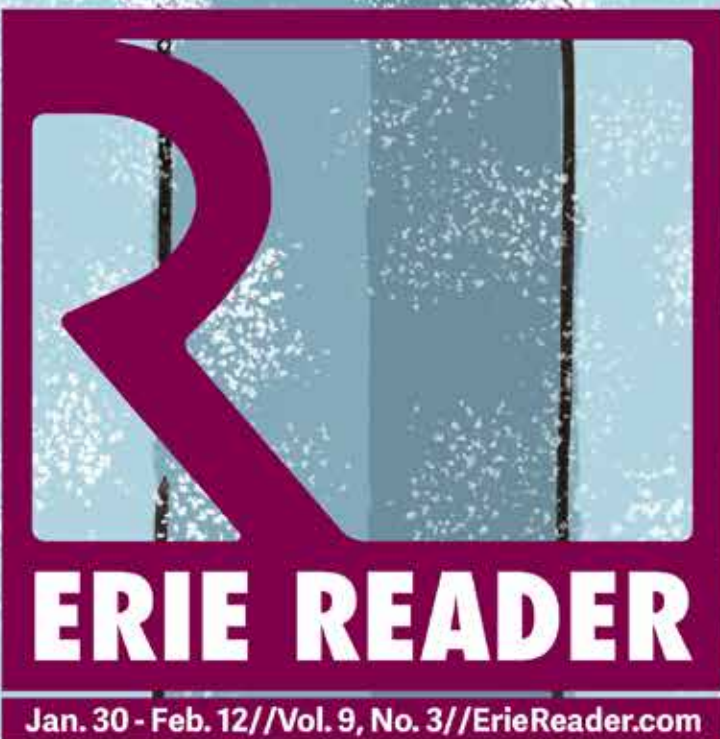


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From the Editors

Cold air, warm hearts

Love is in the air, and so is the wind chill. There are positives and negatives to this of course. As Valentine's Day approaches, the new holiday season comes into full view. It's easy to see how some could find this trend irritating. But since it's the end of football season, we suppose clear eyes can't lose.

If you feel you must guard yourself against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the love-industrial complex, you're probably not alone. Even those fortunate enough to be in functioning relationships often roll our collective eyes at the forced romanticism of Valentine's Day.

Love itself, though, is a many splended thing. There are numerous options if you're finding yourself feeling more Splenda than splended. Why not try out a nice romantic dinner? In this issue, Cara Suppa takes her own trip to Italy and enjoys an evening that would make Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon proud. Winner of the Best of Erie award for Best Romantic Restaurant, Mi Scuzi is sure to be a top date spot in the next few weeks. For dessert, why not have the low temperatures work in your favor, as Matt Swanseger can explain to you as he details the unique process of making ice wine over at Mazza Vineyards in North East. The delectable sweet indulgence is only attainable in certain conditions like we have in Erie County. Swanseger continues to live La Dolce Vita as he checks in with a few massage therapists and spas around town, perfectly apt for a couples outing.

Love lifts us up where we belong. Belonging can mean a great many things, and doesn't have to be dictated by your immediate surroundings. Erie City Councilwoman Liz Allen takes to the streets of downtown Erie to talk to people who spend a majority of their time there. Some are currently experiencing homelessness, and some may just need a warmer place to stay. In a moving piece with a personal touch, Allen makes a few friends along the way.

All you need is love, like the song says. There are countless songs about love. Nick Warren wanted to find some of the best, and enlisted over a dozen local musicians to create a kind of mixtape, whirring with reasons why those songs were chosen.

Warm feelings are all around, sometimes we just need to notice them.

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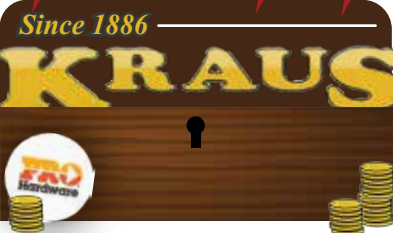


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Meet and greet

Say hello to Erie's hardest walkers



A view from Fifth and State streets looking south into Perry Square — to those experiencing homelessness or living in downtown complexes such as Richford Arms Apartments, this is their backyard.

NICK WARREN

By : Liz Allen

Say hi to Cathy, Mary, Keith, Ted, Alvin and two guys named John. I would have liked you to meet Phyllis, too, but I only got to know her through her obituary. Instead, I'll introduce you to Nancy, her card-playing friend. Nancy says the secret to a well-lived life for a senior citizen in downtown Erie is to get out and about every day.

Ranging in age from their 30s to their 70s, these men and women live, worship, work, eat, and socialize in downtown Erie. As the much-heralded efforts to revive downtown Erie burst into view, I worry that their stories — and those of others in their shoes — will evaporate into the background.

In a city striving to become more walkable, we can learn from those who forge a daily path on foot.

Some of them are battling addiction, struggling with mental health issues, coping with physical ailments, wrestling with financial woes — or all of the above. But don't tag them as "the homeless."

Rather, they are "experiencing homelessness," in the words of Pat Tracy, coordinator of the Sunday Supper program at First Presbyterian Church of

the Covenant.

Others have permanent roofs over their heads but they mourn the loss of a spouse, rue a breakup with a significant other, or are just longing for lively conversation and companionship.

Buttoned up and bearing down against the chill of winter, we're less likely to dig for change for the man in the shabby coat who craves a cup of coffee or to make eye contact with the stranger motoring in his cart along State Street to the Dollar General.

Yet taking time to smile or say hello can brighten that person's day, according to everyone I interviewed for this story.

My interest in writing about downtown residents as real people, rather than an impersonal low-income demographic group, began at a late July meeting of the Renaissance District Care Team. There, volunteers from business, education, government, and social services received updates about the new pocket park just north of the Palace Hardware building, 913-915 State St. They also brainstormed ways for the

Nancy Schill, a retired LPN, offers a friendly greeting to all of her neighbors in the Richford Arms Apartments. She moved there 11 years ago, when she could no longer afford her single-family home.

LIZ ALLEN

Erie Downtown Partnership to build on its "Friendliness and Cleanliness" initiative.

Many suggested that downtown could be safe, welcoming, and vibrant without shunning or chasing out the poor and helpless. Lisa Songer, captain of the Renaissance District Care Team, pointed out that people relaxing on benches outside of subsidized housing complexes aren't intruders or loiterers. Rather, those sidewalks and Perry Square are their backyards, she said.

Songer, who moved to Erie from Ohio 15 years ago to work at Gannon University, is the marketing coordinator for Professional Development Associates Inc. She frequently walks from her office at the Renaissance Centre at East 10th and State streets to the Palace Hardware Building, which her company also manages.

One day, she introduced herself to Danny, a guitar player on State Street who is sometimes mistaken for being homeless. Later, she baked him cookies. "He was overjoyed," she recalls. "That eye contact and a smile can make a difference in anybody's day," she said of her interaction with the affable musician — member of the X-Whites and We Hit the Fan.

She also talks about a new woman who moved into the Palace building at the same time that Downtown D'Lights and Gallery Night were being celebrated. "I've never seen someone so ecstatic

about living downtown," Songer says. "These people want to be out and about. They want to be part of the community. If they are a part of something, it gives them a little more self-worth."

Downtown as home base

That's certainly true for Nancy Schill, 72, who moved to Richford Arms Apartments, 515 State St., 11 years ago, after her house on Shunpike Road became too expensive to maintain. "Gas bills were mounting to \$259 a month. It would take me all summer long to get caught up. I would have had to bring in a roomer," says Schill, who worked for 39 years as a "low-paid LPN." At Richford Arms, she pays one-third of her income for rent.

A self-described "people person," she quickly became friends with Phyllis Zack, a widow who moved to the Richford Arms after retiring. They and two other women, who have both since passed away, played the card game Skat every Thursday.

I didn't know Zack, who died Dec. 20 at age 89, but I loved the imagery in her obituary. It mentioned her many friends at Scully's Pub and said that "she could be seen walking around with her 'Cadillac of walkers,' greeting many people around the park."

But Zack didn't stop at Perry Square. Schill says that her friend would walk "clear up to 18th Street. She just toured the city."

Schill owns her own fancy walker, a cushy red-and-black model from Canada passed down from another resident. "When you sit on it, you feel like you are a director in a movie," she says with a big smile.

A breast cancer survivor, she needs





Regular guests at Sunday Supper include, left to right, Alvin Baldwin, John Sterling, Ted Williams, and Keith Lear. The free meal is offered 50 Sundays a year at First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant. The men say they enjoy the nutritious meals and the lively conversations.

alfredo, green beans, applesauce, and pudding with whipped cream, as volunteers came by to serve water, lemonade, and coffee.

Church of the Covenant pianist Montgomery Service added to the inviting atmosphere by playing familiar hymns in the background as I chatted with the men at one table.

"I wanted to get out and about a little bit. I like the food and the companionship," says Keith Lear, 33, about why he attends Sunday Supper. He works two part-time jobs, lives with his sister and either rides the bus or walks from his home on the east side to Sunday Supper.

Alvin Baldwin, 54, has been homeless for about seven months and is waiting to get Section 8 housing. He blames himself for his situation. "I think a lot of people out there struggle with addiction," he says. But he believes that "willpower" will help him overcome his issues. "I'm never going to give up."

John Sterling, 66, who has worked as a security officer, nursing assistant, and in manufacturing, is living with friends until he can get on his feet, but he admits, "There is nothing like having your own home."

He comes to Sunday Supper because "it's sociable and they serve nutritional meals."

Ted Williams, 58, who lives alone, comes for the "fellowship," he says. "I just get lonely."

The men start a lively discussion about Erie's tax-exempt hotels. Since they are either working or have worked in the past, they qualify as taxpayers. Maybe the tax-exempt hotels should offer one free night of lodging to those who are homeless, so they can get a good night's sleep and a warm shower, they suggest.

When your lodging is a single cot

But a good night's sleep in a comfortable bed, with the convenience of a warm shower, is only a dream for someone like Cathy, who asked that her last name not be used, and John and Mary,

The Cross offers worship at St. Paul's United Church of Christ, 1024 Peach St. Members of the congregation include people who are homeless and as well as seniors who live in downtown apartments.

the walker because she suffers from congestive heart failure.

When I hear community leaders speak cavalierly about moving seniors or the disabled away from downtown, ostensibly to put them closer to social services, I wonder if the movers and shakers realize that these residents are also consumers who spend money downtown. And they live downtown precisely because social service agencies are nearby. It's also convenient that the bus stops near their front door.

Schill, who has been car-less since 1999, can't travel too far with her walker, because she gets winded, but she gets around.

For breakfast, she eats at Dave's Diner, off Perry Square. Once a week, she takes the Route 27 bus to Shirley's Country Kitchen on Old French Road.

She relies on the low-cost LIFT to go to an affordable lunch, bingo, and cards at LifeWorks, 406 Peach St., or for lunch and cards at the Robert B. Wiley Senior Center, 823 Peach St. Every Friday afternoon, she rides the LIFT to St. George Catholic Church, for Eucharistic adoration. "The closer I get to God, the less I worry about myself," she says. You don't need a "barrel" of money to be happy, she says. "It's what comes from the heart," says Schill, who wears a Christmas tree pin on her coat all winter, to remind people to keep the spirit of Christmas alive beyond Dec. 25.

Help for the homeless

Those who serve people who are homeless do it from their hearts and celebrate the hearts — and acknowledge the heartaches — of those they serve.

Their ranks include Pat Tracy, the coordinator of Sunday Supper at Church

of the Covenant. A retired high school health teacher, Tracy had always been active at her congregation but felt called to serve in another way when she was driving down Peach Street to church one day and saw people congregated at Griswold Park (the gazebo where they sought shelter has since been removed). "Loud and clear, I heard the words, 'You hypocrite. What are you doing for the least?'"

Tracy, who volunteered for Our Neighbors Place, the seasonal overflow shelter that Church of the Covenant began in 2011-12, now rotates in two-week shifts among different churches. She and Dale Sweete started Sunday Supper in 2014 "after we heard a guest say, 'It's back to dumpster-diving on Sunday nights,'" because no meals were available to the poor on the Lord's Day.

Now, volunteers from various groups and churches serve Sunday Supper at Church of the Covenant 50 Sundays a year. On the night I visited, attendance was sparser than the usual crowd of 120 to 180. It's hard to walk to dinner when the temperature plunges to the single digits.

I first learned about Tracy's philosophy toward people who are experiencing hard times at a Nov. 13 meeting organized by Mayor Joe Schember's administration to address homelessness. "Don't call them panhandlers," Tracy said then. "These are my friends."

