expand as well.

These businesses include not only restaurants and markets, but also bakeries, clothing stores, boutiques, jewelers, tailors, barbershops, salons, auto shops, auto sales, accounting firms, notaries, home care providers, trucking companies, childcare, galleries, and graphic designers. There are also musicians, artists, dancers, and sculptors.

Want to check out a market with foods and products of which you may not be familiar? There are numerous Iraqi-owned markets on Parade Street. Almadina Supermarket, for example, offers Iraqi, Syrian, and Lebanese breads, fresh produce, as well as drinks, snacks, and candies you won’t find in chain grocery stores. Swing over to the nearby Armenian owned Europa Delicatessen on Peach Street and you can find German chocolates, Bosnian dumplings, Hungarian smoked meats, Ukrainian candies, European soft drinks, and countless other Eastern European treats. Spread throughout the city are also nearly a dozen Bhutanese and Nepalese owned grocers including All in One Market on Pine Avenue and Himalayan Groceries on East 21st Street.

If you prefer your food already prepared, there are



This smattering of baked, canned, dried, and fresh goods are all available at the Almadina Market at 2325 Parade St., which is owned by a family of Iraqi immigrants. This business is providing fresh, culturally significant foods to the city’s eastside neighborhoods.

numerous refugee-owned restaurants throughout Erie such as Shawarma King, Tandoori Hut, Shish Kabob Restaurant, Erie Curry House, and Fine Restaurant & Bar.

It’s not all merely food being offered either. Need a haircut? Give Culture Cut Barbershop & Salon on West 26th Street a try. It’s owned by Yousseff Almaray who came to Erie from Syria in 2016. Have an oil change on the horizon? Check out Al Bidhawi Auto Services on Parade Street or Ed’s Transmission on East 26th Street. Need that title transferred? Z’s Notary on Pine Avenue has you covered.

Need some local talent to add some music for your event? Erie’s refugee community has enriched Erie’s cultural scene also. Musicians such as Gyan Ghising (who also owns My Way Bar and Grill), Nibal Abd El Karim (who also owns Sham Market with her husband), and Mustafa Albalkhi are just a few who are a simple phone call booking away.

Albalkhi, a refugee of the ongoing Syrian civil war, plays the oud, a fretless stringed instrument similar to a lute popular in the Middle East. Before the war, he used to compose songs for weddings and his wife. While in the refugee camp in Jordan, he began writing songs about the war as a way to express the grief and traumas experienced by him and so many others who fled the death and destruction. In Erie, he’s played at numerous local events as well as for programs designed for preschools and elementary-aged students.

“My music is important to other Arabic speaking people in Erie because most of us have a lot of grief. Most of us came as refugees and lost our homes, our jobs, and our family to war,” he told Erie Arts & Cul-

ture. He believes that through music we can achieve peace and understanding between people and cultures. “I believe my music is also important to people who do not speak Arabic. They will not understand the words but my music can touch them. My oud can speak and everyone will listen. They can feel my culture, my pain, my history.”

A June 2021 report by the New American Economy, the City of Erie, and Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership noted that these New Americans, which recently have also included hundreds of refugees from Afghanistan and Guatemala, “punch above their weight when it comes to their power as consumers” too, adding \$192.3 million in disposable income that is spent in our local economy. The way in which they enrich our communities cannot be overstated.

“Thanks to their diverse perspectives and experiences, refugees and their children can help spark new ideas and technologies,” penned Philippe Legrain in 2016. “People who have been uprooted from one culture and exposed to another tend to be more creative, while studies show that diverse groups outperform like-minded experts at problem solving.”

Learn more about Erie’s refugee and immigrant communities at cityof.erie.pa.us/welcoming-erie, uscri.wpengine.com/usc-erie, and well as the Erie Arts & Culture website.

Jonathan Burdick runs the public history project *Rust & Dirt*. He can be reached at jburdick@eriereader.com

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Localvores, Rejoice!

Erie's new Westside Market on Powell is the place to be for all things local

By: Alana Sabol

Upon entering the newly established Westside Market on Powell, you are greeted with rows of soil-less planters and vertical grow towers that sprout vibrant lettuces and herbs, like walking into a greenhouse. This is a showcase of owner Amanda Hines' specialty: hydroponic produce.

Hines, a 2021 40 Under 40 honoree who also owns No Dirt Farms, a hydroponic farm in Fairview, explains that her customers were looking for a brick and mortar location to buy her produce, but no such thing existed. "It has always been a dream of mine to open a market, not quite this large-scale, but to open a market and for people to see hydroponics," Hines says. Thus Westside Market on Powell was born. According to the company website, the goal of the market is "to support local communities, promote environmental stewardship, and provide access to high-quality, nutritious food."

Along with her own hydroponics, Hines has partnered with over 50 local farmers, vendors, and artisans from across the tri-state area to make the market a convenient location to get a wide range of local goods. "It's very difficult for people to go to each farm and support their local farmers," Hines explains. "So coming here, this is a one-stop shop."

In a study titled *Where Do "Localphiles" Shop?: A Mixed-Methods Case Study of Food-buying Habits*, Emily McKee

states that interviewees identified inconvenience, particularly having to visit multiple places, as one of the barriers to purchasing locally-grown food. "A lady just said at the cash register, 'You have all of my favorite things that I love to go and get and I just don't have all the time to get to all of those places,'" Hines says, recalling an interaction with a customer. "And I'm like, that's exactly what we're doing!"

Some of the farmers and vendors sharing the space with No Dirt Farms' hydroponics include Post Apples Farm, Live and Learn Farms, Steel Toe Farm, Gordon's Meats, Northern Scoop Ice Cream, Ohio City Pasta, Till Top Creamery, Hogs and Honey LLC, and more. Customers can also find local artists including woodworkers, painters and other artisans throughout the space. "Jewelry, paintings, crafts, food, candles, you name it, we're trying to get it," Hines says.

On a Wednesday afternoon in October, the market is lively. Customers stroll around and visit the cafe for lunch, sitting at the tables interspersed in the store with their meals. The cafe features drinks, smoothies, toasts, salads, and paninis with written descriptions on chalkboard menus. Hines points out that many of the items in the cafe have ingredients sourced directly from the market itself. "The chef will ask me for fresh basil. I go out, and from the towers I cut the fresh basil, and boom! It's on a sandwich," Hines says.



A grocery store featuring predominantly locally grown or produced goods, with a focus on reducing waste and highlighting sustainability, the West Side Market on Powell is your one-stop shop for supporting the local economy.

The Westside Market also features a refill-ery, a zero-waste approach to buying household items such as soaps, cleaning agents, and personal care products. "It's kind of innovative for Erie, but it has been very well-received too. People are really excited about it," Hines says. "You can bring your container here, fill it up, and then you're only using what you need. You don't have to buy more than you need."

Though the Westside Market on Powell is still a new business, Hines has some ideas for the future of the market. "We definitely want to do some farm to table dinners here," Hines says. For next year's spring and summer

season, Hines hopes to utilize the outdoor space behind the building as well. "I think it would be awesome to have some events here, live music, tables outside; I definitely would like to make that happen."

The Westside Market on Powell is located at 1119 Powell Ave. // Hours: Wednesdays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. // westsidemarketerie.com

Alana Sabol can often be found snuggling her cats or baking at Herb and Honey on the weekends. She can be reached at alanacsabol@gmail.com.

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STYLE

Gem City Style: Nov. 2023 Shop Local

An interview with Mia D'Amato, Sewist/Creator for Boho Basement

By: Jessica Hunter

JESSICA HUNTER



Jessica Hunter (JH): Mia, tell us about who you are and how you got your business started.

Mia D'Amato (MD): I'm 24 years old, originally from Buffalo, New York. I graduated from Mercyhurst in 2021 with a degree in business economics and sustainability. I've always been an advocate for the environment but discovered my passion for conscious shopping during my freshman year at college. I had been searching for brands to buy that prioritize ethical, low waste, production. To be quite honest, there aren't many brands that exist that are transparent and trustworthy in terms of production. So, I started reselling "still good clothing" as a means to educate people on the importance of secondhand fashion ... and make a little extra cash so I could upgrade to Annie's mac 'n cheese from ramen noodles [laughs]

Being sent home from school after COVID hit is really what allowed me the opportunity to start selling and making content full time. After graduating the following year, I was disappointed in myself that I had not found a career or job in my field that interested me. Instead of jumping into something I knew I wouldn't enjoy, I decided to lean into Boho and see if I could make something out of my side hustle. It's now almost two years later and I have discovered so much about myself and the potential of being an entrepreneur. Having built a brand that aligns with my personal values inspires me to wake up and enjoy creating every single day.

