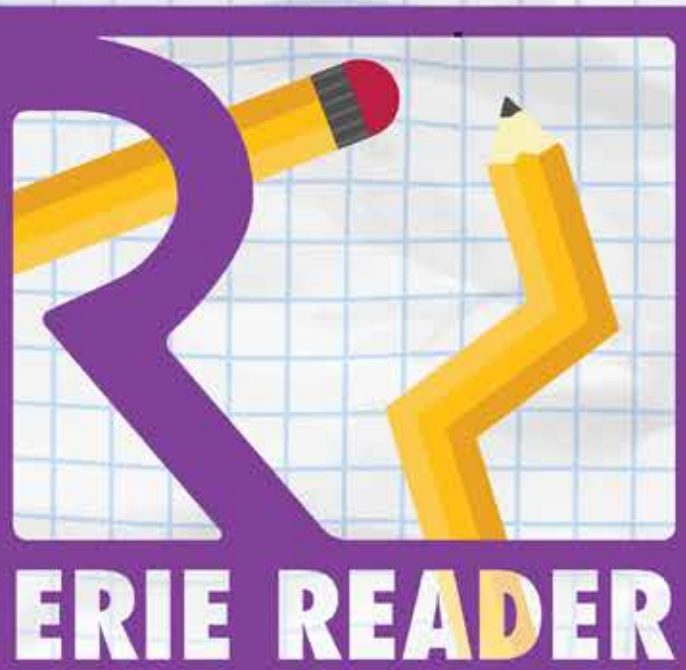


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From the Editors
Orientation season

Back to school is an adjustment for just about everyone.

For students, it’s reacclimating to a set schedule and learning the rules, expectations, and temperaments of new teachers. For parents, it’s the juggling act of before- and after-school logistics, appointments, and obligations. For teachers, it’s adapting to the learning needs of dozens of new faces, with pressures from parents and administrators looming large. On the administrative side, it’s the duty of keeping up with shifting standards and protocols within the constraints of time and facilities and budget. And for the rest of us, it’s pumping the brakes for all those freshly reactivated school zones.

We’ve grown especially averse to slowing down in this day and age, our go-go-go worlds rarely affording the opportunity. Changes to any routine will take some getting used to, and yet we expect these transitions to be seamless. Citywide, Erie is anxiously winding through the hallways on the way to its next period, hoping to find the right classroom, the one with all the tools and amenities to succeed. But who will be standing in front of it?

Shake-ups in leadership tend to leave the lot of us with frogs in our throats and/or butterflies in our stomachs. We’re vulnerable in our formative years, and Erie is going through an unprecedented growth spurt. At the center of this has been the Erie Downtown Development Corporation (EDDC), with former lawyer-turned-mayoral candidate John Persinger leading the charge. With Persinger stepping down at the end of the year, its next CEO will have to step up to the podium without tripping in front of the class.

At a municipal, state, and federal level, there are poised to be yet more new leaders instructing and guiding the trajectory of our future come November. As a community, we must be sure to do our collective homework on these candidates, to articulate our needs and concerns and hopes and dreams with confidence, lest our voices crack. When it’s our turn to tell the class a little about ourselves, we’d better know what to say.

In the meantime, there’s plenty of options to enjoy recess, with an events calendar that could fill several chalkboards — Arts and Drafts, ComiCon Erie, Gallery Night, the Wine Country Harvest Festival, and the Eerie Horror Fest represent just a sampling of what’s in the agenda book (see more online at eriereader.com). So while we should definitely tend to our assignments, let’s not forget how to play.

We all too often grow up too fast.



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Erie At Large: The Last Line of Defense

How important your vote for Pennsylvania's next governor could be

By: Jim Wertz

Mail-in ballots begin to arrive in mailboxes across the commonwealth shortly after Monday, Sept. 19, the first day counties can begin to deliver mail-in ballots. That means sometime between then and Tuesday, Nov. 8 — Election Day — voters will have to make a decision about the future of the commonwealth and the future of our country. Moreover, the outcomes of this election are likely to have a significant impact on our next presidential election in 2024, as many of the people on the ballot this year — and their cronies in state and federal government — continue to deny the results of the 2020 presidential election.

While every race this year has amplified importance, perhaps no race is more important than the Pennsylvania governor's race. That's because our next governor will either be the final backstop to defend the people of Pennsylvania from a sedition-prone, anti-choice, anti-education, anti-union legislature, or he will be the election-denying, confederate and Nazi-sympathizing rubber stamp who funded the transport of hundreds of people to accompany him to the January 6 attack on the United States Capitol.

Let's focus on the latter for now. State Senator Doug Mastriano, who is a subject of the January 6 Committee investigation, in part, because there is video of Mastriano breaking through police barricades and marching up the steps of the Capitol where rioters nearby beat Capitol and DC Metro police with flagpoles and riot gear they had strong-armed from the targeted officers. Mastriano claims to have left the Capitol grounds before the violence began, but there is indisputable evidence that he took part in the putsch that ensued that day.

Mastriano was one of the first and loudest election deniers, having spent the previous five years as a MAGA hat-wearing shill for the former president, and has since stated publicly that he would have the right to decertify election machines in select counties across the commonwealth if he does not agree with the outcome of the 2024 presidential election. If Mastriano were governor, you can rest assured

that many of those challenged voting machines would be in so-called swing counties like Erie County.

Following the 2020 election, among attempts to assert the state legislature's independence to submit "alternative" slates of electors, Mastriano was one of 24 Pennsylvania senators — including Senator Dan Laughlin — to sign on to an amicus brief in the United States Supreme Court case in which the state of Texas attempted to challenge the election results in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

He's also pledged to repeal mail-in voting, which has expanded access to the ballot for tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians of all political parties who have difficulty getting to the polls on Election Day for either personal or professional reasons.

And how would you feel about having to register to vote before every election? If Mastriano is elected, that's precisely what he intends to do, even though such a move is believed by many Constitutional law scholars to be unconstitutional at both the state and federal levels. It's unconstitutional because such a move is routinely seen as an effort to disenfranchise large

Mastriano's contempt for the press and his penchant for extremist media should be alarming. He chooses to operate in the shadows as a candidate and has given no sign that he would embrace the smallest modicum of transparency as governor.

populations of registered voters.

Beyond the undemocratic themes that have consumed this column for many months, Mastriano has promised to ban all abortions with no exceptions for rape, incest, or the life of the mother. Such a policy is generally unpopular. Pew research reports that 61 percent of Americans believe that abortion should be legal in "all or most cases," and that number rises when the life of the mother is at risk.

More recently, Mastriano has court-



Pennsylvania gubernatorial candidate Doug Mastriano was among those present during the Jan. 6, 2021 Capitol riots, and holds a number of extreme views regarding voting rights, abortion, and freedom of the press.

THE FORWARD ASSIST

ed the most extreme and dangerous elements of the Republican party. He spent \$5,000 to recruit followers on Gab, an online social media platform that is viewed by many as a haven for white supremacists. The site was linked to the 2018 antisemitic mass shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh.

His affinity for Gab and other fringe media outlets is part of a broader campaign strategy to ignore communicating with or through traditional media outlets. Throughout his campaign, Mastriano has either excluded or ignored mainstream media at his campaign events.

Mastriano came to Erie on August 4 to participate in the Manufacturer and Business Association's (MBA) legislative luncheon, a regular election year event that offers its members and the general public an opportunity to hear from candidates or elected officials. Local press were invited by the MBA, as is common for such events, and the campaign was notified that the media would be in attendance. But when the press arrived, they were not permitted, initially, to enter the event.

After several minutes of negotiations with the campaign by the MBA's vice president of external relations, Jezree Friend, a compromise was reached. The media would be permitted in and

could record, but they could not approach or ask questions of Mastriano. What is he hiding?

Mastriano's contempt for the press and his penchant for extremist media should be alarming. He chooses to operate in the shadows as a candidate and has given no sign that he would embrace the smallest modicum of transparency as governor.

Like his hero, the former president, Mastriano appears interested in building an anti-democratic machine that would sink Pennsylvania into the depths of political and economic despair. He's shown us who he is and we should believe him.

Mastriano posed for a picture at the Army War College as a confederate soldier in 2014. He also funded and produced a film where he and his family star as Nazis. He cosplays the worst of our history to model the future he desires as an elected official.

Now he courts extremists because what's left of the moderate Republican base won't have him.

Neither should you.

Your vote is our last line of defense.

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

PennDOT's Bayfront Plan: Erie Deserves Something Better

Environmental assessment necessary before construction

By: Lisa Austin

The National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires federally funded infrastructure projects to complete an environmental assessment (EA) to examine the project's impact on residents and the environment.

EAs are a lot of work. Because of "simple" maintenance projects like the refilling of potholes, a "categorical exclusion" option was created. If a project isn't controversial and will have minimal environmental impact, agencies can skip doing the EA with a categorical exclusion.

PennDOT applied to the Federal Highway Association (FHWA) claiming their \$100M project would not harm the environment and did not have significant opposition. Guided by PennDOT's statements, FHWA granted a categorical exclusion.

Unreliable Administrative Record

In December 2020, the environmental law firm Earthjustice filed a lawsuit seeking an EA on behalf of PennFuture and the Erie NAACP. PennDOT and the FHWA were required to submit documents justifying the approved categorical exclusion. Months after certifying that the record was complete, the FHWA altered "crucial data" regarding the categorical exclusion. In January 2022, the FHWA changed their records again. The FHWA's two false certifications that their record was complete casts doubt on the integrity of their EA approval process. In the only two other similar cases, those parties responsible for changing the administrative record after certifying their contents did not find themselves in favorable rulings.

PennDOT should be ordered to cease construction and complete the EA.

Visitors to PennDOT's Open House

The August 2022 PennDOT Open House was attended by a young couple named Dylan and Jamie, who recently bought a home above the Bayfront. They are hoping for the "least amount of traffic possible." Jamie (pondering an eventual child and concerned about PennDOT's plans) commented, "I want to live in a city, not on a highway — I couldn't imagine pushing a stroller over the highway to get to the water."



ILLUSTRATION BY MAXWELL J. HENTOSH. VISION BY CIVITAS / CONNECT URBAN ERIE. COPYRIGHT 2020

This artist rendering by Maxwell J. Hentosh illustrates CIVITAS and Connect Urban Erie's vision of a Bayfront Boulevard complete street and Bluffside Park near the Holland intersection. This concept represents a pedestrian-friendly alternative to PENNDOT's planned Bayfront Parkway project, which would reinforce the Bayfront's current use as a high-speed vehicular traffic corridor, severing the waterfront from downtown.

Trained as an orientation and mobility specialist, Freda Tepfer identified a lack of protection for pedestrians, bicyclists, and seeing, hearing, and mobility-impaired residents. Tepfer urged four-way stops at Holland and at East Second and Front streets.