During my visit to Sunday Supper, Tracy elaborates on that theme. "We've become a family here and they are my friends," she says. "People need to belong to something that is bigger than themselves and Sunday Supper is a place to belong."

That night, guests dined on chicken

who are happily married.

I met Cathy in the church parking lot after Sunday Supper. Bundled up against the biting winds, she dodged snow drifts as she clutched two free books she got at the supper, including the best-selling kid's favorite, *Dork Diaries*. She had been writing her own book for her grandchildren but it got lost when she left it behind at a shelter, she says.

I offered her a ride to the Warming Center at the Mental Health Association of Northwestern Pennsylvania, 1105 Peach St.

From there, she would walk down the block to the Sunday worship service at the Cross, which meets in the sanctuary at St. Paul's United Church of Christ. The previous week, I had attended the Cross, which ministers to downtown residents and people who are homeless. We sang hymns, read the Bible and listened to minister Chuck Nelson preach about the vine and the branches. Afterward, congregants were invited to a simple meal of chili dogs.

Nelson knows Cathy and the rest of the worshipers by name.

"If people were to spend time with the broken, they would see that brokenness is often started by things outside of the person's control. Any honest person, with some self-reflection, will probably realize that their accomplishments were more grace-filled than they credit," he says.





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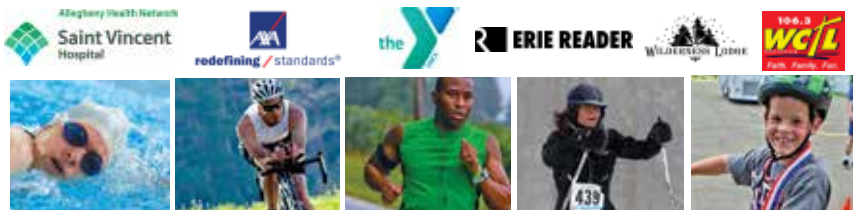
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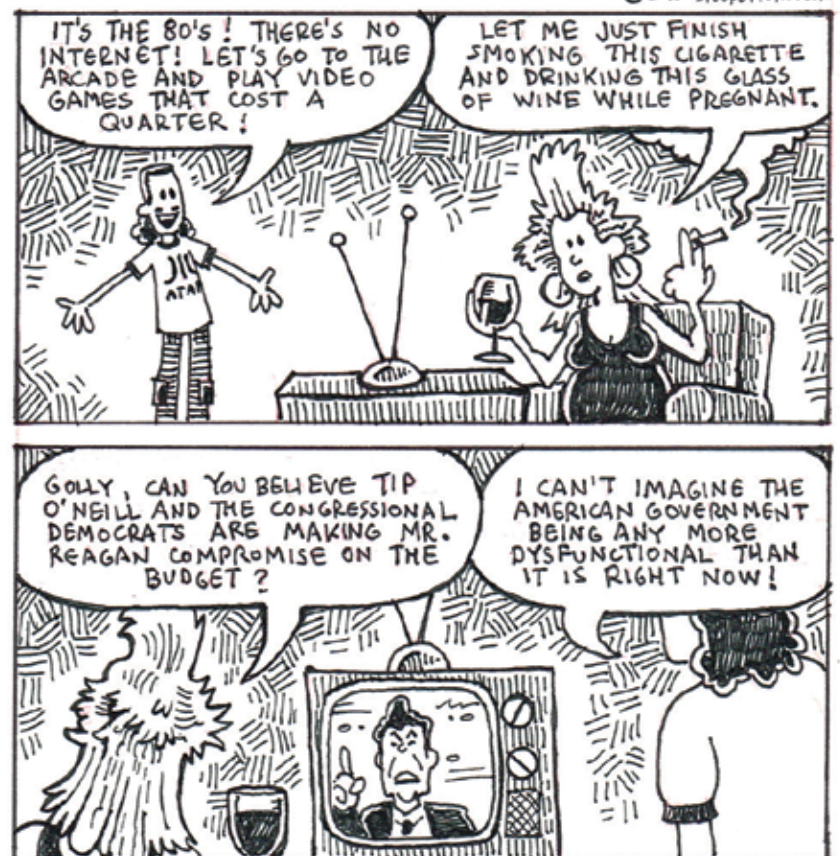




JUST TOYIN' WITCHA — BY B. TOY



I LOVE 80's NOSTALGIA BY BRAD PATTULLO





Mary and John Bliss, who will celebrate their 18th wedding anniversary in June, have been living in shelters on and off since 2017, when John Bliss lost his disability benefits and Mary Bliss's pay from Subway couldn't be stretched to cover their rent.

and the support of peer counselors at the Mental Health Association who help her make it from day to day.

"The people here are so nice," she says about those working at Our Neighbor's Place, where she also has a dedicated caseworker. "They care about your life. They care about your safety. They care about your future."

Looking ahead

Mary Hoffman, a retired special ed teacher, is one of those caring individuals. She introduces Helena and me to John and Mary, sweet, gentle souls who walked to St. John's through the pouring rain from the McDonald's at W. 12th and Sassafras streets.

They have been homeless off and on since 2017, when John lost his disability benefits. The government says he can work, despite a bad back, bad legs, and a bout with testicular cancer. They can't afford rent on Mary's pay from her job at the Subway on lower State Street.

Mary sets up our interview in the school boiler room, to give us more space. An imposing Erie City Ironworks boiler looms in the background.

John, 55, and Mary, 41, met when they worked at Gabriel's in the West Erie Plaza. He asked her out for coffee at Eat 'n Park. They talked for four-and-a-half hours, then took a ride to the dock.

"I took her home, walked her to the door, and I said, 'Can I please have a hug?'" John recalls.

LIZ ALLEN

Cathy is witty, well-spoken, and disarmingly blunt. We played voicemail tag for a few days (her boyfriend, who is also homeless, has a cell phone) until we connected for an interview.

I gave Cathy and her boyfriend a ride to Our Neighbor's Place overflow shelter, which was being held from Jan. 16 to Jan. 29 in the social hall at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 509 E. 26th St.

Without transportation, the couple would have trudged a mile-and-a-half through sloppy slush, created after a day-long downpour, from Community of Caring, a shelter at 245 E. 8th St. Cathy carried her belongings in a big black purse; her boyfriend has his stuff crammed into several plastic bags.

Shelter volunteers arranged for us to talk in a narrow storeroom, filled with blankets and clothes divided by size into men's and women's things. There were lots of boots and shoes. Now I know why; Cathy's loafers would have been ruined in that miserable walk.

I had a wingwoman along for the interview — my friend Helena, visiting from New York. An hour earlier, we had attended the silent march sponsored by Benedictines for Peace. We walked single-file at the Millcreek Mall, amid the bustle of busy shoppers searching for bargains marked "50 percent off!" or "70 percent markdown!"

Safe from the rain and sleet, we could ponder why we need to "buy, buy, buy!" while so many must cram all they own into a single bag.

Cathy, 61, opens up freely. The streets have ruined her looks, she says, but at

12, she was a pretty but insecure girl, craving affirmation from her mom. "I needed guys to validate me," she says. Wanting to play it cool, she asked a guy for a cigarette. "He gave me a marijuana cigarette and I knew right then that I wanted to feel that way the rest of my life," she says.

"After a while, pot wasn't enough. I tried LSD ... One time I had a bad trip. Ozzy Osbourne jumped out of the record and started chasing me around the room. Then I moved on to drinking Boone's Farm wine. I could one-up the guys."

Next, she got hooked on heroin. "When I graduated high school, I had track marks." Later, she married a drug dealer, had two children, stole to feed her habit and did time at the Erie County Prison and the state penitentiary. Her most recent slide into homelessness began in September, after she was released from a six-month jail term imposed when she walked away from a rehab program.

Cathy says she had a lovely childhood, growing up in a home with two working parents, including a father who frequently came to her rescue when drugs got her in trouble.

Still, "by the grace of God, I've raised two good kids," says Cathy. Her two girls have college degrees and good jobs.

A "functioning addict" for most of her life, she has been clean "for months." Will it continue?

"I've been using drugs for 40 years," she says matter-of-factly. But in Erie, it is the kindness of shelter volunteers

He proposed during the grand finale fireworks at Jerry Uht Park (now UPMC Park) on Labor Day weekend.

But he couldn't afford the ring then. Instead, at a baseball game a year later, when John was a contestant during the post-game Launch-a-Ball promotion, he got down on one knee in front of a crowd of 3,500, and gave her a ring.

They have been in and out of shelters since John's disability payments were cut off. They are hoping to get subsidized housing, but the government shutdown makes that uncertain.

"Don't put a person down because they are homeless. Give them a hand up," advises John.

"Homelessness doesn't discriminate. It's not restricted to one group of people. Some like to judge," says Mary. "You could be rich one day and poor the next," her husband adds.

John and Mary will celebrate their 18th wedding anniversary on June 3. The hardest part about being homeless, John says, is that he doesn't get to cuddle his wife at night, because men and women sleep on single cots in separate areas at the shelter.

"This is a test and it makes our love stronger," he says.

At the end of our interview, I ask if I can use their full names. Yes, they say.

Why am I not surprised when I learn that their last name is Bliss?

Liz Allen wants to thank the many peer counselors, too numerous to mention, at the Mental Health Association of Northwestern Pennsylvania who provided background research for this story. You can reach her at lizerie@aol.com.

Learn more

Our Neighbor's Place, hosted by various churches, offers temporary overnight shelter to the homeless through March 26 this winter. **St. John the Baptist Catholic Church**, 509 E. 26th St., hosts the shelter through Jan. 29.

Additional sites include:

The Old Russian Orthodox Church of the Nativity, 247 E. Front St., Jan. 30-Feb. 12

First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, 250 W. 7th St., Feb. 13-Feb. 26

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First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Mar. 13-Mar. 26

For information about various programs sponsored by the Mental Health Association of Northwestern Pennsylvania, including its Warming Center, visit www.mhanp.org or the organization's Facebook page or call 814-455-7165.

For a comprehensive list of resources on homelessness, contact the Erie Home Team at www.eriehometeam.org.

All The Feels

Getting the massage: You're worth it



By: Matt Swanseger

It has been said that before you can love anyone else, you must learn to love yourself. But how does one go about internalizing a strong sense of self-worth? Well, you could spend hours writing yourself sonnets about how you're super sexy or a total badass — and trust me, I'd like to read them — but there's a much easier place to start. This may seem counterintuitive, but it's as simple as shutting yourself up, letting go, and allowing yourself to be taken care of. It's called massage therapy and there's both a good rhyme (or rhythm) and reason for it, far predating the Italian sonnet.

When exactly massage therapy originated is a bit of a touchy subject among historians. As for when it was first legitimized as a topic of study, however, their hands are all over *The Yellow Emperor's Classic Book of Internal Medicine*, published circa 2700 BCE. Its insights continue to be relevant nearly five millennia

later, as its English adaptation is still a standard in massage therapy training, as well as alternative medicine practices such as acupuncture, acupressure, and herbology. Egyptian tomb paintings from around the era indicate that they too were pretty "Ra Ra" about massage therapy, specifically reflexology, or the study of applying pressure to "reflex zones" on the feet and hands. In Southeast Asia, Buddhists and Taoists observed touch as a sacred rite in Ayurveda (Sanskrit for "life health" or "life science")

The forefathers of Western civilization were pretty fond of it too, as the Greek and Romans also enjoyed the rejuvenating and stress-evaporating virtues of massage. However, as time wore on toward the Middle Ages, it was written off as an extravagance or indulgence of the materialistic and worldly, because you know — pleasure is the devil. Fast-forward to the early 1800s, when Swedish doctor, gymnast, and educator (what a

Today's Swedish, or classic massage, is characterized by light to medium pressure, long and smooth strokes, and the purpose of relieving general tension throughout the body and getting the blood flowing.

trifecta!) Per Henri Ling formulated the "Swedish Movement System," which was the recipe from which a Dutchman named Johan Georg Metzgar spelled out the maneuvers used in today's Swedish, or classic massage. It is characterized by light to medium pressure, long and smooth strokes, and the purpose of relieving general tension throughout the body and getting the blood flowing. Its primary counterpart, deep tissue massage, more aggressively targets problem areas.

Pam Perron, a licensed massage therapist (LMT) at Monacella Massage and Kinesiology with a background in special education, elaborates on the benefits of treating yourself. "We tend to downplay the value of touch, of visceral sensation, of being cared for and [temporarily] being free of responsibility. We need to reprioritize the self. Society is so motion-oriented. It is vital to just be."