JH: What drew you specifically to streetwear? How do you find your inspiration for creating new looks?

MD: I've never really been into dressing in anything but sweat sets. When I first started upcycling, I would create things that I liked to wear. The community that I've built around me is a reflection of myself, sports-loving comfort enthusiasts.

JH: Do you have licensing for your NFL and sports

products?

MD: I actually do not have any pro sport licensing. Because I strictly work with goods in the secondhand market, I do not need a license because it has already been paid for at the initial point of sale for that good.

JH: Have you ever collaborated with other artists or creators on a project? If so, describe the experience.

MD: One of the coolest collabs I've done so far was with Nissan's Formula E team, NISMO. I upcycled a collection for the drivers and shot a campaign out in Portland, Oregon back in June of this year. Other than that, I am constantly working with different women connected to pro sports teams to create custom game day fits.

JH: What advantages does Erie offer you as a sewist? How are you enjoying downtown?

MD: Erie has been the best spot for me to network and grow my business. There are so many resources as a startup that I've been able to take advantage of. I work out of the Erie Technology Incubator located in the Gannon Business Building. Through that organization I've been able to meet and work with different groups like the Small Business Development Center, Ben Franklin, Athena, Entrepreneurs Forever, and so many other cool people who offer time to help drive and grow my business. I also have to say, the thrifting in Erie is top tier.

JH: What's next for Boho Basement? How are you preparing for gift giving season?

MD: I typically open custom orders on the third Thursday of every month. Other than that, you can buy ready-made items on my website. New drops every Thursday.

Boho Basement can be found at bohobasement.co or on Instagram at @boho_basement

Jessica Hunter can be found at jessicahunterphotos.com



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Local Artist, Entrepreneur, and Fashion Designer Has Hope for Erie

Andre Jones is influencing the culture with fashion-forward designs and immersive events

By: Amy VanScoter

The days of being able to say “there is nothing to do in Erie,” are long gone. If you’re reading this publication then you probably already know about the wealth of art, music, theater, and events you can find in your own backyard. What you may not know is that Erie has also played host to two full fashion shows this year, with nationally recognized entrepreneur and fashion designer Andre Jones at the forefront — hosting interactive, immersive events that are creating a fashion-forward culture here in Erie that is on the cutting edge of design.

Jones, 36, of Rabbit3 (R3) was born and raised in Erie. He wanted to go into fashion design after high school but was talked out of it and instead attended Edinboro University for Graphic Design. The education served him well because he uses his graphic design skills to not only create his clothing designs, but also market and promote them, all while serving as an art director for a media company based in Los Angeles.

“I think Erie has a void with design and creativity,” Jones said. He feels there is much more that can be done to fill that void and create a scene or subculture.

R3 is described as an experimental project that explores the middle ground between artistry and design. Initially debuting as a ready-to-wear brand, R3 has expanded into the realm of creative direction. Implementing a slight ode to whimsicality, the brand sets to create immersive experiences for the masses.

Although Erie has previously lacked in being a fashion-forward place, it has certainly provided creative inspiration. One of Jones’ popular jackets is printed with



These three looks, completely designed and executed by local fashion designer Andre Jones, represent his Rabbit3 brand, which includes pieces that are ready-to-wear alongside more creatively expansive garments.

trees from photography taken at Presque Isle State Park. Other inspiration includes his childhood, specifically video games and anime.

“Rabbit3 tries to focus on cross-functionality and versatility in fashion. The shirts can be worn three different ways, the pants can become shorts ... the audience is people who are on the go and the designs have three tiers so that they can be worn to work, running errands on a Saturday, or to a social outing,” said Jones. One of Jones’ recent designs, Moto Psycho 2, are pants featuring removable fringe. They are available on his website as are some of his other clothing designs.

Jones started by designing t-shirts and hoodies and progressed to creating his own clothing designs learning about measurements and the manufacturing process as he went along. “As time progressed, I learned the ins and outs,” he explained.

He has utilized Mercyhurst University for market research and continually sought out ways to learn and grow, including doing ghost designs for other brands. Jones was the second place finalist in the 2023 Jack Daniels Classic Remix Grant Program, earning a \$30,000 grant for his clothing. Jones has featured his designs at Philly Fashion Week and hosted local free design workshops, encouraging others to mingle and get creative.

There’s Still Hope, The Runway Show, was the fourth, and greatest experience yet provided by R3. Held at 10/20 Collective, the venue was packed with spectators anxiously awaiting a glimpse of his latest creations. The event was high energy and positive, featuring visual assets for creating engaging digital content, a DJ, vendors, and of course, Jones’ second full runway show featuring the most recent R3 collection using a diverse

group of local models.

“These are pieces that can go to all places and people. People come in all ages, sizes and colors and that is reflected in my show,” said Jones. The collection features bright, bold colors like teal, red, orange, and yellow. Models wore bold red lips and accentuated eyes and lashes. They carried large bags and showed off the versatility of each piece.

Jones has an eye for detail and it’s no secret that he is quite purposeful in the presentation and marketing of each one. Everyone who attended was asked to come dressed in fall colors and received a gift bag with a postcard note and a custom fall-scented candle with a label of the number 4, signifying his fourth event. The theme of hope resonated throughout the space, right down to a large neon yellow butterfly wall hanging, which has remained at 10/20 for others to enjoy.

“I wanted to create something that can inspire people here and my heart is so full, the turnout was way more than expected,” Jones said. Perhaps word is getting out.

The next fashion-forward event, *The Royal Affair*, is on Dec. 9 at 10/20 Collective. This event is in collaboration with 2023 40 under 40 inductee Davina Pacley of Divinely Crown’d and is for ages 25 and up. The event will feature music, dancing, food, and a suggested dress code of “cocktail chic” in purple and gold.

You can find more of Andre Jones’ designs at rabbit3.co and on social media at @whoisandrejones on Instagram and @rabbit3 on Instagram and Facebook.

Amy VanScoter is a certified yoga and meditation teacher at School House Yoga Studio in Erie. She can be reached at avanscoter@gmail.com



Rabbit3’s recent show at Erie’s 10/20 Collective entitled *There’s Still Hope* showed a diverse range of fashion styles as well as models, and was presented to a packed house with high energy and engagement.



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Benedictine Sisters of Erie

EVENTS

PACA's *Spike Heels* Provides a Pointed Commentary

The '90s-era play examines sexual harassment, trauma, and more

PREMIERING FRIDAY, NOV. 3

You wouldn't think that a 30-year-old play would be so relevant today, but unfortunately, some problems refuse to go away. Debuting in 1992, Theresa Rebeck's *Spike Heels* weaves a complicated story of sexual harassment, power dynamics, and the forever-confusing problems of romantic relationships.

Directed by KC McCloskey, the production stars Aimee Wokutch, Aaron Holman, Josiah Prittie, and Marie Glaser. Wokutch plays the lead as Georgie, a secretary at a Boston law firm. She arrives home from work one day to unwind and talk to her neighbor, Andrew (Holman), a political philosophy professor. She goes on to detail how her boss, Edward (played by Prittie) made wholly inexcusable comments to her, and tried to pass them off as a joke. Amidst a budding flirtation between Georgie and Andrew, things become more complicated as Edward takes Georgie out for a date despite the already inappropriate nature of their relationship. Add Lydia (Glaser), Andrew's fiance to the mix, and things unravel further and further, forming an

unstable love-quadrangle between the characters.

"This is still a conversation we're having," explained McCloskey (who serves as the artistic director of PACA as well as being co-owner of Footlights with Sara Little), noting that it's "about the treatment of women and what is right and what is excusable and in turn what that does to us as women." Speaking to the meaning that these topics have today, she reasoned that "as we see our rights continually threatened now, it's important to continue to talk about abuse, harassment, and the way we deserve to be treated. I think that now, we are far more receptive to talking about these issues and the trauma they cause and we've understood the value of those conversations."