Roland Slade of Connect Urban Erie stated "as a citizen walking the area — the Holland Street pedestrian bridge" plan — with their lack of streetlamps — is a concern. In addition, he says that given the challenge of snow removal, forcing people to an elevated route doesn't seem "practical or safe."

Drawings Camouflage Functional Shortcomings

PennDOT's illustrations don't clarify the following:

- *Removal of the Holland Street sidewalk and elimination of at-grade, north-south pedestrian and bike connections*
- *Installation of many large highway signs that will be necessary to guide drivers through the roundabouts, underpass, ramps, and exits*
- *Doubling of traffic by attracting*

more drivers cutting through Erie

- *Increasing noise and pollutants that will reduce the health and quality of life of residents and negatively impact the environment*
- *Installation of guard rails and fencing to prevent pedestrians from taking direct routes to their destinations*
- *Additional distances pedestrians will be forced to walk out of their way*
- *Elimination of library parking lot spaces*
- *Vulnerability of pedestrians and bicyclists with no right-of-way protection from drivers spinning off the roundabouts*

Connect Urban Erie (CUE) President Adam Trott commented, "PennDOT's design updates do nothing to address the serious design concerns we expressed since the beginning of their proposed expansion."

PennDOT's design is pursuing a Bayfront where vehicles never have to stop. Uninterrupted flowing traffic is ideal for an interstate but a disaster for downtown.

21st Century Redlining

Redlining is a now-outlawed federal program that designated disinvestment in non-Caucasian urban neighborhoods across the U.S.

Twenty years ago, PennDOT's \$180M Bayfront Connector (Route 290) divided east side neighborhoods for the convenience of drivers heading to the waterfront.

Since the demolition of the McBride Viaduct in 2019, residents have been forced to walk and bike along Route 290. If PennDOT's Bayfront plan is completed, they will be enduring even more traffic along their highway walk to school, work, etc.

Demolishing the viaduct and expanding an arterial highway on the Bayfront are examples of Erie's 21st century redlining. Both are harmful to people and the environment — and are missed opportunities to revitalize the city.

12th Street Option

Unnecessary through-city traffic should be lured to an improved 12th Street including overpasses at several locations including State, German, and Parade streets and East Avenue.

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Skip the Highway, Build a Boulevard

At the August 2022 Community Town Hall, concerned citizens convened to discuss the Bayfront. Ben Crowther of America Walks and Tony Dutzik of Frontier Group reported that around the world, cities are getting rid of or covering over urban highways and repairing the harm caused by severing communities. Encouragingly, the federal government is providing \$1 billion in funding for such infrastructure work through the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program and another \$3 billion+ from the new Inflation Reduction Act's Neighborhood Access and Equity Grants — "a new program that aims to rework overbuilt arterial roads" like the Bayfront.

Erie should take advantage of this opportunity and fix the current proposal.

Key Question

When PennDOT has completed its Bayfront project, will an eight or 80-year-old be able to walk to the waterfront easily, safely, and joyfully?

To get to "yes" Erie needs to skip the highway and build a Bayfront Boulevard with frequent at-grade, north-south pedestrian and bike connections.

Connect Urban Erie President Adam Trott commented "informed by an EA, PennDOT could still reallocate the targeted funds to create a Bayfront Boulevard instead of an arterial highway." A boulevard will not only "protect water, air, sound level" but will "enhance public health" and "foster a thriving, sustainable urban waterfront better connected to the city that will benefit all residents and stakeholders, including developers."

A stunning urban Bayfront Boulevard that connects residents to the waterfront will attract tourists (and new residents) while protecting the environment and helping to foster a sustainable, thriving economy.

Sign the petition for an environmental assessment @ ConnectUrbanErie.com

Another Considering the City essay by Lisa Austin, CIVITAS. Austin can be reached at lisa@lisa-austin.com

Class Acts: Learn Something New This Fall

Education goes beyond graduation with subjects like art, bridge, and pickleball

By: Liz Allen

Call me old school. As the calendar flips to September, I think about new things I'd like to learn, and it's no surprise that teachers helped educate me on my three current interests: painting, bridge, and pickleball.

But don't think that my baby-boomer status means that these activities are for just the old folks. Isabelle, my 14-year-old granddaughter, has inspired me to dabble in acrylics. One bridge player I met began playing at age 26, and the pickleball players I interviewed at Baldwin Park included two 20-something novices.

Finding Your Way in the Arts

No matter your age when you try something new, it helps to have a patient, nurturing mentor. Natalia Pilato, Ph.D., an assistant professor in the art department at Old Dominion University's College of Arts and Letters in Norfolk, Va., fits that bill.

Pilato, who earned her doctorate in art education at Penn State, worked with as many as 150 Erie volunteers over several weeks to create a community-inspired mural for Odessa's Place at 628 W. 18th St. in Little Italy. The Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network (SSJNN) organized the project, which also relied on research from the Hagen History Center and tapped into a huge amount of community engagement.

"I was told this was called a wayfinding mural. What does that mean to find your way? We make this way together, we walk this road together," Pilato said when she spoke to SSJNN staffers, History Center archivists, and longtime neighborhood residents. "What I want to know is, who is your community? Who is walking together and how are we including them in the process?"

Pilato elicited details about the programs at the SSJNN, which serves a large immigrant population, and about the mission of Odessa's Place, a nonprofit that provides food, clothing, school supplies, Christmas gifts, ministry, and other services to those in need.

Mo Troop, my Erie City Council colleague, invited me to the mural's Aug. 13 unveiling. I learned that Mo's mother, Carol Troop, founded Odessa's Place and named it after her late mother, Odessa Meredith. A single mother of



Erie Bridge Club members, left to right, Marc Sylvester, Barb Grzegorzewski, Rita Schmitt, and Steven Grzegorzewski hope to persuade newcomers young and old to learn the card game they love to play at the club in Meadville, in tournaments elsewhere, and often online.

six, Carol Troop returned to college later in life to become an Erie teacher. Mo works as an assistant principal of Erie High School, founded the Breeze Band, and is the author of *Out of the Cheesebox, A Mother's Lessons in Faith*.

Mo's book stresses the importance of education, perseverance, and role models — the kind of values incorporated into the mural-making project. For example, Pilato chose a Millcreek special ed teacher, Stephanie Kooser Travers, as her summer intern.

Kooser Travers' background — a bachelor's degree from the Cleveland Art Institute, with a specialty in fiber, and a master's in special education from Mercyhurst University — impressed Pilato, as did her professionalism and commitment to hard work.

An internationally known artist, Pilato only takes on large mural projects every few years. Her work in Erie often meant 14-hour days, but even before she arrived here, she met online with a small steering committee to brainstorm while she was in Sicily studying ceramics. Kooser Travers became her "point person on the ground" in Erie.

When Pilato arrived here, "Stephanie showed up for me on day one and her family also showed up for me. They unloaded my car, had dinner for me." Artists "create the culture" during such projects, but you know you truly belong when you are invited to dinner,

she said.

Pilato learned about the importance of hospitality growing up in State College with her artist parents, Grace and Guy Pilato, first-generation Sicilians. "I learned more in my mother's kitchen as a place of learning than any other place in my life. Creating community around food and art and love happened at a very young age in my mother's kitchen. She always had people over. She fed so many people and taught me so many things — the beauty of laying a plate, setting a table, sitting around telling stories."

At Odessa's Place, the visual storytelling is communicated by a mural that swoops around two sides of the building. The brilliant colors and bold images include an angelic Odessa and sunny marigolds, and naturally, food is part of the picture — fresh tomatoes, a corn stalk, a ladle of soup.

When Theresa Gamble, director of library and archives for the Hagen History Center, found a photo of the railroad cars that used to rumble over the 19th Street Norfolk Southern tracks, Pilato, who lives in Norfolk, Va., felt an immediate connection to the train line. So the mural includes a passenger train destined for Little Italy, with hopeful, resilient immigrants, past and present, aboard.

Pilato promised Kooser Travers that after her internship, the Millcreek

MURAL PHOTO BY GERALD MEREDITH, BRIDGE AND PICKLEBALL PHOTOS BY LIZ ALLEN

teacher would “walk away” knowing how to be a mural-maker. Such mentoring was also key to the relationships Pilato built with Angelia Hopkins, 19; Angelia’s sister Ebony Hopkins, 14; and Jordan Sapp, 22. The young people showed up daily in the basement of Holy Trinity Lutheran, 643 W. 17th St., which served as the art studio, and are credited as “studio assistants” on the mural, just below the names of Pilato and Kooser Travers.

One mural element shows an immigrant’s cupped hands filled with tomatoes, with a bracelet dangling on one arm. “I had traced (the bracelet) out but I hadn’t coded it,” said Pilato. She gave the Hopkins sisters a picture of a bracelet and asked them to pick the colors. “I gave them a whole bunch of little paints, warm and cool colors. What’s going to pop? They spent two days just perfecting that bracelet. They had taken ownership of it. I really felt like I was their teacher, aunt, friend.”

Such bonds were created over and over again, said Pilato. “Erie people really did show up for me,” she said, in recounting the kindnesses she received from so many, including the Troop family.

Wrapping up, she was again reminded of her truism that you feel accepted in a new place when you are asked to dinner. This time, it was the parents of a little Syrian boy. “They invited me over and offered me food and tea and set a table for me.”

Cross This Bridge

At the Erie Bridge Club, 1221 Grant Ave., the tables are set with stacks of cards, not food and tea, but the atmosphere is convivial, and players are eager to show curious visitors how they got hooked on the game.

My grandmother was still playing bridge at age 100, so the promise on a Bridge Club promotional poster rings true for me: “Boost your brain power, challenge your mental muscles, and make new friends.”

One of my regrets is that I never took my parents up on their invitation to learn bridge, so when my friend Rita Schmitt invited me to the Bridge Club to learn about the club’s upcoming lessons, I accepted.

When she retired as a school nurse 17 years ago, Rita was already playing many word games but none involved math. In bridge, she said, you have to count, so she added that to her game

repertoire.

“Bridge is a game very quantitative in nature. You have to use logic and deductive skills,” said Marc Sylvester, 46, a statistics professor at PennWest Edinboro University.

Sylvester took up bridge at age 26, when an Edinboro math department colleague needed a fourth player. “I love board games and I love every card game. I’m not picky,” Sylvester said. But bridge is “the most complex and interesting game I’ve ever played,” he said.

Just as I discovered at the mural unveiling, teachers and others in the educational field never tire of sharing lessons outside of the classroom.

Barb Grzegorzewski is a retired Allegheny College English professor; her husband Steven just retired as a chem-

istry teacher from Meadville Area Senior High. They met playing bridge.

“We aren’t nerds. Are we nerds?” Barb joked.