Curious about the strange and alien phenomenon of "just being," I treat myself to an hour-long relaxation massage, with elements of deep tissue for my neck and shoulders (under strain from hours in front of a computer carefully churning out rubbish for our readership). Unobtrusive new age and world music plays in the background as my grievances slowly melt away. My assigned LMT, Pam Barba-to, asks what I think. "Well, I didn't hate it," I say with a self-satisfied smirk worthy of a 1,000 Roger Federer backhands.

Proprietor Missy Monacella is com-

mitted to customizing the experience to each individual customer — as with yoga, there is no universal path to relief. "There's not too much between the team that we don't know how to do. Feedback is vital. We are here to help," she says. An aromatherapy component can be added to any session through the application of essential oils (e.g. invigorating citrus, calming lavender), freeze babies can be pampered with (comfortably) hot stones, and pressure can (and should) be adjusted to the patron's comfort level.

After the session is over, I am advised to drink plenty of water, as massage also facilitates circulation within the lymphatic system, which helps flush out toxins hanging out in the body's interstices. All told, I walked out a glowing, contented, amorphous puddle of humanity, fully equipped to mold myself to whatever situation that might have followed. I didn't resolve to do much else that day, but if I had, there would have been a whole lot less fuss. The advantage of feeling care-free while still caring cannot be understated.

To schedule an appointment at Monacella Kinesiology and Massage (1001 State St., Ste. 1322) visit monacella.massagetherapy.com. Feel free to treat yourself, a loved one, or both at these locations as well: Panache Salon and Spa (2501 W. 12th St.): panacheerie.com or (814) 838-3333. Massage Envy (2070 Interchange Rd., Unit 220): massageenvy.com Conventina Day Spa (10747 Peach St., Waterford, PA 16441): conventina.com

Matt Swanseger could get used to this — or your unrelenting acclaim — at mswanseger@eriereader.com

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The Thai Way to Loosen Up



In Nuat Boran, or Thai Body Work, the practitioner uses the entirety of his or her body to leverage and stretch the entirety of the client's to increase range of motion and foster a state of relaxation.

MAKSIM ŠMELOV

Such intimate and genuine knowledge of the practice is rare, especially in Erie.

"We believe in healing, nature, the yin and yang, and using the Earth," Kae explains.

"I want to bring everything I can from my country to benefit people. I like seeing people leave happy and healthy."

Among the unique services you won't find anywhere else are the Thai Herbal Ball Massage and the Thai Cupping Massage. In the former, a muslin-wrapped ball of herbs is steamed and pressed into the body, marrying the benefits of aromatherapy, herbal therapy, thermal therapy, and massage therapy. As a bonus, the balls can be taken home by the customer and reused — smell ya later (in a good way)! Cupping became especially popular (in particular among athletes) after 28-time Olympic gold medalist swimmer Michael Phelps showed up to the pool in 2016 covered in deep purple circles. Cupping uses heat or air pressure to create suction, drawing cellular wastes and toxins from deep within toward the surface. This effect is comparable to being given a large hickie (did you spend the night with a filter fish or did you have cupping done?)

"I can tell what's going on in your body by the color of the marks the cups leave," Kae says. For example, a smoker's may show a grayish cast. So don't try to slip anything past her. — Matt Swanseger

In the event you are used to being pampered via what Westerners consider "classic massage," there is another branch of techniques out there just as, if not more, steeped in tradition (and sometimes hot water). *Nuat Boran* ("noo-ut bo-rah-n"), or Thai Body Work, is a series of practices originating some 3,000 years ago in — you guessed it — Thailand. At its core, it involves the client lying on a floor mat as the practitioner gently yet firmly manipulates the body, utilizing a combination of stretches, joint movements, and strokes to facilitate a greater range of motion, enhanced flow of energy, and a generalized sense of relaxation and well-being.

While to the untrained eye certain elements of *Nuat Boran* might appear like something out of the WWE, Thai Body Work is not an act (at least certainly not a violent one) and the benefits are very real. At Panache Salon and Spa in Erie, customers graciously accept waiting periods of weeks for a session with resident Thai Body Work expert, Kae Duangkaew Hoag. A Thailand native, she travels back to the source every two years to add new techniques to an impressive repertoire that has been built up over the course of more than three decades.



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VANESSA MAZZA

By: Matt Swanseger

Drip, drop. Syrupy sweet nectar trickles into a metal trough as a cylindrical machine presses hundreds of pounds of frozen Vidal blanc grapes for all they're worth. The enclosure I'm standing in, at Mazza Vineyards in North East, has reached its teens, so now would be an appropriate time to talk about the hummingbirds and honeybees — they would be all over each other to get a taste of this stuff.

It turns out those grapes are worth a lot. Extreme cold freezes the water in the berry but spares the sugars and other natural compounds, allowing the sweet essence of the grape to run free. Shrivelled from exposure, each berry only has the tiniest bit of itself to give, yielding a fraction of the juice that the fall harvest would — as little as a meager 25 percent. Through Old Man Winter's alchemy, that juice has become liquid gold ready to be slowly fermented (a lot of sugar = a lot of work for the yeast).

Ice wine is an extraordinarily valuable commodity, as few regions in the world supply the unique conditions under which it can be produced. First of all, the grape variety must be hearty enough to survive a "hard freeze" (defined as 17 degrees Fahrenheit or below by the Canadian standard, or 19 degrees by the German standard). Traditional or O.G. (original German) "Eiswein" uses Riesling grapes, but the Vidal blanc Mazza uses and Cabernet Franc are also good candidates — it takes some thick skin. Secondly, the grapes must actually stay

on the vine long enough for that hard freeze to arrive — meaning they cannot be rotted off by unseasonable heat and/or humidity, blown off by storms, or picked off by animals (Mazza utilizes precautionary netting). Lastly, when that hard freeze *does* arrive, a platoon of pickers must be ready at moment's notice to pick the plots by hand *before* the ideal temperature is exceeded. That often means harvests in the very early morning or even in the dark.

For the purposes of this assignment, I was recruited to be a part of the Mazza Grape-Picking Militia, with a deployment time of 7 a.m. on Friday, January 11. I dutifully heeded my iPhone alarm's siren's call, swaddling myself in layer upon layer of insulation — only for the squad to be called off last minute. Too warm. My vehicle's cockpit temperature read a balmy 20 degrees.

Warmth was not a problem on the second attempt, as the thermostat struggled to reach double digits on Monday, January 21. However, my timely response to the last-minute summons was, so I consequently missed out on all the gratifying hands-on labor (in the five degree sun!) Thankfully, Mario Mazza, general manager at Mazza Vineyards, did not hand me a demerit when I showed up well into the first pressing, conducted by the aforementioned Mearelli horizontal screw presses. Anyone who has experience with ice wine is used to waiting, and sometimes all for naught. "It's a risk and a gamble," says Mazza.

The Mazza family happens to have over three decades of it, having released their

Volunteers harvest Vidal Blanc grapes in bitterly cold temperatures at Mazza Vineyards in North East on the morning of January 21. True ice wine can only be produced when the thermometer dips below 17 degrees Fahrenheit (-8.3 degrees Celsius), freezing the water in the berry and concentrating its sugars and other compounds.

first ice wine vintage in 1984 — that's the same year Inniskillin, one of Ontario's stalwart examples, first hit the shelves. And thus the Lake Erie region became the first in the Western Hemisphere to enter this notoriously fickle arena. Today, it is one of Canada's most valuable exports by dollar value. A 350 mL bottle (half the size of a typical wine bottle) routinely costs in the \$40 to \$50 range, if not more. "It's not cheap," admits Mazza.

But as has been made abundantly clear, it's not easy either, which makes it a special treat and meant to be enjoyed as such. Mazza's Ice Wine of Vidal Blanc contains "hints of fig, honey, marmalade, and apricot." Mazza recommends drinking it by itself as a dessert, but if one insists on pairing it, doing so with something strong enough to contrast all that sugar sweetness, such as a tangy and salty blue cheese.

He is also adamant about the distinction between a true ice wine and the so-called "ice box" wines produced via cryo-extraction, a process wherein the grapes are flash-frozen and then pressed. "They evolve more complex flavors left hanging on the vine versus freezing artificially at harvest time." He also stresses balance as a pillar of his winemaking philosophy, so he is conscientious of leaving some acidity and alcohol content in the glass to offset what might otherwise be cloyingly sweet.

For all the time and effort involved, that's what's known as getting your just desserts.

I heard (or "hoyd," if I'm John Fogerty) it through the grapevine that Mazza's Ice Wine of Vidal Blanc can be picked up at their winery on 11815 E. Lake Rd., North East, PA 16428 and PLCB Wines & Spirits stores via special order for \$44.95 a bottle (375 mL).

For more from Mazza, visit enjoymazza.com. For more from the wine-producing region at large, visit lakeeriewinecountry.org

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Popping into Mi Scuzi Ristorante Italiano



The romantic ambience at Mi Scuzi Ristorante Italiano is scarcely paralleled in the City of Erie, and the food is among our finest as well — reflected in its strong showings in this year's Best of Erie awards. The eatery will be offering a special four-course meal for Valentine's Day for \$99 per couple.

rise of online rating sites making popular local opinion visible for all to see, Mi Scuzi has clearly carved out a place among the very best that Erie has to offer.

But what's so romantic about Mi Scuzi? If you haven't been yet, the romance is in the details. Bell-shaped fixture shades nestled in wrought-iron sconces give off a gentle glow just overhead, inviting patrons seated against the wall to lean toward one another in intimate conversation, while garlands of ivy affixed over the windows which look out onto Myrtle Street add a rustic touch. The exposed ceiling beams — a truly unexpected feature if you've only ever driven by the building — makes it feel as though you are dining under a pergola in a Tuscan garden after sunset, your table awash in lantern-light.

"We pride ourselves on connecting with our customers," Chef Michael said. "We are so blessed to be a place where people celebrate, meet and — yes, at times — romance each other."

My husband Bryce and I stopped by Mi Scuzi briefly for a few cocktails and appetizers, and we were enchanted by the overall atmosphere, as well as the superior service. The cozy dining space, which is sectioned off from a luminescent bar area gleaming with glasses and bottles, is unfussy and casual, though dressier patrons on a weekend date would not be out of place by any means. It being early on a Tuesday, the dining room was not busy or noisy, and slightly lowering the pitch of our conversation made it possible not to be heard by tables adjacent (though they were welcome to hear our romantic conversation concerning the electric bill).

My extra dirty vodka martini — hazy with olive juice and punctuated with an exclamation mark of a skewer holding two blissful bleu cheese-stuffed olives — was savory perfection, and when our stuffed poblano peppers, "Sicilian" with chicken pizzette and garlic knots arrived, the latter two topped off with decadent shavings of parmesan, Bryce and I both exclaimed with pleasure at the sight.

Chef Michael's food — about which he personally inquires, stopping by each table — invites visceral anticipation from the moment you notice the waitstaff coming toward your table with plates.

The peppers were divine, a worthy take on an Erie favorite (with plenty of sauce leftover for dredging those garlic knots through — not my classiest moment, but I have zero regrets), and the shared pizzette was more than delicious; it was fun to eat, and an unparalleled upgrade from our usual shared Hot-N-Readies.

Like any Best Romantic Restaurant worth its rose petals, Mi Scuzi is holding its annual Valentine's Day dinner event, where couples can enjoy a four-course meal — soup or salad for primo, ravioli for secondi, a number of entrees to choose from for piatti, and an Italian inspired dessert selection for finito, plus complimentary verdi and chocolate-dipped strawberries — for \$99.

"[This] was developed to get the novice, as well as the seasoned couple, to enjoy a Valentine's evening," Chef Michael explained, "with multiple courses and the offerings kicked up a notch."

"It has proven a crowd pleaser," he added, hinting that patrons might want to make reservations sooner rather than later.

Indeed, to make reservations for this event (and any other night) more convenient, Mi Scuzi is now on OpenTable.com, the online reservation service where guests can check to see what is available, book their table, alert the staff to any special requests, and make changes to or even cancel the reservation, all from their smartphone.

Further, if the thought of dining *al ristorante* sounds like too much work, Mi Scuzi takes carry-out orders, and their website boasts, "Take-out orders guaranteed ready in 20 minutes" — a perfect option for a night on the couch in sweats with your sweetie. Mi Scuzi is that rare gem which caters to all different variations of romance — just pick your pleasure.

Mi Scuzi Ristorante Italiano is located at 2641 Myrtle Street and open 5 to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, 5 to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. To view menus, visit miscuzirestaurant.com. To make reservations, call (814) 454-4533 or visit opentable.com

By: Cara Suppa

Here's a 10-year challenge for you: In 2009, the citizens of this city voted on Erie's Choice for Best Fine Dining Establishment and Best Italian Food. In both categories of the Erie Times-News' annual contest, there was one winner: The Olive Garden.