As the production progressed, the cast and crew began finding new things about the source material. "The biggest thing that changed for me during the rehearsal process was the understanding and empathy for each character," McCloskey stated. "It's shifted how I think about each of them. It's kind of a roller-



***Spike Heels*, playing throughout November at PACA, tackles difficult issues of friendship, love, sex, harassment, power, gender, and the way women are treated in the workplace.**

coaster of emotions across the whole play, working through the way they feel about each other, the way they treat each other, and talk to and about each other." — Nick Warren

Nov. 3 - 19, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. (doors at 7 p.m.), Sundays at 2 p.m. (doors at 1:30 p.m.) // PACA, 1505 State St., Second Floor // Adult language and content // \$20 // For tickets and more information go to paca1505.org

Jessica Dickey's *The Convent* to Be Staged at Dramashop

First-time director finds study of the feminine mystique to be a collaborative effort

PREMIERING FRIDAY, NOV. 3

Krista Perry is no stranger to the Erie theater scene but she will be making her directorial debut in November at Dramashop. Perry says the encouragement she got from Dramashop's artistic director Anna McJunkin gave her the boost she needed to take on this new role at the helm. Perry also credits associate director Alaina Manchester with helping her along the way "for guidance and learning technique" as the cast and crew prepare to take the stage. "It takes a team to make all of this happen," says Perry.

The Convent is described by Dramashop as "a toothy dark comedy about desire, devotion, and the mystery of intrinsic divinity." It follows a group of women in the 1980s who go on a retreat to live like nuns. Perry describes it as a play about "motherhood, sisterhood, and self discovery." Adding that "the amazing connection" between cast and crew has allowed them "to have conversations and say things out loud that we all seem to instantly understand, so we can take a deeper dive into what it



Ostensibly about a group of women going on a retreat to live like nuns, Jessica Dickey's *The Convent* tackles issues of motherhood, desire, and self discovery in a darkly comic play coming to Dramashop this November.

means to embody the feminine spirit."

The cast includes both veteran Erie players as well as some new faces. Theater-goers will get to see Anna McJunkin as Jill, Karen Schelinski as Mother Abbess, Alycia Olivar as Patti, Evon Lloyd as Wilma, Leslie M. Ford as Dimlin, Ash Carr as Bertie, and Rosie Pregler Hitt as Tina. The production team, which is largely female and nonbinary, is "powered through female energy which is absolutely incredible," says Perry.

Perry previously acted in *The Blue Bowl Monologues* at Dramashop under the direction of Zach Flock. Perry says that while she's had limited experience at Dramashop specifically, she feels "the Erie theater community is small enough that there are always found friends or connections made quite easily." — Edwina Capozziello

Fridays and Saturdays, Nov. 3 to Nov. 18 at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 19 at 2 p.m. // \$15 // For tickets and info: tickets.eriereader.com



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Jake's Women at All An Act: Love, Loss, and Imagination

Neil Simon dramedy explores the nature of complex human relationships

PREMIERING FRIDAY, NOV. 10

In *Jake's Women*, which premiered in 1992, playwright Neil Simon introduces audiences to Jake — a work-obsessed writer who is just beginning a trial separation with his second wife, Maggie. It seems that though his creativity has soared throughout his career, his intimate relationships with all the women in his life — his sister, his deceased first wife, his therapist, and even his daughter — have suffered. As a result, Jake engages in both real and imagined conversations with these women, but the line between what's real and imagined begins to blur.

Bringing this play to the stage is Erie's own All An Act Theater, located in the heart of the Little Italy neighborhood. It will run each weekend starting on Nov. 10 and ending Dec. 3. The play stars Lisa Simonian, Amy Welker Rowe, Jessica LaFlamme, Tori Snyder, Shantel Kay, Amanda Hill and Aubree Dick, with David W. Mitchell pulling double duty as both actor and director.

Simonian, who plays Edith, Jake's therapist, said, "As [Jake] thinks of the women in his life, they appear as his thoughts made manifest." She continues, "Edith pushes him very hard to find the truths which will help him move forward — and Jake is very resistant to learning them."

Jake's Women is dramedy at its finest, as the titular character, through conversations with "his women," peels back the layers of emotion that he has neglect-



Local actors David W. Michell (as Jake) and Jessica LaFlamme (as Maggie) take to the All An Act stage with Neil Simon's timeless classic *Jake's Women* throughout November.

ed throughout the decades — though seemingly at the cost of his sanity. Simonian expressed, "Neil Simon is one of the greatest storytellers, and I hope that our audiences will laugh a little, sigh a little, and go home thinking about the very tenacious bonds which hold our relationships together." — Cara Suppa

Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m. // All An Act Theatre, 652 W. 17th St. // \$5-\$18 // For tickets and info: allanact.net

Get a Head Start on the Holidays with Copper Carriage's Holiday Market

The historic Masonic Temple will be filled to the brim with holiday cheer

BEGINNING SATURDAY, NOV. 11

This year, Erie's own Copper Carriage is hosting their first Holiday Market at the Masonic Temple in Downtown Erie — a two-day event featuring vendors from all over the tri-state area. Though this is their first Holiday Market, Stephanie and Joe Hunt from Copper Carriage are no strangers to supporting other local business owners, "We've hosted many markets at our antique shop on Chestnut Street, and there we just close down the street to set up the vendors," Stephanie says. "We were unable to host our annual Fall Market this year, so we decided to give a Holiday Market a try."

Featuring more than 40 vendors from the Erie area, Pittsburgh, Ohio, and New

York, shoppers can expect a wide variety of options when shopping for holiday gifts.

In attendance will be several vendors selling antique and vintage items, handmade goods, and other artisan products, as well as food and drink. The event's vendors will fill both the upstairs Grand Ballroom and the downstairs Arcadia room of the Masonic Temple, with an elevator for easy access to both rooms. "Our vendors will have a great assortment of holiday decorations and gift giving items for sale," Stephanie says. "We hope everyone comes ready to have a festive time!" —Ally Kutz

Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. // Masonic Temple, 32 W. 8th St. // For more info: coppercarriage.com



The folks behind Copper Carriage, Stephanie and Joe Hunt, are bringing a holiday market to two floors of the Masonic Temple. Get your holiday shopping done early and totally locally as you shop over 40 vendors.

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EVENTS

George Li Returns to Perform Rachmaninoff with the Erie Philharmonic

Renowned pianist channels majesty of Russian master

SATURDAY, NOV. 11

The Erie Philharmonic will be taking audiences on a stormy journey of beauty and intensity as famed pianist George Li returns to the Warner Theatre to perform Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. Accompanying the famous composition will be Nancy Galbraith's *Tormenta Del Sur* and Surrand Dvorack's Symphony No. 7, as each piece will build on the other to culminate in performances that showcase musical mastery and touch the soul of every listener.

"Traverse an emotionally-charged landscape by Rachmaninoff with a virtuoso performance by the extraordinary pianist, George Li. George wowed Erie audiences in 2021 with an unforgettable performance of Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto. Now he's back with plenty of notice and is ready to captivate our audience yet again," the Erie Philharmonic describes in a statement. "Li's stunning mastery of the keyboard will be on full display as he interprets the beloved *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, striking each note with precision and feeling."

Li first debuted in 2010 at Boston's Steinway Hall at the age of 10 and performed for President Barack Obama in 2011 at the White House. Four years later, he would win the Silver Medal at the 2015 International Tchaikovsky Competition. He has played with orchestras across the world, including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the

Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic, and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Well-known for his collaborations with the Mariinsky Theater Orchestra, Li has toured with the orchestra around the world, including performances at the Paris Philharmonie and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He graduated from the New England Conservatory of Music in 2022 with an Artist Diploma, where he completed a dual degree program with a master's in music from the conservatory and a bachelor's in English literature from Harvard.

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini premiered on Nov. 7, 1934, at the Lyric Opera House in Baltimore. Rachmaninoff, an accomplished pianist, played alongside the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Stokowski. The piece is inspired by Italian violinist Niccolò Paganini's *Caprices for Solo Violin*, with all 24 variations inspired by the final Caprice set in the key of A minor. The 18th variation has been used in movies and television shows, including *Groundhog Day*, *The Walking Dead*, and *The Good Wife*. Rachmaninoff was born in 1873 and studied at the Moscow Conservatory of Music under Russian composer Anton Arensky.