But she and the other club members stressed that bridge players come from all walks of life and it’s a very social game, although you will likely learn in the first few lessons if this game is for you.

For Steven Grzegorzewski, the satisfaction of teaching bridge lessons is similar to the joy he experienced as a chem teacher, “when I see my student’s light bulb go on, when you see people making progress, when they’re having fun.”

There was a reason for that. Joe Charland, a software developer, and Megan McCormick, a government consultant, are from Pittsburgh and had never been to Baldwin Park until they Googled “pickleball and Erie.” Both 25,

they were spending the week at a lake house Charland’s family has at Kelso Beach. They were, in essence, pickleball tourists.

They had joined a pickleball league in Pittsburgh and wanted to get some practice in. “We wanted to do some sort of sport in the fall. We thought that pickleball sounded fun,” McCormick said.

“It’s a good sport for us, to stay active and meet new people,” said Charland.

Borgia and Wisinski, retired sales and marketing professionals, aren’t surprised that the young Pittsburgh couple found Baldwin Park through the website that Arnold coordinates, eppa.royalpickleball.com

“We’ve had players from North Carolina and Texas, Canada and Florida,

sess athletic skills, yet you don’t need to be a tennis expert to play pickleball.

But if you want a good aerobic workout, want to work on your balance and practice good eye-hand coordination, this could be the sport for you.

Arnold, the teacher, gives the same advice to new players that work with her elementary school students. “Don’t give up,” she said. “You’re going to have good games and bad games. Stick with it.”

Liz Allen sometimes bites off more than she can chew, so check back next year to see which new hobby, if any, she embraces. Reach her @lizallenerie@gmail.com

Learn more

Visiting the new public art installation at Odessa’s Place, 628 W. 18th St., doesn’t guarantee you will learn how to paint murals, but by clicking the QR code on new “Map Key” on the building’s east side, you will learn about gardens, green spaces, public art, historical landmarks, and points of interest in the Little Italy neighborhood served by Odessa’s Place and the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network.

If you are interested in learning duplicate bridge, in which players move from table to table playing the same hand, classes start soon at the Erie Bridge Club, 1221 Grant Ave. in Millcreek. Beginner lessons start Wednesday, Sept. 7, at 9:30 a.m. and Monday, Sept. 12, at 6:30 p.m. Intermediate lessons start Sept. 7 at 1 p.m. The \$25 cost for six beginner lessons includes the text; additional series cost \$36.

For more information, contact Steven Grzegorzewski at (814) 573-4743 or steven.grzegorzewski@eriebridgeclub.org or Rick Klaphor at (814) 566-1396 or clubmanager@eriebridgeclub.org, or visit www.eriebridgeclub.org.

The Erie Bridge Club will host the Great Lakes Fall Sectional tournament Sept. 10-11.

The Erie Pickleball Players Association can help you find lessons or courts (outdoors and indoors) by visiting the web page, eppa.royalpickleball.com, or its Facebook page. There are lessons and games throughout Erie County, and the 2nd annual Helen Pappas Pickleball Shootout takes place Sept. 9-10 at Westwood Racket Club, 2660 W. Zuck Road. If you are a first-time pickleball player, be sure to ask about pickleball etiquette, including how to wait your turn for court time.

“I learned more in my mother’s kitchen as a place of learning than any other place in my life. Creating community around food and art and love happened at a very young age in my mother’s kitchen. She always had people over. She fed so many people and taught me so many things — the beauty of laying a plate, setting a table, sitting around telling stories.” — visiting artist Natalia Pilato, creator of community-inspired mural for Odessa’s Place in Little Italy



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'Moving the Needle:' Funding and Equity in the Erie School District

Funding increases still leave Erie County striving to catch up

By: Dan Schank

For parents (like me) with children in our city's school district, good news arrived in mid-July. Basic education funding in the state budget was increased by \$525 million, with an additional \$100 million allotted for special education. In the Erie School District, that meant an increase of \$15.8 million, up 17.9 percent from last year.

Time to celebrate, right? Not entirely.

"I think there's a perception out there that we're flush with cash," says Brian Polito, superintendent of the Erie School District. "But we were so underfunded for so long that this simply moves the needle toward equity and allows us to provide the kind of programming and support that a lot of other school districts take for granted."

On a sunny afternoon in late August, Polito provided me with a recent history of Erie's push toward adequate funding: "Back in 2017, we received a \$14 million increase in our state subsidy, after some strong lobbying from our community for Harrisburg. At that point, we were one of the most underfunded school districts in the state — and months away from not making payroll. So that was a lifeline that really helped us stabilize our finances."

This increase led to long-neglected facility upgrades as well as the first investment in 25 years in curricular materials for teachers in our district. But even after the additional allotment, Erie was still identified as one of the "100 most underfunded districts in the state," according to Polito. To add context, he crunched some numbers: "In the 2020-21 school year, our cost per pupil was \$17,473. The Erie County average was \$18,265. And this was *after* we received that \$14 million adjustment. The state average was \$19,667, so the budget increase needed to get to the county average at that point was \$10.1 million dollars. To get to the state average, it was \$27.4 million."

Worse, the effects of poverty put the Erie School District "at the top of the heap for needs," according to Polito. Our school district is in the bottom 3 percent for median household income and at the top 3 percent regarding economic disadvantages. In a state where property taxes account for an unusual amount of school funding revenue, this can have a dangerous impact.

This year's additional allotment will allow the district to build on some (originally) short-term projects developed in response to COVID-19. For example, stimulus funds allowed for at least one mental health specialist and case manager/social worker to be on-site at each of our city's public schools. "We also expanded our after-school and summer school programming to address the learning loss," according to Polito. "And we were able to reduce the class sizes at the elementary level from 25 to 20." These improvements were initially set to be funded through 2024, but this year's state budget will allow them to continue beyond that end-date.



Despite a budget increase of \$15.8 million for the Erie School District, there is still a ways to go before the scales are balanced compared to wealthier districts, according to Superintendent Brian Polito.

Structural improvements are already underway at Wilson Middle School, Collegiate Academy, and Erie High. The school board recently approved a new project at Edison Elementary as well. "The total estimated cost back in 2017 to do all our buildings was about \$200 million," says Polito. "We had enough to do about \$80 million, so the stimulus funds allowed us to expand that. At this point, we'll be able to do about \$150 million of additional work."

One of the biggest structural problems in our district is proper ventilation — a problem that only grew more urgent in the face of the COVID-19 epidemic. "We had to stay closed for longer because a lot of our buildings did not have mechanical ventilation," according to Polito. As a dad, the thought that improved air quality could shave off a few days of surprise pandemic-paralyzing is incredibly welcome!

Of course, political and ideological changes often complicate long-term plans. For example, Republican gubernatorial candidate Doug Mastriano suggested cutting public school funding by \$9 to \$10 thousand dollars *per student* in a radio interview last March. Just imagine the over-crowded, poorly-ventilated classrooms a funding cut of this size might lead to.

"Whether or not our students have the opportunities to be college and career-ready shouldn't depend on who is in the legislature at that moment," says Deborah Gordon Klehr, executive director of the Education Law Center. As I've reported before, her organization is part of an ongoing lawsuit that could force our state to acknowledge a constitutional right to a quality education — as well as to its legal obligation to guarantee equity regardless of who is in power.

As oral arguments in the case concluded in late July, there were "questions about whether the constitution guarantees a right to education, whether it mandates a high-quality contemporary education — both of which are our positions — or, as the respondents argued, it requires a minimum basic education, without regard to the outcomes for students," according to Klehr.

A decision in the lawsuit is probably still months away. And regardless of outcome, "an appeal by the losing side is likely," according to Klehr.

In the meantime, Klehr is cautiously optimistic about the recent increases in school funding: "It's an acknowledgment by the legislature of how deep a hole they have dug in the schools by neglecting education funding for so many years." However, she is quick to point out that they need to reflect long-term changes. "These kinds of increases will need to be sustained for years to help get local districts to adequate, equitable levels of funding — and to bring Pennsylvania up from the bottom in the share of education funding provided by the state," she argues.

As nice as it has been to see headlines about our school district that aren't exclusively about infrastructural crises, eruptions of violence, or unexpected quarantines, this forward momentum will require continued effort. Some of it may come at the ballot box, some may come in the courtroom, and a lot will inevitably occur in the classroom. The choices we make — and the dollars we spend — will impact our children fundamentally.

Dan Schank can be contacted at danschank@gmail.com



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EC3PA's Sophomore Year

Community college a learning experience for students, administrators alike

By: Matt Swanseger

Erie County Community College of Pennsylvania (EC3PA) President Dr. Christopher Gray and his staff spent their entire freshman year cramming for exams.

It's Year Two now, and the tests keep coming. There are policies and programs to pass, budgets to balance, facilities to equip, and faculty to hire. And then there's the ultimate test for Pennsylvania's 15th and newest community college — to prove its legitimacy and value where a degree of skepticism still lingers.

In short, it's a lot.

"I'll be honest — we're tired. We're exhausted," admits Dr. Gray. "This is a startup. It's the first time I've ever worked in a startup ... it's been a series of win after win after win, but there's no rest for the wicked."

Among those wins? A near doubling of enrollment since the college's inaugural Fall 2021 semester. A near *quintupling* of available programs, from just three to 14. And soon, another campus — the former Villa Maria High Academy building at 2403 W. Eighth St. Full accreditation has been fast-tracked for 2023 or 2024. And perhaps most importantly, clear career pathways and pipelines into the local and regional workforce have been established.

"When I first got here, a lot of people wanted to tell me why we don't need a community college," Dr. Gray recalls. "I think we've changed that. I think people get it. We've connected incredibly well with our business communities. We've added programming right where we need folks to help rebuild our economy here."

Addressing Real Employment Needs

That additional programming includes eight new certificate options (programming, mobile app development, corrections, welding, CNC operator/programmer, industrial machine maintenance, and automated electrical systems) and three new associate's degrees (programming, mobile app development, and criminal justice). Guy Goodman, EC3PA's vice president of academic and student affairs, says the new offerings — as well their educational goals and structure — were very intentionally determined.

"Our first step is to look at the needs of our community. The industry partners we are communicating with, what are they telling us are their immediate needs?" Goodman explains, adding that a desire for more welders and CNC machine operators was one of the most commonly expressed. "We're out there, boots on the ground, meeting with leadership and having those conversations."

The other component, Goodman says, is tying those conversations to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's High Priority Occupations list — those both in demand and capable of providing students with the means to effectively provide for their families. "All programs we've put in place are in line with a family-sustaining wage perspective."

To fill that demand and fill it faster, EC3PA is leveraging partnerships and resources at multiple levels.



In just one year, enrollment at Erie County Community College of Pennsylvania has doubled and programming has quintupled. Information technology training is among the priorities for Erie County employers.