I'm not here to hate on the Olive Garden, or restaurants (chains) like it; they are more than serviceable, and I'd be lying if I said I didn't downright crave Zuppa Toscana or Cheddar Bay Biscuits at times.

Instead, it seems to me that the bulk of Erie hadn't yet started to push past the Peach Street familiars with much regularity, and the "support local" trend hadn't quite taken off, because if they had, surely restaurants like the now-vanished

(and much-loved) Danny's Restaurant and Lounge or Erie-favorite Alto Cucina would have nabbed either of those top spots.

I'm happy to report, however, that this blip on Erie's voting record has passed — let's hope for good — and recognition of independent and locally owned businesses has been on the ascent for a few years now.

Case in point? Mi Scuzi Ristorante Italiano, nestled in the neighborhood adjacent to Saint Vincent Hospital, and the winner of the Erie Reader's 2018 title for Best Romantic Restaurant.

Though this fine dining and Italian establishment has been on the block since 2006, when owner and chef Michael Farsace purchased the restaurant in 2011, the adulation really started to fly. With the



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Revvng Up for the Erie Auto Show



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THURSDAY, JAN. 31 - FEB. 3

Filling the Bayfront Convention Center with all manner of motorcars, the Erie Auto Show is shifting into its 2019 iteration. Buckle up, as the four-day event features new models to check out from 26 area dealerships, as well as plenty of activities and promotions built in for all ages. Friday is “Hometown Hero Day,” and all members of the military past or present, as well as first responders will be given free admission, with proper identification. Saturday is decidedly kid-friendly, with costumed superheroes abound on the grounds, including OBX Megatron and Jazz, 8-foot-tall Transformers come to life in astounding cosplay accuracy (at the show all four days). Sun-

day, as a precursor to the “Big Game,” there will be plenty of gates to be tailed before seeing if New England or Los Angeles will emerge victoriously — no word though if there will be a face-off between a 2019 Jeep Patriot and a 2019 RAM 1500, though one assumes all tires will be well-inflated. And, always a favorite of the show, as guests walk in, they’ll be able to take a gander at a parade of classic cars, literally in showroom condition. — Nick Warren

Thursday and Friday 12 - 8 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Sunday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. // Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier // \$5, kids 10 and under free // eriepromotions.com/erie-auto-show

Oakman’s Wake of the Flood



Meadville native Fred Oakman has been involved in the region’s music scene for decades, playing with bands such as Twirpentes, Signal Home, and One If By Land. His current quartet, The Flood, will grace the King’s Rook Club with their full-bodied alt-country sound to kick off February.

from his idols like Hot Water Music’s Chuck Ragan and Avail’s Tim Barry, Oakman has played many

acoustic sets over the past few years. The singer’s gravely voice and modest personality easily craft a captivating experience.

Together with The Flood, however, he’s raised the bar, with gorgeously tasteful accompaniment rounding out the sound with a lush alt-country flair. Joined by his longtime musical collaborator Troy Messerall — who played in all three bands mentioned previously — on electric and lap steel guitar, there’s an intoxicatingly musical shimmer added to every track. With Jake Peters on bass and Nate Kuhn on drums, the new band has already arrived at a near-perfect sound. The quartet will be filling out the night at the King’s Rook Club’s upstairs stage for what should be a beautiful slate of heartfelt music. — Nick Warren

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. // 1921 Peach St. // Free for members // 21+ // facebook.com/kingsrookclub

MUSIC

Dave VanAmburg & Friends

Jan. 30, Feb. 1, 6, 8, 13 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Bel-Aire Clarion, 2800 W. 8th St. belaireclarion.com.

Open Mic w Taylor Herbstritt & Jack Stevenson

Jan. 30 — 9:30 p.m.
Scotty’s Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

MVP

Jan. 31, Feb. 7 — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Dickey’s BBQ Pit, 3716 Liberty St. facebook.com.

Alex Kates

Jan. 31 — 6 to 9 p.m.
The Skunk & Goat Tavern, 17 W. Main St., North East, PA 16428 skunkandgoattavern.com.

Intro to Drums w Steve Barrone

Feb. 1 — 6 to 7 p.m.
World of Music, 1355 W. 26th St. worldofmusicerie.com.

Whiskey Road

Feb. 1 — 6 to 10 p.m.
BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. facebook.com.

Uncle Claud’s Band

Feb. 1 — 10 p.m.
Scotty’s Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

Fred Oakman & The Flood

Feb. 1 — 10 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Blue Sky

Feb. 2 — 6 to 10 p.m.
BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. facebook.com.

Ish, The Trotts, Justin Moyer

Feb. 2 — 10 p.m.
Scotty’s Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

Consider the Source, The Clock Reads

Feb. 2 — 10 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Sam Hyman

Feb. 3 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
The Skunk & Goat Tavern, 17 W.

Main St., North East, PA 16428 skunkandgoattavern.com.

Uncharted Course

Feb. 3 — 1 to 4 p.m.
Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co., 11727 E. Main Rd. North East, PA 16428 arundelcellars.com.

Of Virtue, Damages, Sacred Decay, Joe Nameless Crimson Shine

Feb. 4 — 5 to 10 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com.

Blues Jam & Open Mic

Feb. 5 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Dickey’s BBQ Pit, 3716 Liberty St. facebook.com.

Khaosity: Heartbreak Soldier Tour

Feb. 5 — 7 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com.

Pat & Abby Doyle

Feb. 7 — 6 to 9 p.m.
The Skunk & Goat Tavern, 17 W. Main St., North East, PA 16428 skunkandgoattavern.com.

Flight

Feb. 8 — 6 to 10 p.m.

BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. facebook.com.

Tri-State Band Festival

Feb. 8 — 8 p.m.
Mary D’Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Erie’s Best Rapper

Feb. 8 — 9 p.m. to midnight
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com.

Cee Brown’s Variety Show

Feb. 8 — 10 p.m.
Scotty’s Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

The Paulsabilities

Feb. 8 — 10 p.m.
Join some of Erie’s best-loved musicians for an improvisational trip throughout the night filled with dynamic virtuosity and group-guided grooves.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Honor Band Concert

Feb. 9 — 2 p.m.
Mary D’Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

100 Proof

Feb. 9 — 6 to 10 p.m.
BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. facebook.com.

The Mixx

Feb. 9 — 6 to 10 p.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. bourbonbarrelerie.com

Spreaders & Friends, Onewayness vs. Battalion of Cloudships, Dagger, Elephant Pill

Feb. 9 — 7 to 11 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

The Wizard of Oz

Feb. 9 — 8 p.m. & Feb. 10 — 2:30 p.m.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. eriephil.org.

Big City Hangover, Willie Cotter Band

Feb. 9 — 10 p.m.
Scotty’s Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

DJ Voto B2B Hekate

Feb. 9 — 11 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Carl Hultman Jazz Trio

Feb. 10 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
The Skunk & Goat Tavern, 17 W. Main St., North East, PA 16428 skunkandgoattavern.com.

Ethnic Heritage Ensemble

Feb. 10 — 4 to 6 p.m.
Seasoned and internationally recognized jazz band blends African-American and traditional African sounds for memorable and unique style.
Artlore Studio, 3406 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

Open Mic Night

Feb. 12 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Katherine Soroka

Feb. 13 — 8 p.m.
Walker Recital Hall at Mercyhurst Univ., 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

DANCE

USA Dance: Erie Chapter

Feb. 2 — 6:30 to 10 p.m.
St. John’s Lutheran Parish Center, 2216 Peach St. usadance.org

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Hatful of Rain Hits Close to Home in Many Ways



FRIDAY, FEB. 1

PACA (Performing Artists Collective Alliance) is putting on a performance that is bound to give you chills, no matter who you are.

Hatful of Rain provides viewers with relatable family turmoil, and the devastating effects of opioid addiction that engulfs both our city and country alike.

What is particularly striking about this play is that it takes place over 50 years ago. It originally debuted in New York City in 1955. While that may seem like a lifetime ago, all the issues the characters face and the family dilemmas that arise are just as relevant today.

Mark Tanenbaum, artistic director of

PACA, explains that “the plot isn’t trite. The addict in this story, Johnny Pope, played by Jason Fried, is a Korean War hero. Like many of the addicts we know, he becomes addicted to painkillers in the hospital. He is sent home where he is forced to turn to the street to support his habit. He is a family man. He has a wife (Krista Perry) and a brother (Paul Lukach) upon whom he has always relied. He is the apple of his father’s (Victor Kuehn) eye.”

Hatful of Rain is a play about the characters. Tanenbaum assures that “all of the characters are far from being two-dimensional. Even the drug dealer, Mother, played to subtle perfection by John Schaaf, is layered and complex.”

If none of this has struck home yet, how about this? “Money is a recurring motif in the play. Each character at some point in time is motivated by money. It’s a driving force, almost like addiction itself. It is also a very proto-feminist play with Celia Pope taking charge of the solution and her family at the climax ... Even the set design reflects the sense of being closed in and with few options,” says Tanenbaum.

We all face demons at some point. There are times when money is tight, or seemingly out of reach. Whether or not we personally know someone who struggles with addiction, we can’t ignore the devastating effects of drug addiction that seems to consume both our city and country. *Hatful of Rain* offers an insight into these issues, and pulls you in with empathy.

Tanenbaum clarifies: “This play isn’t just about drug addiction. PACA is presenting a family drama about recrimination and reconciliation. *Hatful of Rain* addresses family secrets hidden within the four walls of a home. It highlights the fine line many walk between being supportive and enabling. It is about love, damage, and forgiveness. It shows us how a crisis can actually bring us closer and reverse years of backward vision. It’s beautifully hopeful.”

Sometimes, a little hope is all we need. — Kalli Oberlander

Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. through Feb. 10 // 1505 State St., Second Floor // \$15 // BYOB // pacal505.com

FOOD & DRINK

Sausage and Wine Sampling Event

Feb. 1, 2 — noon to 4 p.m.
Bello's Market, 2650 W.
8th St. facebook.com.

DIY Salad Dressings

Jan. 31 — 5:30 p.m.
Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W.
26th St. wfcerie.coop.

Robert Burns Supper

Feb. 2 — 5:45 to 11 p.m.
A dinner commemorating the 260th birthday of the acclaimed Scottish Romantic poet featuring speeches, haggis, and more.
Bayfront Sheraton, 55 W.
Bay Dr. facebook.com.

Beyond Beam: A Bourbon Tasting

Feb. 2 — 7 p.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St.
bourbonbarrelerie.com.

Heart Healthy w Slow Cooker

Feb. 5 — 6 p.m.
Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W.
26th St. wfcerie.coop.

Raise a Glass to Support a Class

Feb. 7 — 6:30 p.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St.
secure.aggiv.com.

Ales for Sails

Feb. 8 — 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Bayfront Maritime Center, 40
Holland St. bayfrontcenter.org.

Juicing for Health

Feb. 9 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W.
26th St. wfcerie.coop.

Wine Bingo

Feb. 9 — 6 to 8 p.m. & Feb. 10 — noon to 2 p.m. OR 4 to 6 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars,
9440 W. Main St., North East,
PA 16428 piwine.com.

MOVIES

Challenge of Five Gauntlets (2019)

Feb. 1 — 8 p.m.
On a journey to save their dying child, a family seeks guidance from a historian with the knowledge of an ancient relic believed to have the power to heal.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W.
Lake Rd. facebook.com.

Objectified (2009)

Feb. 4 — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
The 2009 documentary feature by director Gary Hustwit examines humanity's relationship with manufactured objects, with a short discussion following.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Suspiria (2018)

Feb. 6 — 6 p.m.

Fantasy, fear and mystery swirl around world-renowned dance company as dark secrets are uncovered during latest film showing at Bourbon Barrel.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. filmsocietynwpa.org.

Anime Afternoons: Spirited Away

Feb. 9 — 3 to 5 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. erieartmuseum.org.

First Man

Feb. 13 — 6 p.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. filmsocietynwpa.org.

VISUAL ARTS

Collection Corner

Feb. 1 — 6 to 7 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. erieartmuseum.org.

Power Animals Pastel Drawing & Shield Making

Feb. 2, 9 — 1 to 3 p.m.
AWE, 915 State St. Ste.
LL1 facebook.com.

Hands On: Comic Books

Feb. 8 — 6 to 7 p.m.
Nerd out, drink up, and get a feel for some of the most iconic and sought-after comic books of today.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. erieartmuseum.org.

Winter Natures Watercolor

Feb. 8 — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. registrationdesk.asburywoods.org.