Additionally the Erie Philharmonic will perform Nancy Galbraith's *Tormenta Del Sur*. Galbraith teaches as the head of composition at Carnegie Mellon University and holds the Vira I. Heinz Professorship in Music en-



The Erie Philharmonic brings back the incredible talent of George Li as he presents Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. The evening will also include Philharmonic performances of Nancy Galbraith's *Tormenta del Sur* and Antonin Dvorak's 7th Symphony.

dowed chair at the College of Fine Arts. The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic premiered her symphonic and chamber works. She has written works for choir, concert band, and solo repertoire for piano and organ. *Tormenta del Sur* premiered with the Orquestra Sinfonica de Tucuman under the direction of Eduardo Alonso-Crespos on Sept. 24, 1995 in San Miguel de Tucuman, Argentina. The Philharmonic will also be performing Antonin Dvorak's 7th Symphony, which originally premiered in 1885. —Thomas Taylor

8 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // \$17-\$61
// Tickets and info: eriephil.org

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2023 Barber National Institute Christmas Ball

Family is important to John and Colleen Bloomstine.

It's one of the reasons they are looking forward to welcoming you to the 2023 Barber National Institute Christmas Ball as this year's host family. John and Colleen will be joined by their son Will, son Joe, daughter-in-law Jill, daughter Ellie, son Jack and son Peter-making it a true family affair!

"The Barber Ball truly is special as it brings together generations of families in support of the Barber National Institute mission. We are excited to carry on this tradition with our entire family," said Will Bloomstine. "We support the mission of the Barber National Institute because of its generations-long commitment to families and caring for their loved ones."

The annual gala, which attracts more than 1,200 guests to the Bayfront Convention Center, will be held Saturday, Dec. 9. Doors open at 7 p.m. Stiletto Fire, a dance and show band from Detroit, Michigan, will take to the stage at 8 p.m. with an array of pop, rock, hip-hop and traditional favorites. Announcer Tony Beraducci will keep up the entertainment with continuous music until the event ends at midnight.

Spectacular decorations, tasty bites and holiday cheer set the stage for the annual holiday gala.

The goal set at last year's Ball was the pool renovation project. With a floor that can be raised to deck level, wheelchairs can be rolled onto the floor and lowered in up to 4 ½ feet of water. This feature frees children and adults to move their arms and legs without restriction.

"Last year, we learned about the important pool renovation project. Well, we're happy to say that we're taking our last lap and nearing the finish line," said Bloomstine. "Please consider joining our family at this year's Ball: Shining Bright, Winter Night to help us sprint to the finish of this important project."



The Bayfront Sheraton Hotel and the Courtyard Marriott are offering special packages at reduced rates for Ball guests.

The Barber Ball is open to the public; a formal invitation is not required. Reservations are \$95 per person and more information is available by scanning the QR code. Black tie optional.





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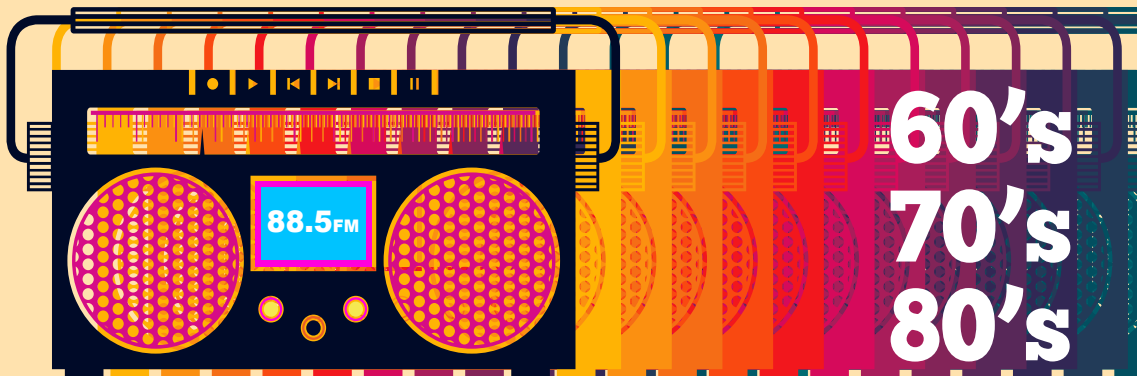
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Big Blitz of Pittsburgh Blasts Into Basement Transmissions

Horns will fill the air with visiting and local brass-centric music

FRIDAY, NOV. 17

Saxophone and drum trio Big Blitz are bringing their Steel City sound to Basement Transmissions. Brothers Lucas and Mason Ciesielski have been playing saxophone since they started taking music classes in the fourth grade in their hometown of Pittsburgh. They have been playing together with drummer Nick Grabigel since the formation of their band in 2016, when the three were still in high school. Saxophonist Lucas talks about what inspired them to play as a trio: "All three of us listen to a lot of jazz, and the sound of the saxophone is a key part of that music. Since we are only a trio, Nick (our drummer) has an equal role in creating our music and shaping our sound." Lucas continues, "Our performances are high-energy and include elements of EDM, rock, and jazz improvisation".

Supporting Big Blitz's Erie debut will be Land of Panda, the reggae-infused jam band from Akron, Ohio, who have been performing and touring since 2017. Ad-

ditionally, two of Erie's own will round out this show. Higher Vibration is a reggae-rock band with heavy metal roots, and will bring their unique combination of reggae, heavy guitar riffs, and heady solos to the gig, while eight-piece indie band This American Song will open the show with their pop harmonies and sweet melodies.

This will be a kinetic show, with positive vibes that are sure to make you groove. Lucas told us why it's so important to have an engaged audience, "We love interacting with the audience at our shows, and we really try to make every show unique in terms of songs performed, solos, and spontaneous improvisation." Even though they are a short drive from Erie, this will be their first performance in the Gem City.

— Larry Wheaton

6 p.m. // Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. // \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door // All ages // For tickets visit: eventbrite.com



Pittsburgh trio Big Blitz brings their horn and drum sounds to Basement Transmissions for a brass-filled frenzy of local talent alongside out-of-town musicians for an evening of high energy and positive vibes.

Experience the Transformative Power of the Preservation Hall Jazz Band

Be immersed in holiday Creole culture with food and music at Mercyhurst

TUESDAY, NOV. 28

The folks at the Mercyhurst Institute for Arts and Culture (MIAC) are ushering in the holiday season by hosting a festive, jazzy Creole celebration — bringing the New Orleans sound up north a thousand miles or so for a Big Easy evening with the legendary Preservation Hall Jazz Band. In addition to enjoying an evening of toe-tapping holiday favorites with a Creole twist, MIAC is taking the experience one step further and offering a pre-show dinner featuring a huge menu of traditional New Orleans cuisine.

The Preservation Hall Jazz Band was originally formed in 1961 by tuba player Allan Jaffe with the intention to preserve New Orleans' musical heritage and provide an outlet for veteran musicians to play. Today the same group is run by Jaffe's son, tuba player Ben Jaffe, who is truly following in his father's footsteps in his mission to honor the city's jazz legacy. Since the band's inception, they have garnered worldwide recognition, and are continuing to stay relevant throughout generations. They have recorded and/or shared the stage with huge names in music like Allen Toussaint, the Foo Fighters, Tom Waits, Yasiin Bey (Mos Def), Dr. John, My Morning Jacket, Beck, and many others.

Jaffe comments on their recent tour: "Touring is a part of our ritual. It's our tradition. When my parents began touring with the band in the early '60s, they brought something that most people didn't even know existed to stages all over the world. It was this magnificent revelation to people that something so beautiful could even exist. People come to Preservation Hall and have transformative experiences, and that's part of our mission: to go out in the world and make that experience available to people."

The show coming to the Mary D'Angelo stage is entitled Creole Christmas and will feature a stewed gum-



The legendary, historic Preservation Hall Jazz Band takes to the Mary D'Angelo stage at Mercyhurst as they present their Creole Christmas: a toe-tapping mix of holiday favorites with a Big Easy twist.

bo of New Orleans' holiday classics: a mix of blues, jazz, and ragtime. Selections will include "Swinging in a Winter Wonderland," "Bells Will Be Ringin'," and other favorites from the band's vast repertoire.

Brett Johnson, artistic director of MIAC, comments, "The Preservation Hall Jazz Band is a musical institution that has preserved, invigorated, and redefined New Orleans music for more than 60 years. We're honored to be a stop on the band's Creole Christmas tour

and excited to ring in the holidays with some of New Orleans' best-loved holiday selections." — Erin Phillips

If you'd like to be one of the 100 guests to attend the pre-show dinner (beginning at 5:30 p.m. the night of the show) featuring New Orleans cuisine served buffet style, tickets are \$40 and can be purchased (separately from concert tickets) by visiting miac.universitytickets.com.