At the high school level, it is implementing a dual degree program with Erie's Public Schools, allowing juniors to spend their afternoons on EC3PA campuses, en route to earning an associate's degree in tandem with their high school diplomas. Numerous high schools both within the city limits and beyond have reciprocated, lending their facilities to community college students after hours (e.g. welding and/or CNC shops).

At the college level, it's aligning with local universities like PennWest Edinboro and Mercyhurst on curriculum in compatible areas, such as criminal justice. It's also constantly in discussions to share adjunct faculty, helping to facilitate an easier transition for the student from EC3PA to the receiving four-year institution. As of now, EC3PA has transfer agreements in place with all three PennWest campuses (Edinboro, California-Pa., and Clarion), Mercyhurst, and Penn State Behrend — once EC3PA is fully accredited, more universities are likely to join that list.

Connecting Career Pathways

Outside academia in the "real world," EC3PA is collaborating with economic development agencies such as the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership — as well as the employers themselves — to get students the skills and hands-on training necessary to be more immediately competent in their chosen professions. One prominent example is Lincoln Electric, who will be working closely with prospective welders this semester. Such arrangements are beneficial to not only the student, who learns exactly what the trade entails, but the employer as well, who more

quickly relieves labor shortages.

This, says both Dr. Gray and Goodman, is illustrative of the special niche a community college can occupy even in an area well-represented by higher education — the nimbleness to adapt and respond to expanding needs by meeting employers halfway. Dr. Gray mentions the college's developing partnership with UPMC Hamot as another example. "UPMC came to me and said, 'Chris, I've got surgeons threatening to leave my system because they can't do enough surgeries because they don't have enough surge techs.'"

Surge techs, or surgical technologists, play a vital support role in operating suites and are clearly in urgent demand. Training them properly, however, requires accurately simulating that setting. Whereas a massively provisioned institution like Penn State might have the real estate and budget to build a mock operating suite on campus, community colleges are much more limited in their budgets and their facilities. So what instead ensues is creative collaboration — EC3PA teaches the baseline science and anatomy courses on their campuses and UPMC Hamot lends EC3PA students one of their state-of-the-art operating suites. Both parties are better for it.

"Our goal is to do college differently," expresses Goodman. "We are not going to look like our partners in higher education here. We don't want to look like them. We want to be that alternative. We want to share that we are producing individuals who can go into family sustaining wages, so that we can help turn around and enhance the economic condition of Erie County."

Dr. Gray adds: “Everyone’s struggling to find employees. If we can’t provide companies with the workforce, and they can’t expand operations or take on new lines or be innovative, they can’t even *think* about competing for bigger contracts. So one of the things I’m most proud of is how we’ve teamed so well with all our economic development agencies, particularly the chamber.”

EC3PA’s achievements over the past year have been more than passable. There are not only growing enrollment numbers and course offerings, but there’s also growing belief in its value. Whether that belief is validated, though, ultimately comes down to students.

How to College

Early on, most of us learn how to count to ten. How to tie our shoes. How to ride a bike. There’s a clearly defined order and procedure to these things, and we generally catch on quickly.

But some students never really grasp “how to college” — at least not right away. And many more simply *cannot* college given their current circumstances — at least not in the traditional sense of committing four uninterrupted years to full-time, rigorous study on a pristinely groomed campus.

“We have five major starting points throughout the year because our students don’t have the convenience of packing up their cars and going off to college,” explains Dr. Gray. “Our folks are working on trying to balance jobs and [lives].”

Those lives may include one or more children to feed. Or perhaps an illness or disability. Or potentially an immediate loss or tragedy in the family. And more often than not, not a whole lot of money. Whatever the case, it’s incumbent upon a community college to “meet [students] where they are,” says Dr. Gray.

Financially, EC3PA has made good on the pledge by extending tuition waivers to Erie County residents (through the EC3 Empowerment Grant). Physically, they’ve done it by *literally* meeting them where they are, holding info sessions, registration events, and subsequently classes in accessible locations through-

out the community — especially those in and around the city’s lower east side.

“We’ve got to be there,” affirms Dr. Gray. “Five of six students don’t have access to a car. It’s a dense population with a need” for access to higher education. “When you look at the fact that one in three of our students are people of color, and one in four identify as Black, that tells you we’re serving a population that may not have been served [at a historically high rate] by the other colleges.”

Education is wholly and unequivocally a socioeconomic issue, and the statistics bear that out. On average, those who attend a community college make 86 percent more annually than if they hadn’t, whether they directly enter the workforce or transition to a four-year institution. Those are the kind of returns that can break multi-generational cycles of poverty and spur upward mobility. But if we are to graduate to something closer to equity, that door has to be held open.

Or, more accurately, doors. In sticking with its “30-minute promise” (Erie County residents will be no farther than 30 minutes away from an EC3PA campus by foot, bike, or public transportation), EC3PA offers classes at five locations:

1. EC3 Erie East (at the St. Benedict Education Center)
2. EC3 Erie West (at 2403 W. Eighth St.)
3. EC3 Summit (at the Erie County Technical School Skills Center),
4. EC3 Corry (in the Corry Higher-Education Council Building)
5. EC3 at TREC (the Regional Science Consortium at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center).

Additional labs and classes will be offered at other locations throughout the county as community college’s network of partnerships continues to grow. Alternatively, the bulk of the coursework can be completed online for most programs.

Once students are in the door, the focus turns to *keeping* them there. And that involves removing barriers or relieving distractions that could be det-



MEVA JERIE STUDIO

perimental to success. In fact, embedded inside EC3PA classrooms are “success coaches,” staff members who monitor for lapses in student engagement and attendance, seek to understand the root cause(s) of those inconsistencies, and connect the student with the community resources to work through those issues. The faculty is also allied in that goal, taking great care in getting to know each student’s name and story in order to optimize their learning experience, according to Goodman.

Explains Dr. Gray: “I think of the thousands of students I’ve taught over my career, I can count on my hands the number that failed because they weren’t smart enough. The vast majority of students aren’t successful in college because A) they don’t care, B) they don’t have the tools, or aren’t allowed to explore with the tools, and C) they aren’t allowed to fail. We take the time to teach you ‘how to college’ — to give you confidence, to teach you to be inquisitive, to teach you it’s *okay* to fail. And we take a lot of the pressures off our students.”

Students should only become more numerous and diverse in the future, including all those graduating high school seniors who have relocated to stunning, sprawling university campuses only to discover it’s not a good fit for them. “They’re going to be back in Erie feeling like they let themselves down. They let their families down. They put themselves behind. That’s not true,” Dr. Gray. “Students can jump in and take some of their gen ed courses right here with us until they find a better fit for themselves in the long term.”

Ideally, Goodman hopes the community college will be many things to many people, roundly utilized and embraced as a local and regional asset. As for Dr. Gray’s wishes for the future: “I want to hear ‘I went to EC3 and it totally turned my life around. My life is different because of it.’”

But tests remain. And although missteps and stutters are allowable for EC3PA students trying to find their way, failure is not an option for EC3PA administration.

“We’re going to make it because I’m too damn stubborn for us not to,” Dr. Gray predicts. “We have to. Our students need us.”

Matt Swanseger can be reached at mswanseger@eriereader.com



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[top right] EC3PA currently offers classes at five campus locations. [above] EC3PA’s new welding certificate program was built with guidance from Lincoln Electric.

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Remnants, Art, and Heart

Generational business becomes shared community beauty

By: Erin Phillips

“You do what you can do for people and I think it comes back to you,” says Judie Pentz, owner of the Remnant Store, a fabric shop at East 11th and German that has been in operation for nearly 60 years. Beyond selling fabric remnants, she has created an anchor in a neighborhood that is often overlooked by those who don’t happen to have a heart as big as hers.

Continuing a business that was started by her father and uncle, Pentz, now 80 years old, feels it is the store that keeps her young and gives her purpose. And she looks forward to carrying on for as long as she can: being a fixture in her neighborhood, greeting customers like family, giving work to local upholsterers, helping her neighbors access services they need, stocking her candy bowl for the neighborhood school children, and now serving as a public canvas for a new, bright, beautiful, inspiring mural for everyone in the community to enjoy.

“My father came to Erie for college, met my mother, brought his brother here with him and, at first, they owned a cafe in this neighborhood. At some point my father patented a barstool he made and sold through Arthur F. Schultz for years. That barstool was in every bar in Erie. And when that died down, he had all this fabric left over, lots of discontinued fabrics, so he started the Remnant Store with his brother.” And the rest, as they say, is history. Judie Pentz inherited the Remnant Store from her parents, Matt and Rose Plizga, who started the store in 1963, and she has since worked there for 46 years.

In addition to carrying on the store, Pentz has also adopted the business philosophy of her father: no fabric has, nor ever will, cost more than \$9.95 a yard. This policy serves as a great equalizer: “Everyone is treated the same way in our store, with respect. Our millionaire customers and our struggling customers alike.” Pentz has not only donated fabric to the various churches and nonprofit organizations in the community over the years, but she also often gives fabric to families who are new immigrants to Erie and are trying to get settled, or offers free rent to her upholsterers in exchange for their help organizing and lifting heavy bolts of fabric for Pentz at the end of the day. For Pentz, it’s all about doing the right thing for the people who need it most.

And all of Pentz’s customers, visitors, and neighbors appreciate her efforts and look forward to seeing her when they come into the Remnant Store. One loyal customer, Gina Rullo, reflects on her experiences with Pentz over the years: “I look forward to going to see Judie, knowing she’ll show me her newest inventory and give her opinion about which fabrics would coordinate best for my project. She’s always so busy but never too busy to ask me what I’m looking for and to redirect me if there’s better fabric for my project. Judie is the Remnant Store and I’m so grateful for her and her family to be part of our extended downtown.”



The Remnant Store recently became a part of the “Purposeful Placemaking” project through Erie Arts and Culture, which aims to complete 50 murals in Erie along Community School Walking Routes in 2022 and 2023. Artist Emily Ding, along with local assistants Cally Paparelli and Doug Bailey completed this mural in July.

For those unaware, remnant fabric is not just scraps and bits left over. When an upholstery company makes a line of couches, furniture, pillows, etc. they are often left, after that run of production, with large bolts of remaining fabric for which they have no use. Oftentimes this is high-end, designer fabric. Wholesaler distributors then buy up these leftover bolts. Pentz has a number of close friendships with these wholesalers and she and her husband (who is 83 years old) make regular road trips down south or to New York to these distributors to pick up new fabric, as shipping such heavy materials is too expensive and would effect Pentz’s ability to continue to sell these fabrics, even those designer fabrics that usually sell at retail for hundreds of dollars, at \$9.95 a yard, just like her father did some 60 years ago in the same building at 306 E. 11th St.