Richard P. Sadlier Retrospective

Ongoing through Feb. 8
Cummings Art Gallery at Mercyhurst, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Sophomore Review

Opening Feb. 11. Through Feb. 15
Cummings Art Gallery at Mercyhurst, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Healing HeARTS

Ongoing through Feb. 17
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. erieartmuseum.org.

Fran Noonan

Ongoing through Feb. 27
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St. glassgrowersgallery.com.

Donna Nicholas: The Space Between

Ongoing through Mar. 10
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. erieartmuseum.org.

Challenging Borders

Ongoing through Mar. 15
Allegheny Art Gallery, 520 N. Main St. Meadville, PA 16335 sites.allegheny.edu.

Tyanna Buie: Recollections

Ongoing through Apr. 1
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St.

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23 W 10th Street, Suite 3
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eriephil.org

erieartmuseum.org.

James McMurray: Faces and Paces

Ongoing through June 10
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th
St. erieartmuseum.org.

Bill Brady

Ongoing through Aug. 2019
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th
St. erieartmuseum.org.

Brian Pardini

Ongoing through Aug. 2019
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th
St. erieartmuseum.org.

THEATER

The Humans

Feb. 1, 2, 3 — 8 p.m.
Dramashop, 1001 State St.
Ste. 210 dramashop.org.

Hatful of Rain

Feb. 1, 2, 8, 9 — 8 to 10 p.m.
& Feb. 3, 10 — 2 to 4 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St.
paca1505.com.

The Met Live: Carmen

Feb. 2 — 12:55 p.m.

With mezzo-soprano Clémén-
tine Margaine in the title
role, the Metropolitan Opera
performs the world-famous
Georges Bizet production.
Mary D'Angelo Performing
Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St.
miac.mercyhurst.edu.

American Girl Live

Feb. 6 — 7 p.m.

The brand-new 90-minute musi-
cal celebrates female power,
friendships, and girls of all ages.
Warner Theatre, 811 State
St. americangirlslive.com.

Six By Tenn: The One-Acts of Tennessee Williams

Feb. 7, 8, 9 — 7:30 p.m.
& Feb. 10 — 2 p.m.
Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E.
38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Murder is a Game

Feb. 8 — 7 p.m. & Feb.
9 — 5:30 p.m.
Station Dinner Theatre, 4940
Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

Towards Zero

Feb. 8, 9 — 7:30 p.m. &
Feb. 10 — 3 p.m.
All An Act Theatre, 652 W.
17th St. allanact.net.

Endgame

Feb. 13 — 8 p.m.
Schuster Theatre, 620
Sassafras St. gannon.edu.

COMEDY

Sebastian Maniscalco

Jan. 31 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
2018 Comedian of the
Year takes center stage
for performance.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St.
eriewarnertheatre.com.

Dusty Slay

Jan. 31 — 7 p.m. & Feb. 1,
2 — 6:45 or 9:30 p.m.

Seasoned comedian walks
audience members through his
childhood and adult life while
throwing jokes in at every turn.
Jr's Last Laugh, 1402 State
St. jrslastlaugh.com.

Ben Bailey

Feb. 7 — 7 p.m. & Feb. 8,
9 — 6:45 or 9:30 p.m.
Jr's Last Laugh, 1402 State
St. jrslastlaugh.com.

SPORTS

Erie BayHawks vs. Rio Grande Valley Vipers

Jan. 30 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. gleague.nba.com.

Erie Otters vs. Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds

Feb. 1 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. ottershockey.com.

Free Boys Lacrosse Coaching Clinic

Feb. 2 — 9 a.m. to noon
MYAA Headquarters, 2614
Colonial Ave. bsnsports.com.

Lake Erie Winter Showcase

Feb. 2 — 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Lake Erie Speedway, 10700
Delmas Dr., North East, PA
16428 lakeerispeedway.com

Erie BayHawks vs. Salt Lake City Stars

Feb. 2 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. gleague.nba.com.

PA Nordic Championship

Feb. 3 — 9 a.m.
Wilderness Lodge, 13488 Weeks
Valley Rd., Wattsburg, PA 16442
thewildernesslodge.net

Erie BayHawks vs. Greensboro Swarm

Feb. 5 — 11 a.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. gleague.nba.com.

Erie Otters vs. Kitchener Rangers

Feb. 6 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. ottershockey.com.

Sarah Backstrom Girls Hockey Tournament

Feb. 8, 9, 10
Erie Bank Sports Park, 8155
Oliver Rd. erieyouthhockey.com.

Erie Otters vs. Oshawa Generals

Feb. 8 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. ottershockey.com.

Erie Otters vs. Windsor Spitfires

Feb. 9 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. ottershockey.com.

EPIC Volleyball Tournament

Feb. 10
ERIEBANK Sports Park,
8155 Oliver Rd. ovr.org.

Joe Root Frostbite Open

Feb. 10
Ninth annual 9-hole golf
scramble takes over frozen
Marina Lake at Presque Isle.
Marina Lake at PI State Park, 1
Peninsula Dr. discoverpi.com.

Erie BayHawks vs. Maine Red Claws

Feb. 13 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809
French St. gleague.nba.com.

COMMUNITY

Mafia & The Mob Trivia League

Jan. 30 — 6 p.m.
Room 33, 1033 State
St. facebook.com.

Basics of Audio Recording

Jan. 31 — 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160
E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Erie Auto Show

Jan. 31, Feb. 1 — noon to 8 p.m.
& Feb. 2 — 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
& Feb. 3 — 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Bayfront Convention
Center, 1 Sassafras Pier
eriepromotions.com.

Alzheimer's Support Group

Jan. 31 — 3 to 4 p.m.
Lincoln Community Center
Library, 1255 Manches-
ter Rd. erielibrary.org.

Matthew Ferrence

Jan. 31 — 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Associate professor and
chair of Allegheny College's
English department shares
his work, which has been
recognized widely in North
American literary journals.
Smith Chapel at Penn St.
Behrend, 4701 College
Dr. facebook.com.

The Outstanding Snow Owl

Jan. 31 — 7 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Cen-
ter, 301 Peninsula Dr. trempi.org.

With and About Projects: Reimagining Dominant Culture

Jan. 31 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Photographer and professor
uses learned media tools and
practices to build a more "integ-
rity-driven dominant culture."
Jefferson Educational Society,
3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Digital Skills for Your Community

Feb. 1 — 9 to 10:30 a.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160
E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Get Found on Google Search and Maps

Feb. 1 — 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160
E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Get Started with Email, Spreadsheets, and Presentations

Feb. 1 — 3 to 4:30 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160

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FEBRUARY

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					1 SSM 7PM	2 @HAM 4PM
3	4	5	6 KIT 7PM	7	8 OSH 7PM	9 WSR 7PM
10	11	12 @KIT 7PM	13	14	15 @LDN 7:30PM	16 NIA 7PM
17 LDN 4PM	18	19	20	21	22 @GUE 7:30PM	23 @OS 7:30PM
24	25	26	27 GUE 7PM	28		



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Cash Cab’s Ben Baily at Jr.’s: Aw ‘Hail’ Yeah



Ben Bailey, a 6'6" comedy club bouncer-turned-comedian, hosted the popular Discovery Channel game show *Cash Cab* for 13 seasons. He will be pulling over at Jr's Last Laugh Comedy Club for a five-show engagement.

THURSDAY, FEB.7

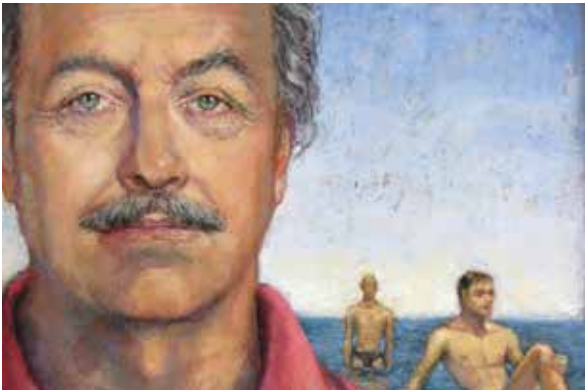
Driving a cab is so much more than just chauffeuring people from here to there in a big city. You have to be able to think quickly

on your feet; you have to be prepared for the unexpected, at any time of the night or day; and you have to have thick skin, an inner toughness that keeps you from taking rude comments personally. Does that sound like any other profession you can think of?

For Ben Bailey, these qualities served him well in the years prior to his helming the *Cash Cab*, because this three-time Emmy Award winner started his career in show biz as a stand-up comedian — another job that is not for the faint of heart. Actually, the 6’6” comedian, actor and producer started his Hollywood career as a bouncer in a comedy club, but his hilarious story-telling caught the attention of the emcee, who invited him to take the stage. On such chance moments do entertainment careers hinge. Though he made a name for himself on the club circuit, he became a game show phenomenon as the host of *Cash Cab*, where NYC cab riders have the

length of their trip to answer trivia and win money. Lucky for Erie and the patrons of Jr.’s Last Laugh, Bailey parked the cab and hung up the keys (for now at least), as he returned to his stand-up roots and embarked on a nationwide tour. His stop here in the Gem City will be a three-night, five-show engagement. After 13 seasons of *Cash Cab*, navigating the heavy, congested traffic of NYC, one can’t help but wonder what Ben Bailey would make of our Peach Street jam. — Cara Suppa
Thurs: 7:00 p.m.; Fri/Sat: 6:45 & 9:30 p.m. // 1402 State St. // Thurs: \$15; Fri/Sat: \$20 // jrslastlaugh.com/ben-bailey

Take ‘Tenn’ for Student-led Tennessee Williams Fest at ‘Hurst



JUAN FERNANDO BASTOS

and poetry. Yet this late-bloomer, who finally attained success at age 33 when *The Glass Menagerie* debuted in New York City, will forever be associated with the stage and with his works’ many brilliant adaptations on screen, such as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and the quintessential *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The Mercyhurst Institute for Arts and Culture not only brings in renowned legends like Shirley MacLaine and Lily Tomlin, it provides support for Erie’s up-and-coming actors and directors in the Mercyhurst Theatre Program. *Six by Tenn: The One-Acts of Tennessee Williams* is a festival-like exhibition of Williams’ one-act plays, all helmed by student directors who have been involved at every stage of the production process, from textual analysis, to casting, to staging and rehearsals. Plays will be set in the intimate Taylor Little Theatre in Weber Hall, Mercyhurst University’s original performing arts space. Plays include *This Property is Condemned*, directed by Alexis Webb; *I Can’t Imagine Tomorrow*, directed

by Monica Tinsley; *The Case of the Crushed Petunias*, directed by Jacob Tretinik; *Hello from Bertha*, directed by Abby Whitman; *Lord Byron’s Love Letter*, directed by Tessa Sayre; and *Auto-da-Fé*, directed by Elizabeth Shewan. The former three will be performed twice, on two separate days (Feb. 7 and 9), and the latter three will also be performed twice, on two completely separate days (Feb. 8 and 10). Eighteen further students were brought on to fill out the casts, as well as three additional students to fill the lighting design, production stage manager, and assistant stage manager positions. Erie is blessed with its rich performing arts scene, and productions like *Six by Tenn* bring essential, classical American theater to our community. — Cara Suppa
7:30 p.m. (see website for full schedule and time details) // 501 E. 38th St. // Adults: \$10; Seniors: \$7; Students/Youth: \$5 // miac.mercyhurst.edu

THURSDAY, FEB. 7

Few playwrights — save for William Shakespeare or perhaps Arthur Miller — enjoy such robust name recognition as Tennessee Williams, the Missouri-born author of not only plays, but also essays, short stories,

E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](#).

Erie Bluffs Trek
Feb. 2 — 10 a.m.
Erie Bluffs State Park, 11122 W. Lake Rd., Lake City, PA 16423 [events.dcnr.pa.gov](#).

Millcreek Branch Library Open House
Feb. 2 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Rd. Ste. 280 [erielibrary.org](#).

Cabin Fever Reliever
Feb. 2 — 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
NWPACollegiate Academy, 2825 State St. [CACabinFeverReliever@gmail.com](#).

Basics of Home Maple Syrup Production
Feb. 2 — 10:30 a.m. to noon

Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. [registrationdesk.asburywoods.org](#).

Cross Country Ski Clinics
Feb. 2, 9 — 10:30 a.m. to noon
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. [registrationdesk.asburywoods.org](#).

Crystal Workshop
Feb. 2 — noon
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. [facebook.com](#).

Pokemon League
Feb. 2 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](#).

Paddleboard Yoga
Feb. 3 — 11:30 a.m.
Glenwood YMCA, 3727 Cherry St. [ymcaerie.org](#).

Ladies’ Funday on Super Bowl Sunday
Feb. 3 — 1 to 4 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars, 9440 W. Main St., North East, PA 16428 [piwine.com](#).