7:30 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. // \$20-\$45 // Tickets and info: miac.mercyhurst.edu

EVENTS

***It's A Wonderful Life* to Open A Big Bag of Feels at Erie Playhouse**

The musical will set the mood for the season of giving

PREMIERES FRIDAY, DEC. 1

We have all felt the strain of life, often amplified during the holidays. The demands of a boss, a spouse, children, and feeling the ever increasing weight of societal pressure to be something, anything, worth remembering — and never knowing how to actually reach those goals. Whether we admit it or not, we've all looked back on our lives and wondered if we are doing or have done enough. Have we reached our full potential? Will we leave a mark in this world? Have we loved enough? Learned enough? Taught enough? Who will benefit from what we have accomplished after we are gone?

These questions and more are analyzed in the musical adaptation of *It's A Wonderful Life* in its return to the LECOM stage. Ryan Ingram, this outfit's director, has been with The Erie Playhouse since 2015 and has been involved in over 70 shows with them — this will be his fourth directorial role. Of the play itself he says, "The journey that our leading man, George Bailey, takes, echoes the stories of so many of us enduring the challenges of our current world. We see a young man with big dreams spiral into a state of despair as life turns out differently than he expected. Only a heavenly intervention can save him." He continues, "Ultimately it's about finding hope even in what appears to be a hopeless sit-

uation." A theme we can all relate to.

Ingram hopes that the audience will walk away from these performances feeling that they can make a difference. "George gets a chance to see that being a kind and generous person has had a huge impact on his family, community, and even strangers. Perhaps our friends in the audience will applaud themselves, along with our cast members, for the times when they made choices that uplifted others, but also challenge themselves to find more opportunities to be more like George, who daily demonstrates his love for mankind."

Ingram is also excited by the vocal rehearsals that are being led by the talented Devon Yates. "This cast is a vocal powerhouse. The solos and small group numbers have been so lovely and the full cast numbers have blown me away." Excited as always for the musical aspects, Ingram is also excited about the dance numbers. He continues, "It has me grinning from ear to ear what Melissa Dixon is doing with our choreography. Every number is thrilling, but the 1920s dance style competition is my favorite. Very excited for the audience to experience it."

None of this would be possible without an experienced team behind the scenes and in the pit. "We are so lucky to have Abby McCauley leading our great stage crew; the brilliant Bruce Yates will be directing our tal-



The musical adaptation of the 1946 classic *It's a Wonderful Life* brings its universally relatable themes of regret, kindness, and hope to the Erie Playhouse stage just in time for the holidays.

ented and stunning orchestra; and Nico Lombardo is pulling triple duty in scenic design, assistant director, and dance ensemble. We are so thankful for the hard work they do to make this possible." — Jordan Coon

Fridays and Saturdays through Dec. 16 at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. // Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. // Tickets on sale Nov. 7 // More info: erieplayhouse.org

Strong, Dark, Evil, and Delicious

Krampusnacht Erie Holiday Bazaar returns in a new location with its own ale

SATURDAY, DEC. 2

The Krampusnacht Erie Holiday Bazaar is back and bigger than ever. This year, the event adds a signature brew made by the Brewerrie at Union Station called Horn & Hoof — a Belgian dark ale made with dark Belgian candi sugar inspired by Krampus himself. It promises to be strong, dark, evil, and delicious. Krampus-themed cocktails and food will also be available this year, thanks to a new, larger location in the Concourse at Union Station. Attendees will receive a wristband and can go back and forth between the Concourse and Brewerrie.

The event was previously held at Basement Transmissions but organizer Kerrie Fargiorgio says she always had plans to move into a larger venue. "The goal was always to grow the event enough to hold it at Union Station," said Fargiorgio. "It's literally the creepiest venue in town and Krampus celebrations go hand in hand with breweries. Looking at last year's event attendance, the amount of Christmas Creep and Krampus costume contest entries, as well as the pin-up contest tripling its contestants, I knew we were finally ready to move it where I hope to be a permanent home. The move to Union Station is the beginning of bigger and better things for the event."

If you are unfamiliar, the legend of Krampus goes back centuries and is a tradition rooted in German-speaking countries. It has gained attention in recent decades and around the world, where many countries celebrate the night known as Krampusnacht, where St. Nick



Come celebrate the darker side of the holidays with the fourth annual Krampusnacht Erie Bazaar – including a pin-up contest, Krampus costume contest, tons of arts and craft vendors, and a custom-brewed, festive beer made by the Brewerrie.

takes care of the good children, and Krampus handles those less-well behaved. This year marks Erie's fourth Krampusnacht Holiday Bazaar.

Vendors from all around will showcase their creepy creations, oddities, and Krampus-related wares. Fargiorgio and her husband Eric, who are Erie residents, spend much of the year vending at similar events in other cities. "This year we have a wide array of artisans and vendors, from custom jewelry, creepy bath bombs, bakers, and even special effect (SFX) technicians," said Fargiorgio.

In addition to the vendors, there is much more to

see and do. Pin Up Penny (Penny Shaut) is hosting the fourth Krampus-themed "Miss Krampusnacht" pin-up contest at the event and Eerie Horror Fest is sponsoring the best dressed Krampus or Yuletide Monster in the Christmas Creeps Contest. "They have put together an amazing prize bundle for the winner including an all access pass for next year," said Fargiorgio. — Amy VanScoter

Noon to 8 p.m. // The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. // \$5 admission // For more information visit Facebook event: [Krampusnacht Erie](https://www.facebook.com/KrampusnachtErie)

SAT, NOV 4TH



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Fri 11/03

The Convent
@ 7:30pm / \$15
Dramashop, 1001 State Street, suite 210

Spike Heels Opening Reception and Performance
@ 7:30pm / \$25
PACA, 1505 State Street

Spike Heels
@ 7:30pm / \$20
PACA, 1505 State Street

Sat 11/04

Flannels and Flapjacks
@ 8:30am / Free-\$30
11800 Edinboro Rd, Edinboro

STUFF THE CRUISER FOR TOYS FOR TOTS!
@ 12pm
STUFF THE CRUISER IS A PUBLIC TOY COLLECTION EVENT IN SUPPORT OF THE ERIE COUNTY TOYS FOR TOTS PROGRAM Walmart Supercenter, 1825 Downs Drive. jeffrejohn@pa.gov, 814-450-0726

The Convent
@ 7:30pm / \$15
Dramashop, 1001 State Street, suite 210

Spike Heels
@ 7:30pm / \$20
PACA, 1505 State Street

Chestnut Grove w/ Six Year Stretch at King's Rook Club
@ 8pm / \$10
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach Street

Tue 11/07

Bluey's Big Play - The Stage Show
@ 6pm
Warner Theatre - PA, 811 State St.

Wed 11/08

Bluey's Big Play - The Stage Show
@ 6pm
Warner Theatre - PA, 811 State St.

Thu 11/09

Spike Heels
@ 7:30pm / \$20
PACA, 1505 State Street

Fri 11/10

Erie Otters vs. Sudbury Wolves
@ 7pm
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French Street Erie

The Convent
@ 7:30pm / \$15
Dramashop, 1001 State Street, suite 210

Spike Heels
@ 7:30pm / \$20
PACA, 1505 State Street

electroFLUX @ The Hideout
@ 8pm / \$10
FEED Media Art Center, 1307 State Street

Featured



An Evening with Jeremy Pinnell
@ 5pm / \$30-\$35
Lake View Country Club, 8351 Pennsylvania 89, North East



Featured



Medusa's Disco and Habatat
@ 8pm / \$15
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach Street



Sat 11/11

The Convent
@ 7:30pm / \$15
Dramashop, 1001 State Street, suite 210

Spike Heels
@ 7:30pm / \$20
PACA, 1505 State Street

George Li
@ 8pm
Warner Theatre - PA, 811 State St.

Wed 11/15

Aaron Lewis
@ 8pm
Warner Theatre - PA, 811 State St.