The building itself stands as a testament to long-lasting generational businesses, as the Pentzes are somehow only the third owners the building has ever had since about 1877. Built in the Commercial Italianate style like so many storefronts of that time period, the storefront was originally built and owned by the Knoll Brothers, who ran a grocery and liquor store from one side of the property, and a shoe store on the other. They ran these businesses for 40+ years, eventually selling the building to Arthur L. Stone, who sold kitchen equipment and scales. It was from Stone that Pentz’s father purchased the building, and not much of the original character of the building, nor the business that Judie’s father started, has changed over the years.

So, given that regularity, Pentz never expected that an opportunity would arise that would mean a massive change to her previously unchanged building: an Erie Arts and Culture “Purposeful Placemaking”

mural that would transform what was previously a massive swath of white vinyl siding covering their building. According to the organization’s executive director, Patrick Fisher, the choice to use Pentz’s building was a natural one: “Visiting muralist Emily Ding selected the Remnant Store for the unique architecture of its front facade, even though vinyl siding is a less than ideal surface to paint on, as it poses many challenges. After Emily identified the Remnant Store as her top choice, I placed a cold call to the Remnant Store and spoke with Judie. I identified myself, provided very minimal details about the project, and quickly received an eager YES from Judie.”

Muralist Emily Ding traveled to Erie from Los Angeles and was assisted by local artists Cally Paparelli and Doug Bailey. Not only do these public art projects help uplift surrounding neighborhoods with their beauty, they also allow for a teaching opportunity for local artists. Fisher comments: “When we bring visiting muralists to Erie, it’s actually a strategic effort to build the capacity of the talent that is present in our own community. For every visiting artist, we hire two to four Erie-based artists to serve as their assistants. We pay the assistants \$25 per hour and they are provided with a direct opportunity to learn from national and international artists.”

Pentz saw the mural as yet another opportunity to help her neighborhood, and she soon realized the benefits spreading throughout the area. “We have a line here for the food pantry down the street on Saturday mornings, they’re all in front of this mural, looking at it, and it makes them so happy. They wonder why they put it here in this neighborhood: well it’s because they’re thinking of us and want to bring us some beauty! We have a neighbor, Jim, we call him the Mayor, and he went down the street and helped

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FEATURE



ERIN PHILLIPS

everyone clean up their front yards and porches, because people are coming down to the neighborhood now and stopping to look at the mural. So, yes, I think this is going to help the neighborhood immensely.”

Fisher agrees with this insight, knowing that public art has the power to transform places, and the organization and its community partners, like the United Way of Erie County, are not stopping with the Remnant Store: “Through this initiative, we aim to create a total of 50 murals between 2022 and 2023, all along [the United Way’s designated] Safer Walking Routes. Each of the five community schools will receive 10 murals. In part this is a wayfinding project through which we are providing large visual landmarks that indicate the walking routes. But, this is also about improving the visual landscapes of our communities. We are working to counteract predatory advertising

that can be found along the routes, things like advertisements for payday lending, bail bonds services, and alcohol and tobacco products. Advertising is a visual language and children in our neighborhood are exposed to it each and every day as they walk, bike, and play in their neighborhoods. What is the cumulative impact when the advertising they are consistently exposed to is predatory in its nature?”

And conversely, what is the positive impact of this public art on the community’s children? Many of the children who pass by the Remnant Store every day on their way to school at Pfeiffer-Burleigh Elementary, or to the Neighborhood Art House, or the various churches or charitable organizations in the area, don’t often have the opportunity or the means to go to an art museum or a gallery, but by placing these murals on their walking routes, they have the chance to see, appreciate, and be inspired by the art. To know that they, too, can someday make something beautiful for the community, to see that there is value in being creative and to understand that giving something back to your neighborhood improves the quality of life for all its residents. Fisher believes that this art helps the neighbors in the surrounding area feel seen, heard, and valued: “What’s always striking to me is when someone says ‘I never thought my neighborhood would have something like this.’ I use moments like that as an opportunity to expand the conversation to delve into what other investments they’d like to see made in their community.”

While our city neighborhoods change and grow in many ways, through public art, or simply through individual kindnesses, Judie hopes that her legacy at the Remnant Shop can live on beyond herself. It would take a special person with a big heart (and big shoes to fill) to take on a business that is more focused on fairness and honoring the community than making a lot of money, but Judie is confident that the kindness, generosity, and positivity that she has put out into Erie for all these years will, in fact, come back to her.

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



ERIN PHILLIPS

[top] Remnant fabric lines the walls in the circa 1877 Remnant Store building at 306 E. 11th St. Judie Pentz’s father purchased the building in 1972 and moved the business he began in 1963 from its previous spot on Parade Street to its current location. [above] Judie Pentz shows off a roll of Ralph Lauren remnant fabric, which would normally retail for hundreds of dollars a yard, but Pentz has priced at \$9.95 a yard. Following her father’s example, Pentz never prices any fabric higher than \$9.95 so her customers can complete their projects for a fraction of the price.



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www.erieirishfestival.com or visit us on Facebook.

EVENTS

Otherworldly Art, Live Music, and Fresh Brews at Arts and Drafts Festival

A wonderful weekend of local art and music planned at the Brewerrie

BEGINNING THURSDAY, SEPT. 8

The Brewerrie at Union Station hosts another iconic Arts and Drafts Festival for all lovers of art, music, and good drinks. Heading into its 14th successful year, this event highlights performances from popular local musicians, and specially features one unique local artist each year in addition to the over 70 local artists with works on display and for sale.

This year's featured artist is Erie's beloved Robert Jensen. Most know him as the owner of Erie's hot spot venue, Basement Transmissions, but Jensen is a creative man of many talents. From being a skateboarder in his early years, to a musician, a venue owner, promoter, a father, and an artist, his spinal injury never stopped him from pursuing his goals in life. Jensen went on despite being paralyzed in high school from his neck down, to work hard at regaining some function in his arms and legs, form many bands and musical projects, get a masters degree from Edinboro University in jewelry and metal smithing, and continue being creative, providing a space for many musicians to perform.

Jensen also hosts an Art Club at Basement Transmissions and surrounds himself and his venue with peculiar and eclectic artwork. "Recently I have been exploring alternative mediums", he says. "I've transitioned from creating mostly metal work, to making mostly papier-mâché and found object work.

I dabble in any creative endeavor I can fit in, and love exploring new mediums, techniques, and ideas."

Jensen is excited to show off new sculptures and other fine crafts he has been working on at this year's Arts and Drafts Festival. You can find his unique work on his website robertjensen.info or on his tiktok @bluntguts814. Art show hours for this year are noon to 11 p.m. on Thursday through Saturday.

"I am very grateful to Doug Bailey (one of my favorite local artists) for choosing me, Amanda Ferguson for making it all happen, the Brewerrie for hosting the event, and most of all the Erie art scene for always supporting my work," Jensen says.

Music can be enjoyed from 6 to 11 p.m., with a \$5 cover after 8 p.m. each night of the event.

Thursday, Sept. 8th will kick off with Maroon River, Dirty Leaf, Fog Giant, and Hard Luck Story.

Friday, Sept. 9 brings Trace the Pattern, Royek, Dumpster Garden, Penny Racer, Grim Grin, and Odd Atrocity.

Saturday, Sept. 10 ends the weekend with Performance Software, Spades, Wasted Info, Half Glass, and Tiny Paper Boats. — Cypher Eihwaz

Open noon to 11 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; Music from 6 to 10 p.m. Thursday, 6 to 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday // The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. // Free before 8 p.m., \$5 donation after // Join the event on Facebook to see posts and information at the event's Facebook page



Blouses performs trackside at the Brewerrie at Union Station during the 2021 Arts and Drafts Festival. This year's edition will again feature a full slate of live music, along with a host of local artwork in the venue's concourse.

MERCYHURST INSTITUTE FOR ARTS & CULTURE

2022-2023 MIAC LIVE SEASON



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WITH THE ERIE PHILHARMONIC

Saturday, Sept. 17 | 7:30 p.m.

Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center

miac.mercyhurst.edu
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EVENTS

Escape the Fate Heads to Basement Transmissions

Well-loved rockers make Erie stop joined by venerable locals

FRIDAY, SEPT. 9

Head-bangers unite for a night of hardcore music at Erie's Basement Transmission presented by Heel Heat Productions.

Coming out of Las Vegas, with a whopping 3.3 million followers on Facebook emerges **Escape the Fate**. Their heavy sound and massive presence is expected to pull a large crowd Sept. 9, and tickets are selling quickly at \$20. They will be supported by local post-hardcore bands **Fastfall** and **Real Fake Doors**, who both had well-received performances at this year's Celebrate Erie event.

Fastfall received praise from the Erie Reader this year for their self-released EP, *Tell the World Your Secrets*. Featuring vocals from Johnny Snyder, Andrew John on guitar and backing vocals, Casey Valencic on guitar, bass by Joe McLaughlin, and percussion by Eli Maloney, this quintet is known to bring an energy to the stage you don't want to miss.

Real Fake Doors, another five-piece band consisting of Jesse Purshun with vocals, Mark Gorski on guitar and backing vocals, Sean Stevenson on guitar, Zack Smith on bass, and Wes Seeley with percussion has opened for notable acts such as Red Jumpsuit Apparatus and Anti-Flag, so it was no hard decision to get them in on this incredible show.

Escape the Fate has released three



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hailing from Las Vegas, post-hardcore band Escape the Fate has belt a substantial following with numerous highly charting albums. They headline at Basement Transmissions on Friday, Sept. 9.

EPs and seven full-length albums since forming in 2004, with multiple landing on Billboard music charts across the world. Most prominent among these was their self-titled third studio album, which topped the Hard Rock charts in 2010. Currently they consist of Craig Mabbott with lead vocals, Kevin "Thrasher" Gruft on lead and rhythm guitar, Thomas "TJ" Bell also on guitar and backing vocals, Erik Jensen on bass with backing vocals, and drummer Robert Ortiz.

— Cypher Eihwaz

6:30 to 11 p.m. // Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. // \$20 advance, \$23 day of show // For tickets go to brownpapertickets.com and for more information, go to the "Escape the Fate at Basement Transmissions" Facebook event

Erie's 40 Under 40 Experience Party Celebrates 10 Years

The expansive one-night only affair brings together all our city's best

FRIDAY, SEPT. 16

This July, we honored our 2022 class of Erie's 40 Under 40. Marking the 10th year anniversary singling out two score young innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders shaping the future of Erie, that meant that there were now 400 people who have had the distinction of being selected.

That's a lot of talent to talk about.

In 2018, we had the idea to showcase some of that talent. In conjunction with Young Erie Professionals and the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, the 40 Under 40 Experience was born.

Anyone who has attended this event in the past will no doubt look forward to this year's edition.

The idea of utilizing a different space each year has taken root, with the 10/20 Collective downtown providing the perfect backdrop for 2022. There will be a bevy of entertainment, food, drink, and more — and let's not forget the silent disco.