Yoga with Kelly
Feb. 3 — 4:30 p.m.
Tippy Bean, 2425 Peach St. [facebook.com](#).

What Is Junior Jeopardy?
Feb. 4, 11 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Multiple library locations [erielibrary.org](#).

Stabilization Strategy for Resilience Abroad
Feb. 4 — 4:30 to 6 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](#).

Legends of the Night Sky

Feb. 4 — 6 p.m.
Cooper Science Center, 230 Scotland Rd., Edinboro, PA 16444 [edinboro.edu](#).

Gentle Yoga and Meditation: Level 1
Feb. 4 — 6 to 7:30 p.m. & Feb. 7 — 10:30 a.m. to noon
Multiple library locations [erielibrary.org](#).

Monday Makers: Meal Prep Workshop
Feb. 4 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](#).

Yoga and Shakes
Feb. 4 — 7 p.m.
Zero Gravity, 4447 W. Ridge Rd. [facebook.com](#).

Sunset Beach Hike

Feb. 5 — 5 p.m.
Beach 9 at PI State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. [trecpi.org](#).

Theology Pub & Cafe
Feb. 5, 12 — 7 p.m.
Tippy Bean, 2425 Peach St. [facebook.com](#).

Lincoln in Erie
Feb. 5 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](#).

DiscoverE: Salamanders
Feb. 6 — 10:30 a.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [trecpi.org](#).

Creating a Home Inventory Using Basic Excel
Feb. 6 — 12:30 to 2 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [LifeWorksErie.org](#).

Startup Grind: Fireside Chat w Zak Stahlsmith
Feb. 6 — 5:30 to 8 p.m.
Cashier’s House, 417 State St. [startupgrind.com](#).

Yoga at Attic Rehab
Feb. 6 — 6 p.m.
Attic Rehab, 1501 State St. [facebook.com](#).

Romance Paperback Sale
Feb. 7 — 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. & Feb. 8 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Feb. 9 — 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](#).

Diabetes Self-Management Workshop
Feb. 7 — 1 to 3:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [LifeWorksErie.org](#).

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CALENDAR

Quaff for a Cause at Ales for Sails



FRIDAY, FEB. 8

Beer is thicker than water — if you’ve ever tried to guzzle them at the same rate, you might know what I’m talking about. Nonetheless, beer is 90 to 95 percent comprised of water, so they are essentially almost one and the same (note: not a valid argument for the police).

And so it is with the local craft brewing and maritime communities during the annual Ales for Sails fundraiser event. Bonded by a mutual love of and investment in water, the Bayfront Maritime Center invites 10 Lake Erie Ale Trail breweries to pack its halls and sample their libations. Proceeds from the event, now in its seventh iteration, put a stiff wind behind the sails of the BMC’s mission: “To design and implement engaging, hands-on, maritime-themed edu-

cational, vocational opportunities for the community in a universally accessible waterfront facility.”

A \$40 ticket secures each attendee a commemorative glass that can be filled (and re-filled) at any of the 10 draught stations, appetizers from Ca-

li’s West Catering, and one vote for their favorite participating brewery: Arundel Cellars & Brewing, Blue Canoe Brewery, The Brewerrie at Union Station, Erie Ale Works, Erie Brewing Co., Five & 20 Spirits and Brewing, Koehler Brewing Co., Lavery Brewing Co., Orr’s Brewing Co., and Timber Creek Tap & Table. Additionally, music will be provided by Millennium Sound and photo booth opportunities will be available courtesy of Video Veritas.

If this sounds like something you’d be into, trust your (beer) gut and reserve your spot today — with sellouts each year, this ship is sure to have sailed. — Matt Swanseger

6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. // Bayfront Maritime Center, 40 Holland St. // \$40 // bayfrontcenter.org

Erie RV Show

Feb. 7 — 2 to 8 p.m. & Feb. 8 — noon to 8 p.m. & Feb. 9 — 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. & Feb. 10 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Browse a variety of RVs, motorcycles, and campsites from vendors across the area at annual expo.

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafraus Pier
eriepromotions.com.

Give Kids a Smile Day

Feb. 8
Fortis Institute, 5757 W. 26th St., Building E
givekidsasmile.ada.org

Little Leaves

Feb. 8, 9 — 10 to 10:45 a.m.
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Beach Glass Drilling Valentine Style

Feb. 8 — 6 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trepci.org.

Wellness Night

Feb. 8 — 6 to 9 p.m.

Various locations eriewellnessnetwork.com

Backyard Beekeeping

Feb. 9 — 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. registrationdesk.asburywoods.org.

Story Shenanigans: Dinosaur Tea Party

Feb. 9 — 10 to 11 a.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Iroquois Branch Library Open House

Feb. 9 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Iroquois Ave. Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. erielibrary.org.

Learn to Snowshoe

Feb. 9 — 10:30 a.m. to noon
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. registrationdesk.asburywoods.org.

Paws For A Cause

Feb. 9 — noon to 5 p.m.
Polish Falcons Club, 431 E. 3rd St. facebook.com.

Peek’n Peak Ski Patrol Open House

Feb. 9 — 1 p.m.
Peek’n Peak Resort, 1405 Olde Rd. Clymer, NY
14724.facebook.com.

Teen Advisory Board Meeting

Feb. 9 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

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Vex and Vigil & 76 Tattoo Grand Opening Party

Feb. 9 — 7 to 10 p.m.
The grand opening of open space tattoo studio and art gallery will feature local artists’ works, hors d’oeuvres, drinks, prizes, and more.
Vex & Vigil, 2230 W. 8th St. facebook.com.

14th Annual Winterfest

Feb. 10 — noon to 3:30 p.m.
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Cupids & Canines

Crack the Mystery at All An Act's Towards Zero



FRIDAY, FEB. 8

As with Clue, the childhood board game loved by many, suspense is at the forefront of All An Act's annual production of *Towards Zero*. Audience members "rarely figure out who the guilty party was. Sometimes they change their favorite suspect several times during the show," said Larry Lewis, managing director and co-founder of All An Act Theatre.

The Agatha Christie mystery is a staple of the production company's season, having run for nine consecutive years. Thanks to Christie's intricately woven plot, the show never fails to draw interested crowds. "[These productions] are always among the most attended shows we do," Lewis, who is directing the show, said.

"If the audience figures out 'whodunnit' early in the show, then we haven't

done our job," he continued. The secrets are held until the end by All An Act's talented troupe who, through years of perfecting the play, have mastered the "threatening looks (and) subtle innuendos" critical for the believability of the play.

Lewis elaborated, "When a seasoned cast with a strong chemistry works

their magic along with Christie's incredible gift for writing mystery, it makes for one great night of theater. Christie never just hits you over the head with clues. She whispers them in your ear when you least expect them."

Starring Adele Crotty, Crantel and Shantel Kay, David W. Mitchell, J.D. Mizikowski, Raymond Steinbacher, Dorothy Kaliszewski, Peggy Brace, Giovanni Ciminella, Eli Coppeck, Raymond Steinbacher, Chad Santos and Andrew Heidt, showings will begin in early February.

One dollar from each ticket sold will benefit the Community Shelter Services.— Hannah McDonald

Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m. through March 3 // 652 W. 17th St. // \$12 adults, \$10 students and seniors, \$5 children under 12 // (814) 450-8553 // allanact.net

Adoption Event

Feb. 10 — noon to 4 p.m.
SAGA Club, 3828 Washington Ave. [facebook.com](#).

Second Sundays: Snow Day

Feb. 10 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Dementia: Communication Tips & Techniques

Feb. 11 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [LifeWorksErie.org](#).

PI History Series: Maps Through Time

Feb. 11 — 6 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [trepci.org](#).

Love Your Heart

Feb. 11 — 6 p.m.
Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W. 26th St. [wfcerie.coop](#).

Mending for Beginners

Feb. 11 — 6 to 7 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](#).

Monday Makers: Turkish Calligraphy Demo

Feb. 11 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](#).

Read to a Therapy Dog

Feb. 12 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Lincoln Community Center Library, 1255 Manchester Rd. [erielibrary.org](#).

Colors & Cocoa

Feb. 12 — 5:30 to 7 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](#).

Beginner Improv

Feb. 12 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [LifeWorksErie.org](#).

Align Your Vibration

Feb. 12 — 6:30 p.m.
Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W. 26th St. [wfcerie.coop](#).

The History of Valentine's Day

Feb. 12 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Dr. Andrew Roth delves into the history of Valentine's Day and explores how the event

changed from Romans and saints to roses and seasonal cards. Chocolate and wine available to those 21 and older.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](#).

Teacher Workshop: Pennsylvania Songbirds

Feb. 13 — 6 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [trepci.org](#).

Interpretive Snowshoe Walk

Feb. 13 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Asbury Woods, 4105 Asbury Rd. [registrationdesk.asburywoods.org](#).

The Stars Are Ours

Feb. 13 — 7 p.m.
Cooper Science Center, 230 Scotland Rd., Edinboro, PA 16444 [edinboro.edu](#).

William Penn, John Marshall, and Robert H. Jackson

Feb. 13 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](#).

Support Local Arts Students at the 9th Annual Fringe Fest Erie



FRIDAY, FEB. 8 — 23

Next Friday will see the return of Gannon University's ever-popular Fringe Fest Erie. Based on the Edinburgh Festival Fringe of Scotland, this two-week event will feature a wide array of shows from both on- and off-campus production companies.

Things will kick off next weekend with open mic comedy nights on both Friday and Saturday evening, starting at 8 p.m. at The Knight Club. Here, students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to bring their own stories and jokes to share with a local crowd. Then, from Sunday, February 13th through Wednesday, February 16th, Schuster Theatre will be featuring

an on-campus production of *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett. Originally produced in 1957, this one-act play from the writer of *Waiting for Godot* is an absurdist piece that ruminates on loneliness and the cyclical nature of life, utilizing only four characters throughout.

Finally, on Friday, February 22nd, members of the university's honors theater fraternity, Alpha Psi Omega, will be presenting 23:59:59, an imaginative spin on their annual 24 Hour Show, in which theater members are directed to write, produce, and present an original work in a 24-hour time span.

In addition to these three on-campus productions, shows from local theater companies will also be featured throughout the city. More information about those upcoming shows is coming and will be located on the festival's Facebook event page. It's the start of a new year, and there's never been a better time to support our diverse arts community. — Aaron Mook

Showtimes vary // 620 Sassafras St. // Admission costs vary // [gannon.edu](#)

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Thursday, Jan. 31
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Tuesday, Feb. 5
"Lincoln in Erie" featuring Erie Historian Sabina S. Freeman



Tuesday, Feb. 12
"History of Valentine's Day" featuring Jefferson Scholar-in-resident Andy Roth

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CALENDAR

The Phil Takes Yellow Brick Road



METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

SATURDAY, FEB. 9-10

The prestigious Erie Philharmonic will be taking its audience through one of the most beloved experiences in all of cinema. *The Wizard Of Oz* will be brought to life with a special screening of the classic, held high above the orchestra for everyone to see. With the 1939 film playing overhead, the Erie Philharmonic will be recreating the entire music score of the film, playing along to every scene. As is custom with the Philharmonic, the magic will come alive at none other than the historic Warner Theater.

Word about this one-of-a-kind event

has been spreading rapidly around town, and you might want to get your tickets before the show becomes completely sold out (tickets still remain for the Sunday afternoon encore). The Philharmonic promises an incredible night that will make you feel as if you were galloping down the Yellow Brick Road yourself. Fun for all ages, our orchestra welcomes everyone to embark on the unforgettable journey that has made people all over laugh, cry, and cheer for ages. This live performance guarantees to have you strolling with Dorothy, Toto, and her newfound friends on her quest to find the one and only Wizard of Oz. — Charles Brown

Saturday 8 p.m., Sunday 2:30 p.m. // 811 State St. // Tickets \$20-\$52, \$10 for students // eriephil.org

Celebrate a Split Release with onewayness, Battalion of Cloudships, Spreaders and Friends



SPREADERS

Spreaders, a dark noise act hailing from New York, will help headline the latest installment of the electroFLUX experimental music series, this time at the Erie Movie House.

friends and fellow harsh feedback artists Jackson H. K. and Mike Sidnam.