Fri 11/17

Erie Otters vs. Saginaw Spirit
@ 7pm
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French Street Erie

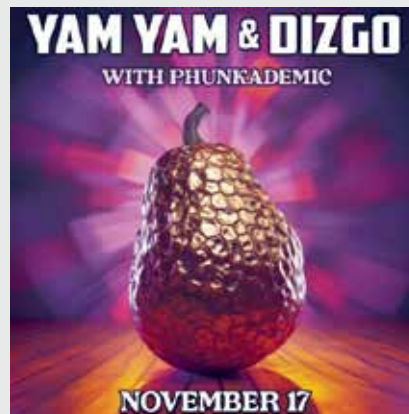
The Convent

@ 7:30pm / \$15
Dramashop, 1001 State Street, suite 210

Spike Heels

@ 7:30pm / \$20
PACA, 1505 State Street

Featured



Yam Yam & Dizgo w/ Phunkademic
@ 8pm / \$15
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach Street



Sat 11/18

Erie Otters vs. London Knights
@ 7pm
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French Street Erie

The Convent
@ 7:30pm / \$15
Dramashop, 1001 State Street, suite 210

Spike Heels
@ 7:30pm / \$20
PACA, 1505 State Street

Sun 11/19

The Convent - Matinee
@ 2pm / \$10
Dramashop, 1001 State Street, suite 210

Spike Heels
@ 2pm / \$20
PACA, 1505 State Street

Nate Bargatze
@ 4pm
Warner Theatre - PA, 811 State St.

Nate Bargatze
@ 7pm
Warner Theatre - PA, 811 State St.

Thu 11/23

ERC Turkey Trot
@ 7:30am / \$12-\$15
Presque Isle State Park- Beach 1

Erie Otters vs. Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds
@ 7pm
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French Street Erie

Sat 11/25

Erie Handmade Fair - Small Business Saturday
@ 10am
Erie Handmade Fair is a community of artists who

make and sell handmade items. We help promote live music. We donate funds to local non profits. Erie Family Center, 606 Raspberry Street. thecookielady@neo.rr.com, 814-454-5750

Erie Otters vs. Mississauga Steelheads
@ 7pm
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French Street Erie

Wed 11/29

Erie Otters vs. Kitchener Rangers
@ 7pm
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French Street Erie

Fri 12/01

From the Ashes Promotions presents On GOD, Souls collapse, AMAVASYA, THE PLAN and SEASONS
@ 8pm / \$10
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach Street

Sat 12/02

Featured



DETENTION LIVE! ft. Okay? and Chip and the Charge ups
@ 7:30pm / \$14
King's Rook Club, 1921 Peach Street



All Elite Wrestling
@ 7:30pm
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French Street Erie

Calendar information is provided by event organizers. All events are subject to change or cancellation. This publication is not responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in this calendar.

NEUROLOGIST

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MOVIE REVIEWS

An American Tale

Killers of the Flower Moon is Scorsese at his most daring



Online discourse would have one believe that Martin Scorsese is a director of “mob films.” This is grossly inaccurate of course, but if Scorsese’s body of work were to have a unifying theme, it would be the belief that America was built on money and violence — a theme further emphasized in *Killers of the Flower Moon*. At a time when some state legislators are attempting to erase the darker aspects of America’s past from history books, this film is more important than ever and it proves that the octogenarian has not lost any of his energy or creativity.

After the discovery of oil on their land, the Osage people suddenly became the wealthiest people per capita in the world. This naturally brought greedy opportunists, and this influx of people inevitably led to violence. After members of her family are murdered, Mollie Burkhart (Lily Gladstone) appeals to the government to help solve the murders. But this leads to shocking truths about her husband Ernest (Leonardo DiCap-



rio) and his uncle (Robert De Niro) who know much more about the crimes than they show.

Like all of his best films, Scorsese tells this story with dynamic camerawork and editing, never letting the story drag despite its gargantuan runtime. DiCaprio and De Niro are excellent, as expected, but it is Gladstone who is the real stand-out of the film. Her understated performance speaks to the less privileged peoples throughout history who suffered at the hand of American exceptionalism (the film takes place at the same time

as the Tulsa massacre). I’m unsure how many films Scorsese has left in him, but if this will be his final statement, it is the perfect end to a legendary career. — Forest Taylor

Directed by Martin Scorsese // Written by Scorsese and Eric Roth // Based on the book by David Grann // Starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Lily Gladstone, Robert De Niro, Tantoo Cardinal, Cara Jade Myers, JaNae Collins, Jillion Dion, Jason Isbell, William Belleau, Louis Cancelmi, John Lithgow, Brendan Fraser, and Jesse Plemons // Paramount // 206 minutes // Rated R

I Will Survive

Nowhere is a harrowing tale of survival



The biggest challenge with setting a film almost entirely in one location with only one actor is keeping the scenes from getting redundant and keeping audiences from losing interest. A skilled director can solve this by gradually ratcheting up the tension and keeping viewers on edge, wondering how the hero will overcome these new challenges. Albert Pinto does exactly this with his new thriller *Nowhere*, a suspenseful story that only occasionally takes its premise into the realm of the ridiculous but is saved by a strong central performance.

In the not-too-distant future, a food crisis has caused Spain to devolve into a totalitarian regime. Nine-months-pregnant Mia (Anna Castillo) and her husband Nico (Tamar Novas) are attempting to flee to Ireland inside of large shipping crates. Circumstance separates the couple and soon Mia finds herself alone in a crate. Things get worse when a storm throws the crate off the ship and Mia is now trapped in the middle of the ocean.

The director uses speculative fiction to tell a story that is happening to many



people in the world today. That message is there but at its heart, this is a survival story. All the tension is in watching Mia’s clever solutions as things go from bad to worse and it is anchored by Castillo’s strong performance, a must for a film that is mostly centered around one character. Unfortunately, the film runs long and the increasingly stacked problems Mia faces soon strain credibility to the point of silliness, but thankfully, it never

goes completely off the rails. *Nowhere* doesn’t break any new ground, but it makes for some tense entertainment. *Nowhere* is currently available on Netflix. — Forest Taylor

Directed by Albert Pinto // Written by Ernest Riera, Teresa de Rosendo, Seanne Winslow, Miguel Ruz, and Indiana Lista // Starring Anna Castillo, Tamar Novas, Irina Bravo, Victoria Teijeiro, and Emma Sanchez // 109 minutes // Netflix // Rated R

How do you draw a ghost? *Fish that Talk* by JOHN BAVARO



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JUST TOYIN' WITCHA — BY B. TOY



ALBUM REVIEWS

Blunt Guts

The Destroyer
Basement Transmissions Records



Blunt Guts is the pseudonym that musician, artist, and Basement Transmissions owner Bob Jensen uses for his solo work (with appearances from longtime co-conspirator, guitarist Johnny Why?). *The Destroyer* is a follow up to last year's *My Mom Thinks I'm Depressed*, which features the same driving beats and entertaining samples you would expect from Blunt Guts. Why?, who previously collaborated with Jensen on projects Pegasus Unicorn and Jargonauts, brings a similar sound back on the opening track "Bullies," providing a spare country-blues backdrop for the Beastie Boys-esque call-and-response vocals before the songs peaks with an unexpected instrumental rave-up.

The second track "Heart Problems" is a shift in direction for Blunt Guts, showcasing a Brian Eno-inflected ambience, as do songs like album closer "Hot Head" featuring Nate Jeffery. The title track features a mix of '80s synth pop and reggae, with a melody that sticks in your head, giving the song a Wall of Voodoo feel. This is the fourth release from Blunt Guts (not including two remix albums) and shows real growth in songwriting and production. Blunt Guts may be, well, blunt at times, in the way the music is presented with brash effects, dreamy landscapes, and emotional lyrics, but it delivers an original sound that can't be denied.

— Larry Wheaton



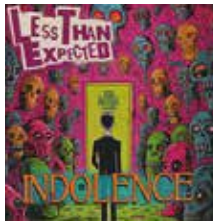
Less Than Expected

Time Enough at Last
This Is Just A Record Label



Less Than Expected — an Ashtabula-based five-piece formed in 2018 and composed of Martin Dunn, Dan Sebastian, Matthew Morton, Hunter Eager, and Joe Greenfield — far exceed the modest implications of their band name. Their newest album *Time Enough at Last*, appropriately named after an episode of *The Twilight Zone* is not just a fantastic sludge-punk earworm, but a carefully curated piece of art that takes you back in history, huddled around the family room, channel flipping on an old-timey radio. Each piece is a perfect mix of grunge and old-school punk rock showcasing the high energy and emotion of Dunn's vocals, quick-but-thoughtful riffs, fast-paced percussion, and an undeniable knack for melodicism. Vibes similar to Nirvana and The Melvins bring a nostalgia that is difficult to find in modern groups, harkening back to those '90s JNCO jeans you packed away for safekeeping. Some prominent tracks include "Indolence," released early as a single, the sludgy "Eternal Sunshine," the hasty punk of "Erotomania," and the heavy-hitting "Plot Device." Closing track "Tuning-Out" also features channel flipping sound clips from other regional bands like Drain Outs, Odd Atrocity, Alex Leniz, Kimota Bombs, and Varmints. *Time Enough at Last* hit all platforms on Oct. 27 and was celebrated with an album release show at The Wickyards in Youngstown, Ohio.