The evening will feature a dance presentation from Seiche Dance Collective, drag performances from Rebecca Mae, Shea D'Heaux, and Debbie, live tattooing from Leslie Fiolek Hess of Andromeda Studios, and massages from Compassionate Hart Massage. Bid on items at the silent auction, and check out



MIKE GOLABX-HIBT ONE PRODUCTIONS

The silent disco — and a whole lot more — will return for the 2022 edition of Erie's 40 Under 40 Experience, taking place on Friday, Sept. 16 at the 10/20 Collective.

specialty curated artworks from past 40 Under 40 honorees. Musical guests include Brooke Surgener, Jess Royer, Tony and Amanda Kellogg, Zack Orr, and Fred Oakman & the Flood.

The food trucks Sticks and Bricks, Taco Distro, Tariq's, and Sundae will be on hand, with an open bar at the event as well.

The event is inclusive and open to the public, though tickets are going fast and capacity is limited. Attendees are certainly not limited to just past honorees or those under 40 — it's more of an experience after all, not a rule. — Nick Warren

7 to 11 p.m. // The 10/20 Collective, 1020 Holland St. // 21+ // \$50, Special pricing for current and past honorees (email info@yeperie.org for more information) // For tickets and more, go to 40u40.eriepa.com

The Stage is Alive with *The Sound of Music*

Beloved classic twirls onto Playhouse Mainstage

PREMIERING FRIDAY, SEPT. 16

As one of the greatest musicals of our time, it is no surprise that *The Sound of Music* is making its way to the Playhouse stage to enchant Erie audiences with the story of the von Trapp family.

The final collaboration between Rodgers & Hammerstein, *The Sound of Music* follows Maria Rainer, a postulate in the Church who leaves temporarily to serve as governess to the seven von Trapp children in Austria.

Initially stubborn and brooding, their patriarch Captain Georg von Trapp slowly begins to soften as Maria brings joy and music into the family home. As Nazism begins to take hold in Austria, though, Maria and the entire von Trapp clan must make moral decisions that will affect the rest of their lives.

With many unforgettable songs, including "My Favorite Things," "Do Re Mi," "Six-

teen Going on Seventeen," and the titular number, *The Sound of Music* has become a classic in the musical genre, with the stage musical earning five Tony Awards.

A film adaptation was released in 1965, starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer. One of the most commercially successful films of all time, the film won five Oscars and cemented its place in classic popular culture.

Starring Maeve Kirby as Maria and Brendan Daugherty as Captain Georg von Trapp, *The Sound of Music* at the Erie Playhouse is sure to have you running in from the hills just to sing along. — Ally Kutz

Nine performances from Sept. 16 through Oct. 2 // Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. // \$12 - \$21.70 // For tickets and more information, including full performance schedule, go to erieplayhouse.org



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EVENTS

The Countdown to Con

Erie ComiCon returns to Bayfront Convention Center

BEGINNING FRIDAY, SEPT. 16

Erie ComiCon's sixth edition is about to hit the Bayfront Convention Center with a full lineup of artists, guests, features, vendors, and games, making this the biggest year yet for the popular event. But, don't let the name fool you, the convention features much more than just comics.

It all kicks off Friday, Sept. 16 at 2 p.m. and continues until Sunday at 4 p.m. There is an impressive array of vendors and artists for this year's event, as well as presentations, cosplayers, vehicles, and contests. An after party will be held on Friday night with Erie DJ Bill Page, and will include celebrity appearances, giveaways, and more. Cosplay contests for adults will be held at 4 p.m. Saturday and for kids at 1 p.m. on Sunday.

Celebrity guests this year include Emmy Award Winner **Bill Diamond**, an American puppeteer, puppet fabricator, and producer who has worked on projects such as *Fraggle Rock*, *Sesame Street*, and more. Diamond began his ca-

reer working with the legendary Jim Henson and later created *Dr. Rock's Dinosaur Adventure* for FOX television in the '90s.

Other guests include voice actor **Sonny Strait** who provided the voice of Krillin in the *Dragon Ball* franchise, actress and producer **Cindy Morgan** of *Caddyshack* and *Tron*, *The Purge* actress **Brittany Mirabile**, horror actor and director **Drew Godderis**, and from *Power Rangers Beast Morphers*, **Jazz Baduwalia** and **Rorrie Travis**. Full guest bios are available on the ComiCon website where visitors can also purchase photo ops.

An all new addition to the convention this year is **LUGs**. A LUG is a LEGO Users Group, which is typically a group of LEGO fans living in the same region. Displays from groups in Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Northeast Ohio, and Baltimore are sure to be a popular attraction. Adult fans of LEGO can submit MOCs (My Own Creations) and participate in the Erie Community Build. If you are an AFOL (Adult Fan of LEGO), be sure to come down to meet special guests Mel Brown and Co-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Among the celebrity guests at this year's ComiCon Erie will be (left to right) Sonny Strait (*Dragon Ball Z*), Brittany Mirabile (*The Purge*), Rorrie Travis (*Power Rangers Beast Morphers*), Cindy Morgan (*Caddyshack*), and Jazz Baduwalia (*Power Rangers Beast Morphers*).

rey Samuels of the television show LEGO Masters.

In the Zone gaming will include video game tournaments, PC gaming, board game demos, and tabletop cards and games such as Pokemon TCG, Magic: The Gathering, and Dungeons & Dragons. The schedule for gaming events can be found online.

More than 2,500 people have visited the convention since its inception. – Amy VanScoter

Friday 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. // Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier // Advance ticket Weekend pass, \$35; Advance Ticket Single-day, \$17-\$20; All tickets sold at the door are \$22 per day or \$40 Weekend pass // Children age 7 and under are free // eriepromotions.com/comicon-erie



2022-2023 MIAC LIVE SEASON

BETTY BUCKLEY

Saturday, Sept. 24 | 7:30 p.m.

Walker Recital Hall

miac.mercyhurst.edu

814-824-3000

MERCYHURST
INSTITUTE FOR ARTS & CULTURE

A Special Saturday Gallery Night

An open exhibition of Erie’s art scene

SATURDAY, SEPT. 17

Nothing brings Erie’s art community together quite like Gallery Night. Loyal attendees have — for years — reveled in making their own unique treks, hitting as many Erie locations as they can in one busy night. This September features the evening’s events on a Saturday, as opposed to the standard Friday lineup. — Erie Reader staff

The following locations are participating in this September’s Gallery Night (listed in alphabetical order).

814 Photo by Patrick Grab
@ City Supply
431 State St. // 814photo.com
Photography from the man behind the @814.photo Instagram and more

1020 Collective
1020 Holland St. // 1020collective.com
“Singular Being” by Kris Risto upstairs, with an Erie-based group show downstairs, music by Miami electro-dance duo Afrobeta and Ithaca-based duo Dom Martyr

Allen Stoneware Gallery LLC
2602 W. 8th St., Colony Plaza // allen-stonewaregallery.com
Beautiful pottery and ceramic works on display

Annabella’s at Anastasia Mansion
551 W. 8th St. // facebook.com/AnnabellasAtAnastasiaMansion
Unique reflections on the spirit, and our purpose in life, with live music with Amber Adams and Michael Shreve

Artifacts on 10th
301 W. 10th St. // facebook.com/artifactserie
Works by Evan Everhart, with Electric Kool-aid and live music by Sheldon Peterson

D’ Hopkins Denniston Gallery Fine Art
5 W. 10th St. // D’ Hopkins Denniston Gallery Fine Art on Facebook
Celebrating 10 years, with new works by Herm Weber, Kelley & Olaf

The Dollhouse at Pointe Four
423 State St. // pointefoure.com
“Where Vintage Meets Modern” displaying a special collection from the 1920s to modern times



JESSICA HUNTER

The 10/20 Collective will be just one of 20 locations participating in September’s Gallery Night, featuring local art on display, refreshments, and more.

Ember+Forge
401 State St. // emberandforge.com
Music and art from McKenzie Sprague (aka Optimistic Apocalypse)

The Erie Art Museum
20 E. 5th St. // erieartmuseum.org
View Chautauqua Artists in Residence 2022, “Ole’ Say Can WE See?” by Garry R. Bibbs, “Narcissus” by Erie Art Company & Noodlefish, “Out of Many — Stories of Migration” and “Connecting with the Collection: Photographic Portraits” both curated by Laura Domencic and Brian Cohen, plus more at Gallery Night’s anchor location

Flagship City Foodhall
22 N. Park Row // flagshipcityfoodhall.com
With Gallery Night food and drink specials

Footlights Theatre Performing Arts Center
945 W. 12th St., Suite B // footlightspac.com
With performances from Footlights’ Student Committee and collaborative art pieces

Gannon’s Schuster Gallery
700 Peach St. // gannon.edu
Featuring the work of Gannon alum William Schuster, with animated film screening

Glass Growers Gallery
10 E. 5th St. // glassgrowersgallery.com
“Wonder” by Susan Stone displaying mixed media works

Grounded Print Shop
1902 Cherry St. // groundedprintshop.com
Demos and work from in-house artists, experimental live music

Kada Gallery & Frame Shop
2632 W. 8th St., Shops at the Colony // kadagallery.com
“Realms” by artists Jamie Borowicz and Justin Elliot Poole, with live music

Mid-Day Dance Break Finale
Crime Victims Center, 125 W. 18th St. // cvcerie.org/mid-day-dance-break-gallery
Art from participating dancers, along with short video presentation

Molly Brannigan’s
506 State St. // mollybrannigans.com
Art by Helen Tullio, with live music, and more

Primo Tailoring
421 State St. // primotailoring.com
Original clothing tailored and created on-site by founder Louis Geramita and co.

Purrista Cat Cafe
30 W. 8th St. // purristacatcafe.com
With painter Kelsie Sackett, music from Jess Royer, and cats courtesy of Because You Care Inc.

The Studio at St. Mary’s
310 E. 10th St. // studioatstmarys.com
Full gallery plus weaving demonstrations and yoga on-site

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EVENTS

'20 Lives Ignited' Book Launches at Erie Art Museum

How 20 Women Over 60 (and 15 from Erie) are Creating Success on Their Own Terms



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

THURSDAY, SEPT. 22

Did you know that one of Amazon's #1 bestselling books (in the Women & Business category) was three-quarters written by Erie authors?

That book is *20 Lives Ignited: How 20 Women Over 60 are Creating Success on Their Own Terms*.

As the title suggests, it offers valuable life lessons from successful women all over the country, with 15 of them hailing from right here in Erie.

Dr. Gae Anderson-Miller, one of the book's authors who helped organize the publication, noted that each chapter aims at detailing something that has been a proven success. "There are so many things in there that I believe would be really helpful," Anderson-Miller said. "You've got everything from job loss to a child overdosing, someone being captured in a van, to people who were abused. There's a whole gamut of the kinds of things that people experience."