In addition to onewayness and Battalion of Cloudships, Erie's unique harsh noise scene will be represented by DAGGER, who released their latest LP, *A BLADE IN THE DARK*, just last month, as well as Elephant Pill, a trip-hop project that creates original scores for imaginary stories, such as last year's *The Tortoise Hair Troupe*. With six more fresh musical acts to carry forth the electroFLUX name, it seems Holquist and company have crafted yet another show you'll need to hear to believe within Erie's expanding entertainment scene. — Aaron Mook

SATURDAY, FEB. 9

The latest installment of Adam Holquist's ongoing electroFLUX experimental music series is set for the Erie Movie House with an absolutely stacked album release party. Centered around *onewayness v. Battalion of Cloudships*, a split featuring two local post-ambient artists being released on CD, the event will also feature five additional acts, three of which are traveling from New York. One of these artists, set to headline the show, is Spreaders, a dark noise act who will be joined by

7 p.m. to 11 p.m. // 3424 W. Lake Rd. // \$8 // All Ages, BYOB 21+ // facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse

That Lovin' Feelin' Comes to Mercyhurst



SATURDAY, FEB. 16

You've heard Darlene Love. Beginning in the late 1950s, she has appeared in countless recordings, including those from Elvis Presley, The Beach Boys, Sam Cooke, Tom Jones, and the recordings of Phil Spector (including the Righteous Brothers tune that this headline is cribbed from). While her powerful voice permeated pop culture, it wasn't until years later that she found the audience she deserved.

Working primarily as a backup singer, she eventually established a successful solo career decades later. Regrettably, Love relinquished the rights to most of the songs that she appeared on. After taking a break from the music industry in the 1970s and working as a maid, she revived her career in the 1980s. Thankfully, Love was able to capitalize on one of her best-known songs (and one actually credited to her by name), "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)." Acting

a bit as well, she appeared as Danny Glover's wife, Trish Murtaugh in the *Lethal Weapon* quadrilogy.

These days, she's made a name for herself, being called "one of the greatest singers of all time" by Rolling Stone Magazine. One major factor for this rightful ascension in recent years was the prominent role she played in the film *20 Feet from Stardom*. Winning the 2014 Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature, she took the stage for the acceptance speech, doing a brief rendition of "I Sing Because I'm Happy" to a standing ovation. Mercyhurst's Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center will be one of her next stops. Just a few days following Valentine's Day, it's sure to be a supremely appropriate time for some Love. — Nick Warren

7:30 p.m. // Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. // Adults \$30, Seniors \$25, Students \$20 // *mia*.c. mercyhurst.edu

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a love song mixtape

Tracks with heart from Erie's music scene

Compiled by Nick Warren

Love Songs. They're pretty much the basis for 99 percent of pop music. It's not just the Top 40 purveyors that have a monopoly on love or the lack thereof, however. We wanted to create a musical collage fit for Rob Sheffield, with the theme of love being interpreted in different ways by different ears. Posing a simple question, we asked some key members of the local music scene to pick a favorite love song of theirs and let us know why. So here's a little mixtape from them to you.

Stephen Trohoske - Bassist of Stephen Trohoske's Art Groupies, Ahimsa Beat, et. al.

"Martha" by Tom Waits

It's a rediscovery of love many years later after two people have lived different lives, loved and lost their spouses, raised their children, and reached out for each other, thinking back to when love still had romance. It's sad, sweet and filled with that romance.

Mark Gorski

Lead Guitarist of Real Fake Doors

"Baby I'm Yours" by Barbara Lewis

The song has a classic old-time feel, with lyrics that are simple and sweet, and music that is perfect for a slow dance.

Dave Defranco - Bassist of Hard Luck Story, The New Morning Sunrise, and Save Yourself

"She's Got You" by Patsy Cline

Describes a very specific brand of pain in a relatable way, and it's sung by one of country's greatest voices.

Roxann Hudock - Singer of Black Moon Mistress

"No One's Gonna Love You" by Band Of Horses

Hmm that's tough! I think I'm gonna roll with this because that song gives me chills every single time I hear it. It really takes me back to when Zach and I were first dating and sharing special moments together. Still holds as one of my faves!

Carlos Rivera - Singer/guitarist of Mala Sangre and the Trotts

"I Want You Around" by Ramones

It's off of *Road to Ruin*, and on the soundtrack to *Rock 'n' Roll High School*. I like the song because of the cadence during the chorus, and who doesn't want their significant other around. Touches the heart.

Teddy Rankin - Singer/Songwriter

"First Day of My Life" by Bright Eyes

This is my favorite love song because the lyrics are an amazing piece of poetry that truly captures the feeling of love. It should be played at every wedding for all time!

Abby Barret - Violist of Abigail Lynn Music

"Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini" by Sergei Rachmaninoff

I don't have words for this piece of music.

John Johnston - Guitarist of This American Song and Tiny Paper Boats

"There She Goes" by the La's

Such a great hook, pretty subversive, and sad ... textbook love.

Abby Badach Doyle - Singer/fiddle player of Gem City Revival

"Tougher Than the Rest" by Bruce Springsteen

I just finished Bruce Springsteen's brilliant autobiography, *Born to Run*. It shook me in the best way to see The Boss – the picture of masculinity – write with intense vulnerability about falling (and staying) in love with his wife, Patti Scialfa. This captures that vulnerable feeling of knowing you've found real love but still being afraid to give your heart up. They perform it as a smoldering duet in *Springsteen on Broadway*.

Brooke Surgener - Singer/Songwriter

"I Will Follow You Into the Dark" by Death Cab for Cutie

I first heard this song at 15 years old, it's a song that has grown with me and meant many things through different relationships – including my brother, ex-boyfriends, best friends, and my father. No one wants to be alone, and it's a song about being there for someone, through life and death. Anytime I play it, or just listen to it, it never gets old.

Robert Jensen - Founder of Basement Transmissions; Beats, Samples, and Synths for Green Fingers and Jensen & Three Sharks

"Rhesus Negative" by Blanck Mass

I choose this song because it is relentless, progressive in its use of sampling, both experimental and listenable and in my opinion, is just plain fantastic! I love that the vocal processing and I think it was produced by using a kids karaoke machine. Blanck Mass is half of the electronic duo Fuck Buttons that records in a similar nature but has not released any music in four years.

Steve Weiser - Percussionist; Executive Director of the Erie Philharmonic

"Peace" by O.A.R.

Through thick and thin, this song has always been the perfect way to be reminded about what is most important in my life.

Michael Hibbler II - Drums for The Monk's Brew, Cult Classics, The Hibsters, The Blue Docks Jazz Combo

"One and Only" by Adele

This is my favorite love song because – for me and my wife – it's "our song." It tells the story of letting your defenses down and giving the unexpected a chance, to prove they can be the best thing that ever happened to them.

Ryan Bartosek - Bassist; Promoter at the King's Rook Club

"The Ballad of Love and Hate" by The Avett Brothers

Everybody craves love, seeks it out, is desperate for it. When you don't have it in your life, or you've had it then lost it, those times can be dark and scary. I feel this song gives hope that those dark times are only temporary.

Adam Holquist - Keyboard player and multi-instrumentalist for onewayness and The LEC

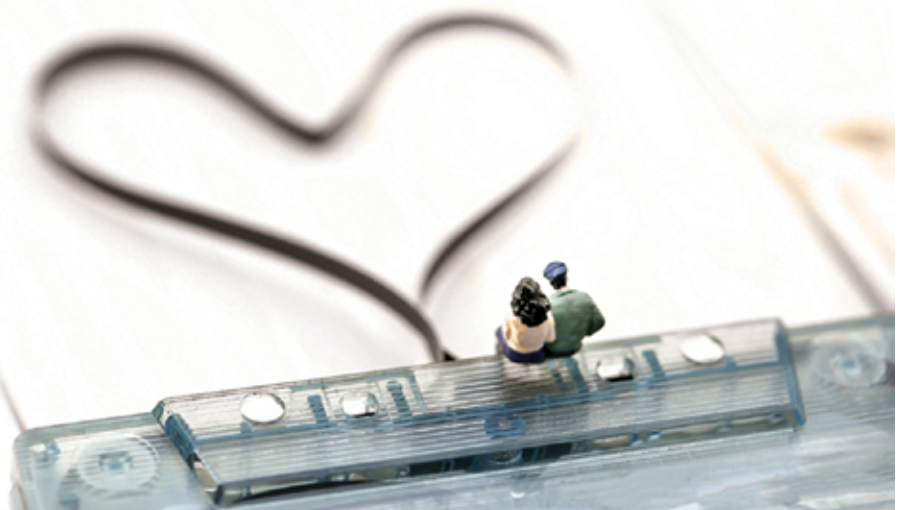
"The Luckiest" by Ben Folds

Ben Folds has written plenty of songs that are goofy and even downright cringey. But he's also written a solid handful that I can't hear – or even think too hard about – without getting choked up. And most of them are decidedly NOT love songs. But this is a song about finding your person, that's also somehow about death and failure and the melancholy of marveling at how easily things are that could have not been, instead. And love songs that are not just love songs are the best kind.

"Morbid" Rob Burke - Singer of Maniacal Device

"I'll Be Your Sister" by Motörhead

A wise man once said, "If you don't like Motörhead, fuck you." That wise man was me. Dirty and beautiful, Lemmy cuts right to the chase on this tune. No frills, no flowers, right to the meat of the matter.



MOVIE REVIEWS

If Beale Street Could Talk: Barry Jenkins' New Film is Deeply Intimate and Compassionate

★★★★★



ANAPURNA PICTURES

Barry Jenkins caught the attention of the world (and the Academy) with *Moonlight*, a touching and intimate story about sexuality and masculine identity that proved to be a powerfully emotional experience for many audiences, including this writer. His follow-up *If Beale Street Could Talk* was one of the most anticipated films of the year and I'm happy to say that it both exceeded expectations and firmly places Jenkins among masters like Wong Kar-Wai and Hou Hsiao-Hsien as one of the best chroniclers of the human experience working today.

Based on James Baldwin's 1974 novel, the film follows Tish and Fonny (Kiki Layne and Stephen James), a very young couple in Harlem who are just starting to work on their life together after Tish discovers that she is pregnant. However, when Fonny is falsely accused of a crime and incarcerated, Tish and her family find themselves doing what they can to raise money for his defense as well as racing to prove Fonny's innocence.

The film's story could easily fall into the traps of becoming a generic melodrama or political soapbox. Jenkins avoids these pitfalls by focusing intensely on the people caught in this dilemma, but also recognizes that this is a story that has affected (as an incredible supporting role from Bryan Tyree Henry attests) far too many people in this country. The result is a beautifully shot and powerfully acted story that deals with a tragically common problem in an intimately human way. I think when describing the films of Barry Jenkins, "intimately human" would be the best description. — Forest Taylor

Written and directed by: Barry Jenkins, based on the novel by James Baldwin // Starring: Kiki Layne, Stephen James, Regina King, Colman Domingo, Teyonah Parris, Michael Beach, Aunjanue Harris, Ebony Obsidian, Domonique Thorne, Diego Luna, Finn Wittrock, Ed Skrein, Emily Rios, Bryan Tyree Henry and Dave Franco // 119 minutes // Rated R

Superhuman: Glass is Occasionally Interesting, Mostly Silly

★★★



UNIVERSAL PICTURES

No filmmaker has had more of a roller-coaster career than M. Night Shyamalan. After hitting it big with critics and audiences, he went on to make some truly bizarre films that ranged from ambitious failures (*The Village*) to hilariously inept (*The Happening*). Shyamalan has found something of a comeback recently with Blumhouse Studios, making smaller scale thrillers culminating with his newest film, *Glass*. It is solidly a Shyamalan story; that is to say it is ambitious, uneven, and often more than a little dumb.

A sequel to both 2000's *Unbreakable* (still the director's best) and 2017's *Split*, the film begins with David Dunn (Bruce Willis) tracking down seemingly supernatural serial killer Kevin Wendell Crumb (James McAvoy) to an abandoned factory. During their fight, they are both apprehended and taken to a psychiatric hospital where the notorious Elijah Price (Samuel L. Jackson) has been kept all these years. Upon seeing what Crumb is capable of, Price plans to use him for more supervillain schemes.