— Cypher Eihwaz



Josh Travis

Few of Days & Full of Trouble
Self-released



A pitch-perfect alt-country record, Josh Travis' debut full-length album, *Few of Days & Full of Trouble* is magnificent. The full-band follow up to Travis' 2017 *Landlocked EP* captures the evolution of a gifted songwriter. Now accompanied by Sam Krahe on electric guitar, Dan Cephas on drums, and Kasi Borden on bass, the quartet have found a beautiful synchronicity over the past few years, and this album encapsulates it perfectly. Recorded by Al Torrence at Pittsburgh's Music Garden Studios and mastered by Garrett Haines at Treelady Studios, the sound is just what you want from this burgeoning genre. Fit for fans of Tyler Childers and Sturgill Simpson, Travis and company find themselves virtually on the same level as some of modern country's most critically acclaimed heavy hitters. Starting off with the mid-tempo shuffle of "Secondhand Smoke," Travis blends his personal lyricism with ear-friendly hooks, each of Krahe's guitar touches landing with expert accuracy. They move on to the bluesy number "The Only Good In Me," followed by the ruminating balladry of "Old Beat Up Paint." One of the highlights of the album's ten tracks is certainly "Change of Heart," a poignant love song underscored by vocals by his wife, Rachel.

— Nick Warren



One If By Land

American Crows
Self-released

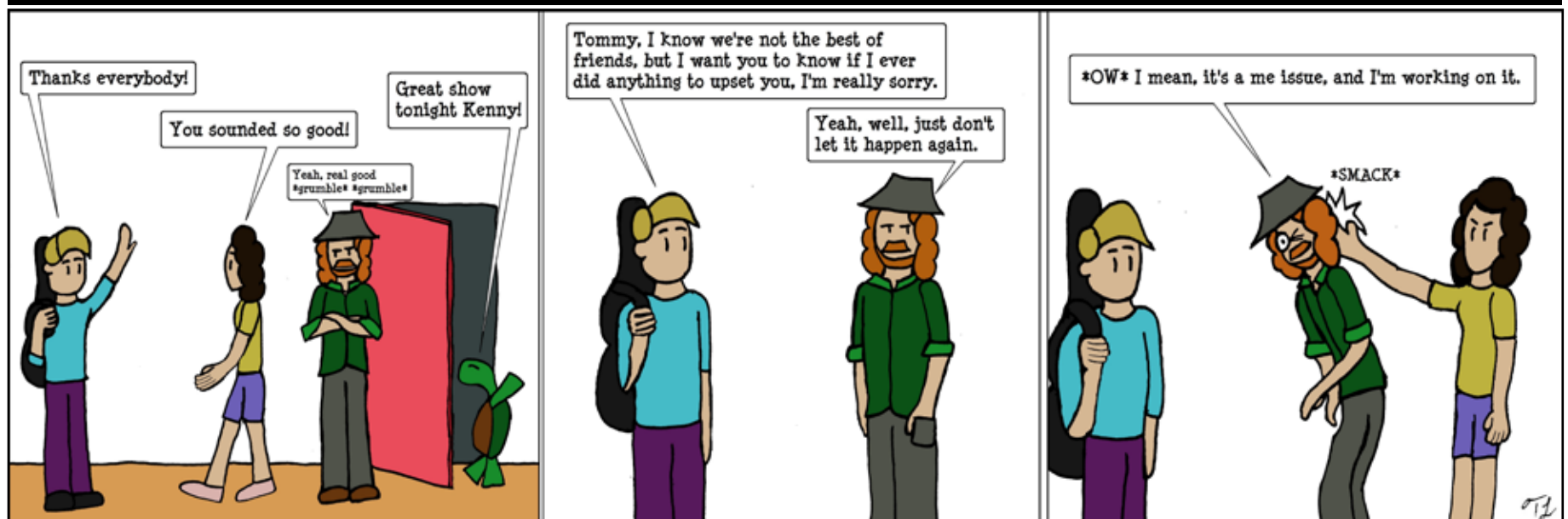


The album opens with a radio crackle. Snippets of "Goocher" by the Twirpentes and "A Fragile Constitutional" by Signal Home cut in and out before the opening track "We're Still Making Noise" cuts in beautifully. It's a clear treatise from frontman Fred Oakman, giving a nod to his previous two bands. Oakman is able to use sentimentality like a weapon, wielding it deftly with the expertise that has come from decades of progressive punk rock songwriting. Weaving the sounds of bands like Hot Water Music, Dillinger Four, and fellow 2010s compatriots, Oakman is writing in a language that he is utterly fluent in. Touches of his more rootsy side with Fred Oakman & The Flood are seeping through gracefully, as the quartet (The Flood's Troy Messerall, joined by Signal Home alum Paul Dean, and drummer Jim Stone) grooves to tracks like "Walls" and "Fired and Blue." The follow-up to the band's 2016 album *Nobody Wants To Leave*, *One If By Land*'s third full-length sees the Meadville band still at the top of their game. These are songs meant to be sung along to, lyrics that could be scrawled in a high school notebook and shouted in car rides with friends. If you don't know *One If By Land* by now, don't wait a second longer.