Finding success despite hurdles — sometimes horrific — is the throughline of the book. It's meant to be a helpful guide to readers of all ages, sharing the secrets of success these women have found.

"A friend of mine, Linda Staszewski

thought about writing a book," Anderson-Miller detailed, citing that due to their numerous connections they could form an impressive anthology. "So she reached out to local people, and was in touch with other members of the Coffee Club Divas."

"So there are people in the book from Hawaii, California, and Texas, but 15 of the authors are from Erie," Anderson-Miller explained.

The book's authors include (in alphabetical order) Sydney Amicucci, Valerie Baltzer, Shelley Chicas*, Bonnie Conley, Susan Dunton, Tarnie Fulloon*, Janet Kassir, Heidi Parr Kerner, Vickie Jones, Thasia Ann Lunger, Vicke Marz, Gae Anderson-Miller, Remlee Peck, Peggy Schwab, Linda Staszewski, Theresa Ream*, Jody Royee*, Tammy Ward, Valerie Weaver, and Tharifah Wenrich* (asterisks indicate non-Erie County authors).

For its special launch party, the authors will be on hand to tell their stories at the Erie Art Museum. The evening will include live music by David VanAmberg and friends, as well as refreshments, and a chance to pick up the book for 15 percent off its price on Amazon. — Nick Warren

5 to 7 p.m. // Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. // Free // To register, go to EventBrite

Dramashop Presents the Musical *Lizzie*

Punk take on the Lizzie Borden murders opens the theatre company's 2022-23 season

PREMIERING FRIDAY, SEPT. 23

Erie's Dramashop presents a new musical titled *Lizzie* this September. Based on the book by Tim Maner, *Lizzie* is a dramatic musical focusing on strong themes such as murder, sexual abuse, and oppression. Premiering at the Living Theater in New York City in 2009, *Lizzie* is a hard-edged, punk rock take on the legendary Lizzie Borden axe murders.

"In the late summer of 1892, Lizzie Borden was accused of murdering her father and stepmother with an axe," Dramashop's online synopsis reads. Through unreliable testimonies and incomplete evidence, Borden was acquitted. The music — composed by Steven Cheslik-deMeyer, and Alan Stevens Hewitt, with lyrics by Cheslik-deMeyer and Maner — seeks to delve "into the mysterious mind of Lizzie Borden and speculates on the motivations she may have had." These motivations include the loss of inheritance, a history of sexual abuse, mental health issues, and more. In the musical, Borden is joined by her older sister Emma, her maid Bridget, and neighbor Alice, the four women creating a punk rock score illustrating Borden's story, who "took an axe and gave her mother 40 whacks, and why when she saw what she had done, gave her father 41."

The performances are divided into two casts, the AXE Cast (featuring Kate Thiem as Lizzie, Julie Lokahi, Jenna Baker, and Hadleigh Jae Bills), and the ROSE Cast (featuring Anna McJunkin as Lizzie, Tori Lyn Koszegi, Julia Polaski, and Maia Magerle), each with



SERGEY NIVENS

five performances a piece during the three-week run, including Thursday shows, a Dramashop rarity.

Dramashop is set to have a season-opening celebration on Friday, Sept. 23, with a 7 p.m. reception and an 8 p.m. performance by the AXE Cast. — Andrew Mello

Performances beginning on Thursday, Sept. 29 through Sunday, Oct. 9, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. // Dramashop, 1001 State St., Second Floor // Standard tickets \$15 // For tickets (including discounted rates) and more information, go to dramashop.org.

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EVENTS

North East WineFest Uncorks a Packed Weekend

The three-day event toasts to its fourth decade and more

BEGINNING FRIDAY, SEPT. 23



JESSICA HUNTER

Come September, if you take a drive or a bike ride up Route 20 toward the New York line, the air is redolent with the thick, juicy scent of ripe grapes. And that can only mean one thing: it's time for the North East Wine Country Harvest Festival, colloquially known as WineFest.

This year's WineFest again takes place over the last weekend of September in North East's beloved Gibson Park, and it has grown to include over 100 different wines to sample, dozens of musical acts on the main stage and hundreds of vendors, selling everything from arts and crafts, to apparel, jewelry, and sweet and savory treats.

Said Jennifer Smith, marketing and board liaison for the North East Chamber of Commerce, "Just like every glass of wine represents months of cultivating and nurturing by the farmers, the Chamber and its board of directors spend months planning the annual Wine Country Harvest Festival."

"It's thrilling to see the event come together and so many people enjoying our town and the fruits of everyone's labor," she continued.

For those tipping the vino, you must have valid ID to show that you are over 21, and you must purchase a Day or Weekend Tasting wristband. Of course, everyone who purchases a tasting wristband will receive a commemorative souvenir wine glass (while supplies last).

If you're just looking to take in the general festival atmosphere, minus the tasting, admission is totally free — wander the park as you will.

And speaking of the festival atmosphere, each day of the event will feature live, local music, including The

Goats on Friday, Amanda Barton Duo and Two for Flinching on Saturday, and Jack Stevenson & The Buried Treasure Band on Sunday.

There will be plenty to do for the kids, as live demonstrators will perform juggling and magic, or your little one can transform into a tiger or a kitty via face painting.

You can even take a whimsical ride in a horse-drawn carriage through North East's historic streets.

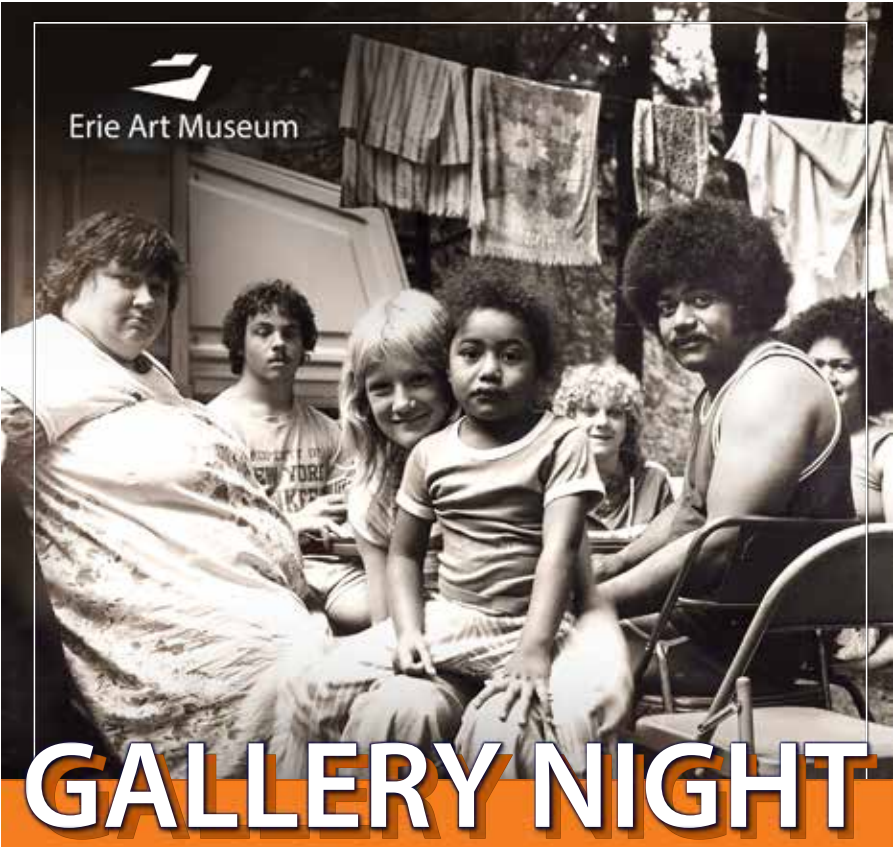
Returning are events that "have been on hiatus for a few years," according to Smith, such as the Skunk & Goat Tavern four-course outdoor dinner, which features limited seating and a special focus on the wines of North East.

There's also the Car Show: "We've partnered with NFI Empire to bring the event to Heard Park from noon to 3 p.m. Sunday and proceeds benefit our local Boy Scout troops," explained Smith.

Finally, there is the Bike Wine Country Tour, on Friday and Saturday, which features eight and 15 stops, respectively; the WineFest 5K on Saturday which steps off from Gibson Park at 9 a.m.; and the Car Show at Heard Park at 3 p.m., or Yoga & More with Deb Phillips on Sunday.

Whether you're a wine aficionado with a taste for the good stuff or you just want to enjoy the live music and grab a bite to eat, the North East WineFest is pouring with goodness. — Cara Suppa

4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday; 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday; 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday // Gibson Park, 2 Gibson Street, North East // Friday or Sunday Tasting Pass: \$20; Saturday Tasting Pass: \$40; Free general admission // For more information and to buy tickets visit: nechamber.org/about-winefest



GALLERY NIGHT

Saturday, September 17th

for a full list of participating galleries
please visit ErieArtMuseum.org/gallery-night

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— Live Music Schedule —

Wed, 8/31 | Jeremy Jaeger | 6-9pm

Thurs, 9/1 | Man's Room Band | 6-10pm

Fri, 9/2 | Ron Yarman & Jared Cooney | 6-10pm

Sat, 9/3 | Jack Stevenson | 4:30-6:30pm
| Lucky Dog | 7-11pm

Sun, 9/4 | Geek Army | 6-10pm

Mon, 9/5 | Tennessee Backporch | 5-9pm

Wed, 9/7 | Monica Lewis | 6-9pm

Thurs, 9/8 | Dan Baney | 6-9pm

Fri, 9/9 | The Acoustic Jukebox | 6-10pm

Sat, 9/10 | The Goats | 6-10pm

Sun, 9/11 | Ron Yarman | 3-6pm

HOURS OF OPERATION

Before Labor Day	After Labor Day
8/31 - 9/1 4pm - Close	Mon - Fri 4pm - Close
9/2 - 9/5 12pm - Close	Sat - Sun 12pm - Close



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EVENTS

Erie Philharmonic Pops Series Returns with Rock n’ Radio

Sheena Easton joins Erie Phil for night of top hits

SATURDAY, OCT. 1



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Erie Philharmonic is starting its Pop Series for the 2022-2023 season with “Rock n’ Radio with Sheena Easton,” a concert featuring popular rock music from eight decades of hits. The touring show features Scottish singer-songwriter Sheena Easton, and is produced by Scott Coulter, who directed the “Music of the Knights” concert featured last season. That show featured music from Paul McCartney, Elton John, and Andrew Lloyd Weber, and was a success for the orchestra, selling out the Warner Theatre and dazzling Erie audiences.