The film initially asks some really intriguing questions about the myth of the superhero in our culture and how powerless people may use them as a vicarious power fantasy. Unfortunately, that's all a preamble to the film's true goal: silly theatrics and a plot that violates *Unbreakable*'s entire premise. I can't talk about some of these problems without spoiling major parts of the film, but the story takes a left turn so jarring, it ruins everything else the film had going for it. As the eponymous Mr. Glass intones: "This is real life, not a cartoon." If that's the case, why does *Glass* insist on being so cartoonish? — Forest Taylor

Written and directed by: M. Night Shyamalan // Starring: James McAvoy, Bruce Willis, Samuel L. Jackson, Anya Taylor-Joy, Sarah Paulson, Spencer Treat Clark, Luke Kirby, Adam David Thompson, and Charlayne Woodard // 129 minutes // Rated PG-13

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MUSIC REVIEWS

Pedro the Lion
Phoenix
Polyvinyl Records

★★★★★

On *Phoenix*, Pedro the Lion's first proper album since 2004's *Achilles Heel*, frontman David Bazan manages something most reunion records never get quite right. Despite releasing four increasingly synth-centered solo albums over the past decade — aptly comparable to Pedro the Lion — Bazan made sure that there were no doubts about the artist name attributed to *Phoenix*. The album hearkens back to the Midwestern sounds of slowcore and emo that encapsulates Pedro the Lion's heyday — a heyday fans may now question considering just how thrilling and thoughtful this record is. *Phoenix* was conceived while Bazan was staying with family members on the road, lending to the album's desert-like palette and nostalgic storytelling. There are rewarding motifs throughout, such as the anthemic lead single's titular "Yellow Bike." Still, as familiar as the album sounds, Bazan navigates an array of subgenres with ease, from the crunchy power-pop of "Clean Up" to the piercing guitars that mark "Powerful Taboo" just a track later. Between its oscillating musical textures ("Quietest Friend") and emotional anchors ("Model Homes"), *Phoenix* very well may be Bazan's strongest work to date. — Aaron Mook



Steve Gunn
The Unseen In Between
Matador Records

★★★★★

Steve Gunn's discography has always been an understated one, making for an intensely rewarding listening experience for fans the relatively underrated artist. The echoing tremulous introduction of "New Moon" is a swirling, almost psychedelic piece that's easy to get lost in — in the best way possible. The tempo picks up a bit with "Vagabond," filled with welcoming guitar chimes, a few more hooks and beautiful backing vocals by vocalist Meg Baird. The most touching moment comes at the end of the album's first half, with "Stonehurst Cowboy," written about the Gunn's father who passed away in 2016. As a whole, *The Unseen In Between* is a gorgeous work, one without an obvious timestamp. There's a retro element at work for sure, a lush folk sound akin to Ryley Walker. Gunn, a Brooklynite and former guitarist with Kurt Vile, has had an impressive catalog, this being his fourth album proper — among many EPs and collaborations (like 2013's with Hiss Golden Messenger, or 2014's with Mike Cooper). While *Unseen* doesn't quite hit the heights of 2016's *Eyes On The Lines* and its unique guitar artistry, it's yet another strong release from a relatively underrated, brilliant songwriter. — Nick Warren



Future
Future Hndrxx Presents The WIZRD
Epic Records

★★★

What is left to be said about Future's latest project that hasn't been said about his past work? *Future Hndrxx Presents The WIZRD* is simultaneously overstuffed and undercooked at 20 tracks, most of which hover around three minutes or less, with none in particular standing out as the prolific Atlanta rapper's next "Mask Off"-sized hit. Despite this initial disappointment, *The WIZRD* is completely listenable, a cohesive playlist that benefits from Future's typical aesthetic and beats that consistently come to work, if nothing else. There are highlights here; standouts "Temptation" and "Crushed Up" are ambitious singles that succeed in delivering memorable beats, while later on, tracks like "F&N" and "Baptiize" highlight the kind of head-turning beat switches that marked Travis Scott's *ASTROWORLD* just last year. Unfortunately, for each of these tracks that wouldn't feel out of place on a previous, more consistent project, there's one that feels slightly out of tune ("Call the Coroner"), or even worse, off-beat (opener "Never Stop"). The unwieldy record is also top-heavy, which unfortunately strains much of Future's energy and enthusiasm throughout the album's scattered B-side. — Aaron Mook



Sharon Van Etten
Remind Me Tomorrow
JagJaguwar

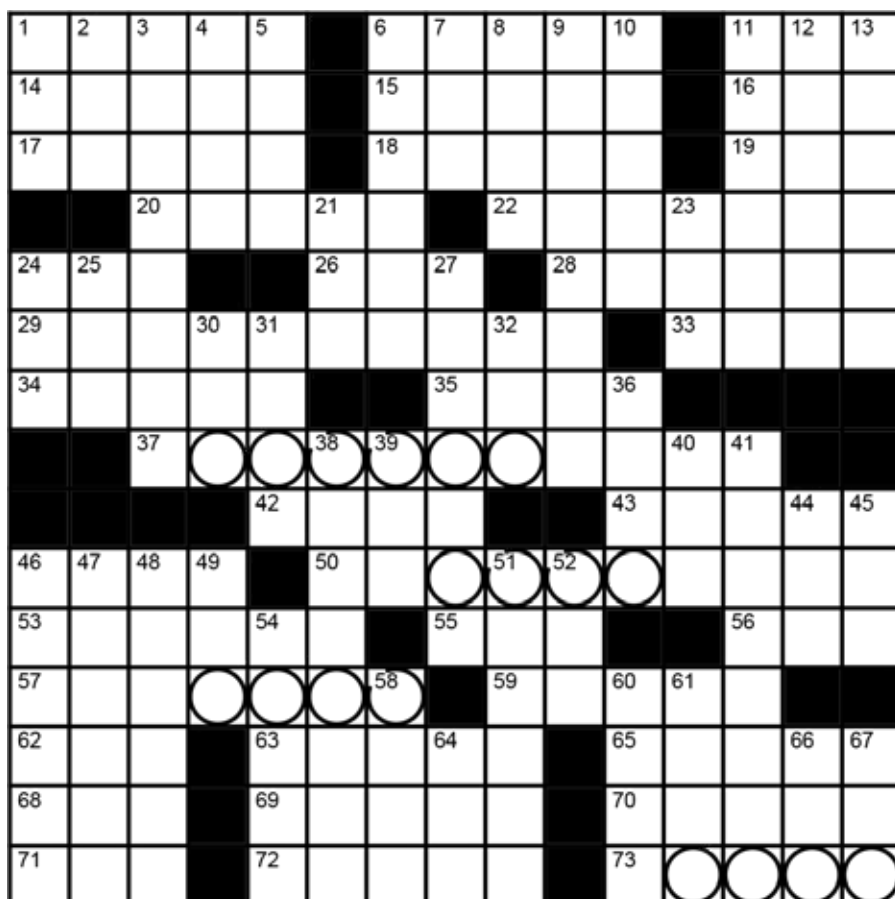
★★★★★

Opening with a minimal touch of piano reverberating in emptiness, "I Told You Everything" begins the album with a solemn, almost prayerful tone. It's a personal connection that Sharon Van Etten builds here, one that's strengthened by virtually every track. *Remind Me Tomorrow* is the fifth official album by the 37-year-old New Jersey songwriter (Van Etten recorded and self-released five albums prior to her formal debut, 2009's *Because I Was In Love*). This is also perhaps her strongest release in an already formidable career, and *Remind Me Tomorrow* serves should serve as an early benchmark for album of the year. Van Etten has long been a fountain of creativity and her latest output flows freely with it. This record notably shifts from a folk, almost alt-country vibe into a more modern indie pop sound, her haunting, evocative alto voice selling it all perfectly. From the synth nightmare-club sounds of "Memorial Day" to the triumphantly mournful pulses of "Hands," the record is a dark and alluring portrait. The highlight of the album is "Seventeen" a nostalgic blend that channels Arcade Fire's *The Suburbs* re-translated as a working-class Springsteen-esque anthem. — Nick Warren



TOMMY IN TOON — BY TOMMY LINK



**Across**

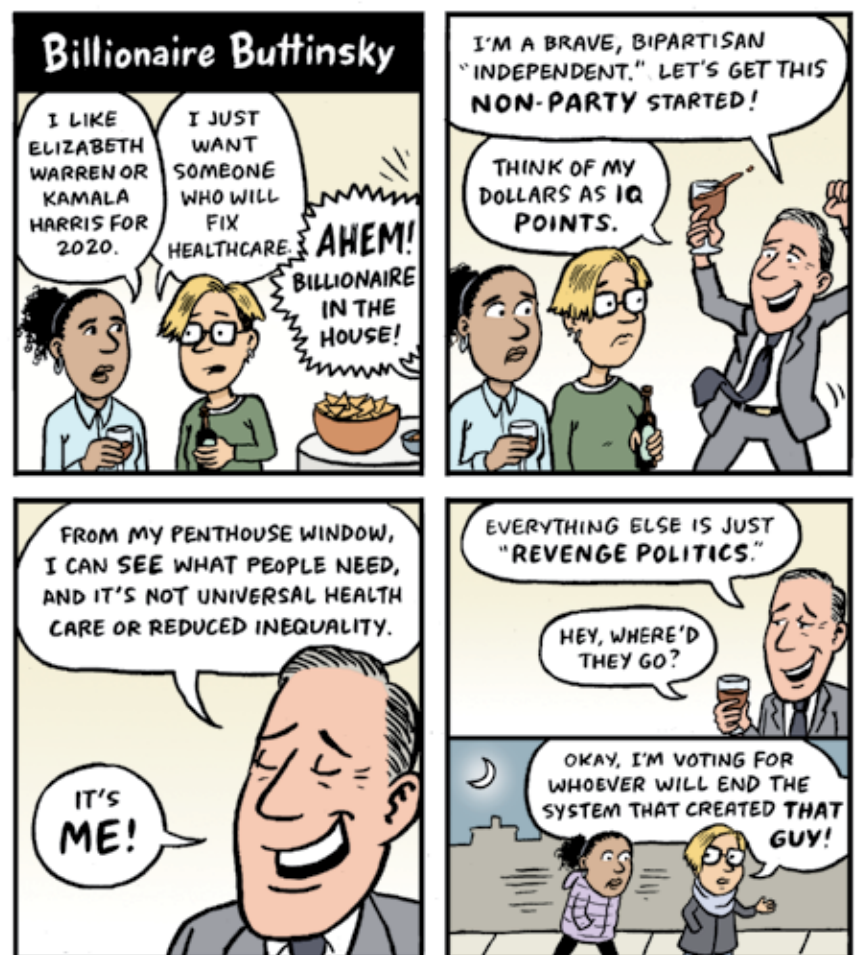
1. With 22- and 29-Across, a classic movie line from "Good Will Hunting" ... or a query about this puzzle's groups of circled letters
 6. "Later"
 11. Aid in climbing the corp. ladder
 14. Shatter
 15. Early Peruvian
 16. Canon model
 17. "44"
 18. Jury of one's ____
 19. Auction grouping
 20. Excite
 22. See 1-Across
 24. AOL alternative
 26. Will Smith/Tommy Lee Jones film franchise, for short
 28. Sportscaster who played a sportscaster in "Major League"
 29. See 1-Across
 33. Laura of "Star Wars: The Last Jedi"
 34. "The Tortoise and the Hare" fabulist
 35. Finished
 37. Stole, as gasoline
 42. Apt rhyme of "crude"
 43. Plugs away
 46. Imperial ____ (bar orders)
 50. "Love Story" actress
 53. "The Wind in the Willows" amphibian
 55. When something

- should take off, for short
 56. Palindromic farm animal
 57. Feature of many a hospital rooftop
 59. Shirk one's responsibilities
 62. "Born in the ____"
 63. Train from Boston to Washington
 65. How losses appear on a ledger
 68. Some football line-men: Abbr.
 69. Longest river in Deutschland
 70. Sonia of "Kiss of the Spider Woman"
 71. Wee one
 72. Car company headquartered in Palo Alto, California
 73. Two-legged stand

Down

1. "Westworld" ailer
 2. Item at the end of a wizard's staff
 3. Failing
 4. Title for Helen Mirren
 5. "I'm cool with that"
 6. Brit's "Goodbye!"
 7. Direction from Mo. to Me.
 8. ____-deucy
 9. Lived it up
 10. Happen next
 11. Informal approval
 12. Politico Cory
 13. Rudderward

21. Stereotypically "blind" official, for short
 23. Like some digital clocks, for short
 24. Underground NYC org.
 25. "That's all ____ wrote"
 27. "The Tide Is High" band
 30. "Little ol' me?"
 31. Fridge or freezer: Abbr.
 32. Preceding day
 36. Campus mil. program
 38. Ibuprofen target
 39. Hogwarts mail carrier
 40. Magic show effect
 41. It can easily go up in flames
 44. Typical John Grisham subject
 45. Perennially strong entrant at the Winter Olympics: Abbr.
 46. "That cuts me to the quick"
 47. Cousin of "Voilà!"
 48. "Finally!"
 49. "... or ____ gather"
 51. Peak that marks the eastern boundary of Yosemite Natl. Park
 52. Fuss
 54. In two
 58. Discord on the far left and far right?
 60. Bandmate Barry, Maurice or Robin
 61. Crucifixion letters
 64. Wee wee?
 66. Swelled head
 67. Pop

**Answers to last puzzle**



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