— Nick Warren



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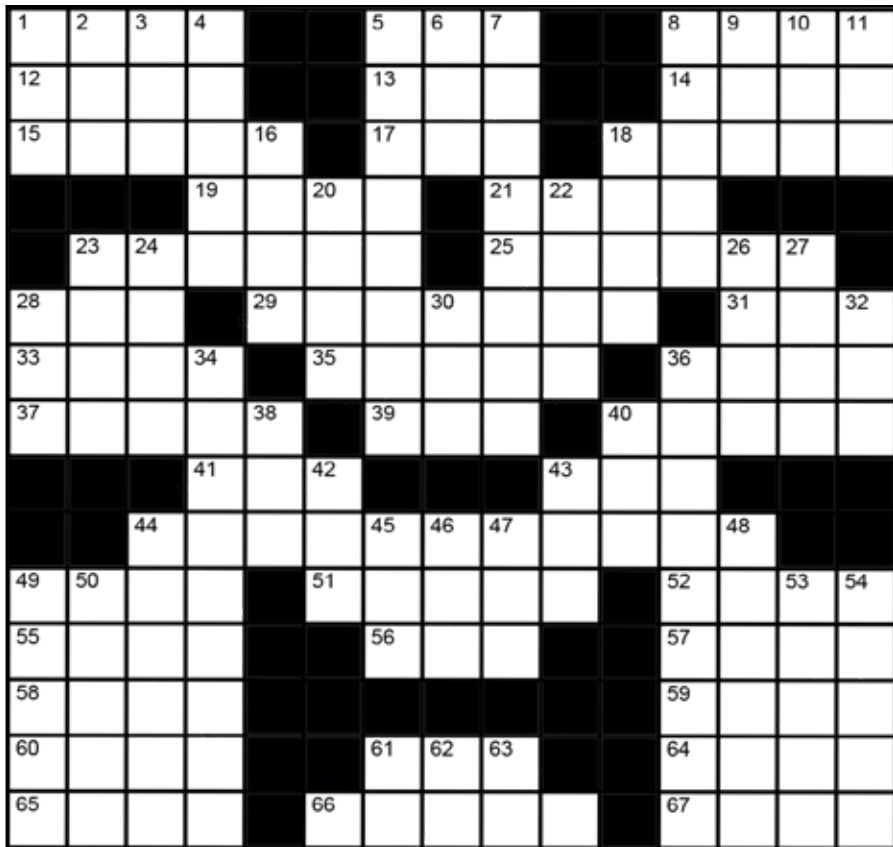
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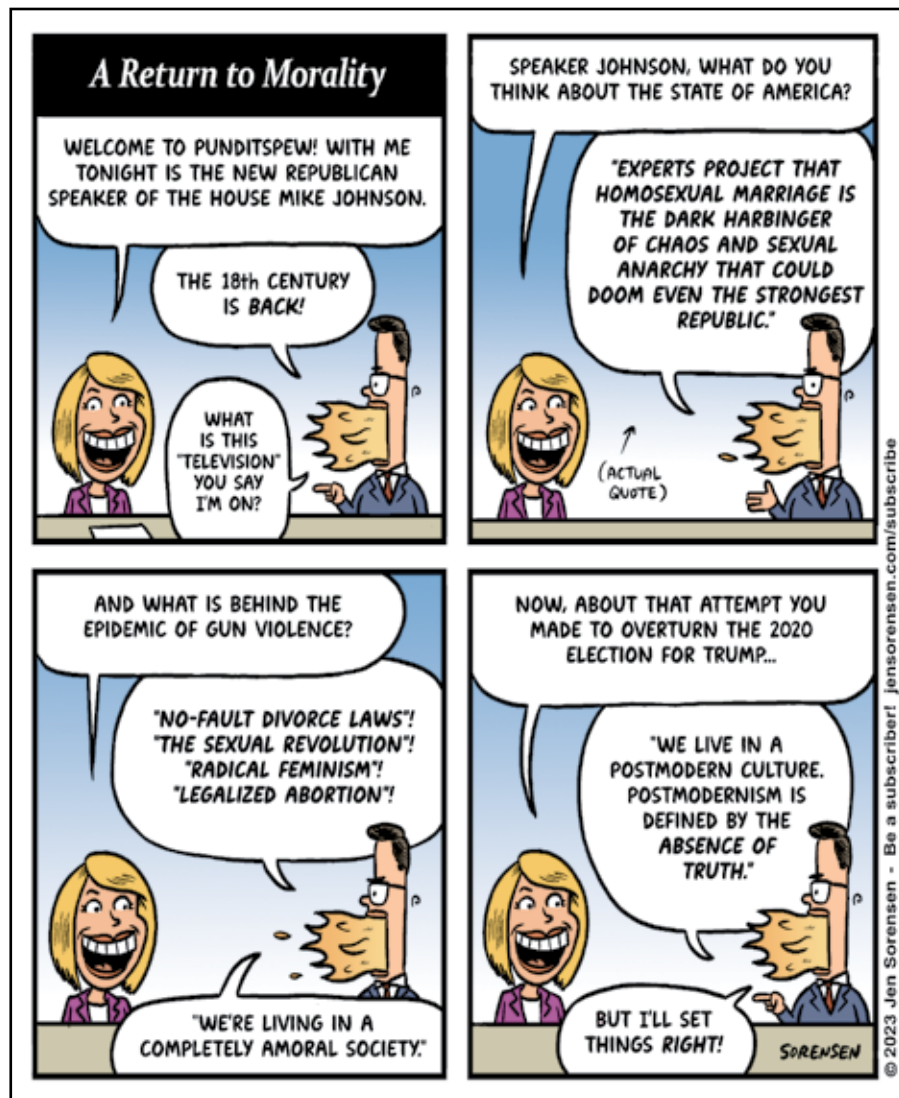
- 1. Yearn (for)
- 5. Work ____ sweat
- 8. Ophthalmologists call it a hordeolum
- 12. Pastoral poem
- 13. Neither's partner
- 14. "Suuuuure"
- 15. Thanksgiving pie choice
- 17. Dietary guideline letters
- 18. More than needed
- 19. Painter Magritte
- 21. Bargaining ____
- 23. With 25-Across, children's entertainer who famously wears a 56-/61-Across
- 25. See 23-Across
- 28. Suffix with senator or president
- 29. Emmy-winning scientist who famously wears a 56-/61-Across
- 31. "The Matrix" hero
- 33. Nursery bed
- 35. Some jeans
- 36. A little bit of everything?
- 37. Nobel Prize laureate ____ Ishiguro
- 39. Performed
- 40. Contacting privately via Twitter or Instagram
- 41. "Quiet!"
- 43. Untruth
- 44. Comedy legend who famously wore a 56-/61-Across
- 49. "Peek- ____!"

- 51. Rent-____ (purchasing option)
- 52. Bibliography abbr.
- 55. L'homme upstairs?
- 56. With 61-Across, fashion accessory depicted by the arrangement of black squares at the bottom of this puzzle's grid
- 57. ____ Nostra
- 58. Water under the drawbridge
- 59. Cut drastically
- 60. Backside, as the Brits call it
- 61. See 56-Across
- 64. Financial aid factor
- 65. Pickleball dividers
- 66. Frog habitats
- 67. "With God ____ witness ..."

Down

- 1. ChapStick target
- 2. Sappho's " ____ to Aphrodite"
- 3. MoMA's home
- 4. Harsh light
- 5. Let out, as a fishing line
- 6. Okra unit
- 7. Scorpion, e.g.
- 8. Dinner time, for some
- 9. Hashtag accompanying a nostalgic photo
- 10. "Oh, quit ____ bellyachin'!"
- 11. In-flight announcement, for

- short
- 16. Novice, informally
- 18. The Emerald Isle
- 20. Author Gaiman
- 22. Casual greetings
- 23. Prefix with military or medic
- 24. Part of QE2: Abbr.
- 26. Opposed to
- 27. Like superbright colors
- 28. "Eww"
- 30. Super Bowl of 2022
- 32. "!!!"
- 34. Certain urban maps
- 36. Apple pie, campaign buttons and such
- 38. "Well, what do we have here?!"
- 40. ____ de los Muertos
- 42. Crude shack
- 43. K-O connection
- 44. Transfer from Stanford to Princeton, say
- 45. Corn discard
- 46. "Woo- ____!"
- 47. "That hu-u-u-urts!!"
- 48. Popular new holidays gifts of 2001
- 49. TV's Don Draper, e.g.
- 50. "Free your pores" brand
- 53. " ____ to recall ..."
- 54. Household name?
- 61. " ____ Kill a Mockingbird"
- 62. Out's opposite
- 63. "Shape of You" singer Sheeran



Answers to last puzzle



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WEEK TWO

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2023 AT 7:30 P.M.

Della Clark. Expert in minority entrepreneurship, Ms. Clark is President of The Enterprise Center in Philadelphia.

Location: Gannon University's Yehl Room at Waldron Campus Center, 124 W. Seventh St.



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2023 AT 7:30 P.M.

Tom Nichols. Prolific author, academic, writer, professor, and national commentator on public affairs and international relations. He is also an expert on Russia, nuclear weapons, and national security.

Location: Gannon University's Yehl Room at Waldron Campus Center, 124 W. Seventh St.



WEEK THREE

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023 AT 7:30 P.M.

Robert Garland. The Wooster Emeritus Professor of Classics at Colgate University, Dr. Garland is an expert on ancient history and the author of many books capturing details of ancient Greek and Roman life.

Location: Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St.



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2023 AT 7:30 P.M.

Maj. Gen. Edward L. Bolton, Jr., Ret. This year's Hagen Dignitas Award recipient was a distinguished United States Air Force major general. The Erie native also served as senior executive at the Federal Aviation Administration and as a senior vice president in the space/defense industry.

Location: Gannon University's Yehl Room at Waldron Campus Center, 124 W. Seventh St.



WEEK FOUR

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2023 AT 7:30 P.M.

Laura Coates, Karen Tumulty and Lisa Adams

Laura Coates is a CNN anchor and senior legal analyst, and Karen Tumulty, a previous Global Summit speaker, is an author, deputy opinion editor, and columnist for the

Washington Post. Adams is a veteran reporter with Erie News NOW and anchor of "The Insider." Location: Gannon University's Yehl Room at Waldron Campus Center, 124 W. Seventh St.



LAURA COATES



KAREN TUMULTY



LISA ADAMS

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2023 AT 7:30 P.M.

Val Demings and Michael Steele.

Former Congresswoman and U.S. Senate candidate Val Demings first gained national notoriety as the first police chief of the Orlando, Florida Police Department. She will discuss politics with former national GOP Chairman Michael Steele, a political analyst for MSNBC.

Location: Cathedral Prep Auditorium 225 W. 9th St.



VAL DEMINGS



MICHAEL STEELE

** Jefferson Global Summit XV Chairman **Steve Scully** will appear at several events.

For more information, visit www.jeserie.org



STEVE SCULLY

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