“Get ready to rock n’ roll down memory lane with an evening of music straight from the radio, featuring the biggest pop songs of all time,” the Erie Phil-

harmonic concert description reads. “Groove along to over eight decades of chart-topping hits from the greatest names in music history, including Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Carole King, Aretha Franklin, The Beatles, Elvis Presley, Whitney Houston, Lady Gaga, Elton John, Adele, and more.”

Easton is a two-time Grammy winner, and has sold over 20 million albums worldwide along with being the first to have top five records on five of the Billboard Charts. She is known for her work in pop music, American standards, and film soundtracks, including hits such as “Modern Girl,” “9 to 5,” and the title track on the 1981 James Bond film *For Your Eyes Only*. Along with her Las Vegas residencies and tours across the globe, she’s starred in Broadway productions, including the West End Revival of *42nd Street* in 2017 and featured roles in *Grease* and *Man of La Mancha*. – Thomas Taylor

8 to 10:30 p.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // Tickets starting at \$25, \$12 for students // For tickets and more information, call (814) 455-1375, visit the Erie Phil offices at 23 W. 10th St., or go to eriephil.org/calendar/sheena

‘Whose Live Anyway?’ At the Warner

A show-stopping number from the *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* crew

TUESDAY, SEPT. 27



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Unscripted, unplanned, and unhinged comedy is what you will witness when you see *Whose Live Anyway?* at the Warner Theatre. *Whose Live Anyway?* is a touring version of the hit television series *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* featuring three of the show’s stars in Ryan Stiles, Greg Proops, and Jeff B. Davis, along with Joel Murray (the youngest of nine Murray brothers — yes, Bill is one of them). The appeal of this performance comes from its use of games, gags, and songs to act out scenarios that are improvised on the spot. The jokes are delivered in rapid succession that are filled with one liners, witty comebacks, and often irreverent topics that will keep you laughing through the next bit.

A show that is as unscripted and spontaneous as *Whose Live Anyway?* requires the type of energy and chemistry that these short-form improv comics have. Stiles and Proops have worked together on *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* since the U.S. version’s first season (and previously on later seasons of the original British version) and Davis since Season Three. They are adding Murray who has over 250 sitcom appearances under his belt, and is known for his work on *Mad Men* and *Shameless*, along with the films *One Crazy Summer*, *The Artist*, and Bobcat Goldthwait’s *God Bless America*. *Whose Live Anyway?* combines years of comedic experience with a happenstance attitude toward material that is sure to impress as well as entertain. Whether you are an avid fan of these performers or have just stumbled across one of their videos online, you can expect to see a set filled with random topics and hilarious improvisations. – Larry Wheaton

7:30 p.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St // \$37 - \$57 // Tickets can be purchased at erieevents.com, by phone at 814-452-4857, or in person at the Erie Events box office in Erie Insurance Arena (809 French St.)

Eerie Horror Fest Continues to Scare

The film and gaming festival hits in early October with a full lineup of events and guests

BEGINNING WEDNESDAY, OCT. 5



F.W. MURNAU

It’s almost that time again for the Film Society of Northwest PA to throw their annual Eerie Horror Fest; a spooktacular event that pays homage to some of horror’s most beloved movies and underground films with special guests, Q&As, featurettes made here and around the world, pitch competitions, and more.

This year, the four-day event will be coming back home to the historic Warner Theatre.

Kicking off with a bang (or should we say, a silent scream) will be a very special screening of the 1922 silent film *Nosferatu*. The iconic film will be accompanied by the Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ, only recently installed. A pipe organist will play along with the film,

in the style it was heard when released. Arriving on the scene nearly a decade before Bela Legosi’s *Dracula*, this influential German Expressionist horror film is directed by F. W. Murnau, and stars Max Schreck as the vampire Count Orlok. It’s making served as the basis for the 2000 film *Shadow of the Vampire*.

Some of this year’s guests include:

- John Adams and Toby Poser of Wonder Wheel Productions (*Hellbender*, *The Deeper You Dig*, *Halfway to Zen*)
- Carter Smith (*The Ruins*, *Swallowed*, *Bugcrush*)
- Mark Patton (*A Nightmare on Elm Street 2, Swallowed*, *Scream*, *Queen! My Nightmare On Elm Street*)
- Courtney Gains (*Back to the Future*, *The ‘Burbs*, *Children of the Corn*)
- John Franklin (*Children of the Corn*, *The Addams Family*, *Addams Family Values*)
- John Philbin (*Point Break*, *Return of the Living Dead*, *Children of the Corn*)
- Fritz Kiersch (*Children of the Corn*, *Tuff Turf*)
- More TBA

The Eerie Horror Fest has been running for 15 years, giving the City of Erie a look behind the scenes at some of Hollywood’s fan favorites as well as local films, with

panel discussions featuring the directors, actors, and others involved in the filmmaking process.

This is also a grand opportunity for other creatives in the Erie area to connect with filmmakers and other guests to help grow the film community. Participating vendors such as Clown Candy Art, All Things Spooky, and Eileen Green Farms will be in attendance to provide for this yearly party that horror nerds cannot stop raving about.

This year, the pitch competition will be in full effect, giving creators an opportunity to propose their horror ideas and synopses for a chance to win great prizes. As always, Erie caters to its upcoming and ambitious writers and directors to keep the flow of the arts circulating.

On Oct. 5th, dare to enter the haunting doors of the Warner Theatre where ghouls and goblins will party the night away for a creepy good time. — Charles Brown

Thursday from 3 to 9:30 p.m.; *Nosferatu* from 8 to 9:30 p.m.; Friday from 3 to 10:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 1:30 a.m. // Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // All-access Fest Pass \$105 pre-sale; Premium All-Access Fest Pass \$132 pre-sale; *Nosferatu* Movie and Party Package \$45; *Nosferatu* Movie \$30 // For tickets and more information, visit eriehorrorfest.com

Single tickets on sale now

Don't miss a note!



October 1

Rock n' Radio
featuring Sheena Easton



October 22

Beethoven's Ode to Joy
+ Erie Philharmonic Chorus



November 5 + 6

Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back
in concert



November 12

Cameron Carpenter
+ The Wurlitzer Theatre Organ



December 3

Come Home for the Holidays:
A Soulful Christmas



January 28

The Planets
+ Accordion Concerto



February 18 + 19

Pixar's *Toy Story*
in concert



March 25

Midori
+ The Erie Jr. Philharmonic



April 15

Cirque at the Symphony with
Troupe Vertigo



May 13

Alexander Nevsky
+ Erie Philharmonic Chorus

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More Noteworthy Events This Month

Erie County Fair - Beginning Aug. 28

13993-14399 PA-89, Wattsburg, PA // wattsburgfair.com

German Heritage Fest - Beginning Saturday, Sept. 3

St. Nick's Grove, 5131 Old French Rd. // dank-erie.org/german-heritage-fest.html

Waterford Community Fair - Beginning Monday, Sept. 5

13012 Route 19 S, Waterford, PA // waterfordfair.org

Mighty Wurlitzer with the Erie Philharmonic - Friday, Sept. 9

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. // erie-phil.org/calendar/organ

Drag Brunch 2 - Sunday, Sept. 11

The Zone Dance Club, 133 W. 18th St. // the-zone-dance-club.square.site/

Albion Area Fair - Beginning Tuesday, Sept. 13

30 Academy St., Albion, PA // albion-fair.com

Daughtry at the Warner Theatre - Wednesday, Sept. 14

811 State St. // erieevents.com

RibFest - Beginning Thursday, Sept. 15

Perry Square, Downtown Erie // eribfest.com

Erie Irish Festival - Beginning Friday, Sept. 16

Saint Patrick Church, 130 E. 4th St. // saintpatrickparisherie.org/Events2.html

Oktoberfest at Riverside Brewing - Beginning Saturday, Sept. 17

Riverside Brewing Company, 1 Fountain St., Cambridge Springs, PA // riversidebrewing.co

Bernadette Peters with the Erie Philharmonic at MIAC - Saturday, Sept. 17

Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. // miac.mercyhurst.edu

Betty Buckley MIAC - Saturday, Sept. 24

Walker Recital Hall, Mercyhurst, 501 E. 38 St. // lmiac.mercyhurst.edu

Homegrown Harvest Festival

Goodell Gardens - Sunday, Sept. 25

Goodell Gardens & Homestead, 221 Waterford St. (Route 6N), Edinboro, PA // goodellgardens.org/harvestfest/

Clay Walker at the Warner Theatre - Thursday, Sept. 29

811 State St. // erieevents.com

Lions Tigers, and Beers at the Erie Zoo - Saturday, Oct. 1

423 W. 38th St. // eriezoo.org/events/lions-tigers-and-beers

No Laughing Matter: *Bodies Bodies Bodies* Is Too Cynical to Be Much Fun

★★

There are lots of fans of slasher movies who seem to treat the subgenre as a kind of sport, that the pleasure in viewing them comes from rooting for the killer as he makes his way through the victims who obviously deserve what they get in some capacity. This has always been strange to me as the whole point of horror is to be horrified for the characters. Yet the new film *Bodies Bodies Bodies* still intrigued me because it seemed to be using this concept to make some kind of statement about the more obnoxious tendencies of modern culture — a potentially interesting idea that comes off sadly far more mean-spirited than genuinely satirical in execution.

The film follows Sophie (Amandla Stenberg), a recovering addict who invites her new girlfriend Bee (Maria Bakalova) to a hurricane party being held by some friends she hasn't seen in years. As the hurricane rages outside, one friend suggests they play a murder mystery game that turns real when one friend is found dead. As the bodies slowly pile up, paranoia and mistrust



rule the night, but who is the real killer?

The film wants to have some kind of message about the narcissism, ironic nihilism, and general hostility that can so often be found in the "Twitter/TikTok Generation" but I'm not quite sure what that message is beyond "laughing at the horrible people." Worse, the characters are so terrible to each other, it becomes difficult for audiences to even care about their predicament. I understand the desire to show people at their worst

but that can't be all there is. All films — even horror films — need some kind of empathy and humanity to keep audiences engaged. And you'll find neither of those qualities here. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: Halina Reijn // Written by: Sarah DeLappe, based on a story by Kristen Roupenian // Starring: Amandla Stenberg, Maria Bakalova, Myha'la Herrold, Rachel Sennott, Chase Sui Wonders, Lee Pace, and Pete Davidson // 93 minutes // Rated R // A24

Gonna Have Some Fun Tonight: *Prey* Is a Flawed but Worthy Prequel

★★★

Has there ever been a film franchise with more highs and lows than the *Predator* series? After a genre-defining original and a fun sequel, we had a few convoluted mash-ups with the *Alien* films, an entertaining attempted reboot (*Predators*) and another reboot with the most ridiculous story imaginable (*The Predator*, the one with weaponized autism ... seriously). Now the series goes back to the distant past with *Prey*. The result is, despite some pacing issues, the most interesting take on the franchise since Arnie and his friends had their jungle adventure back in 1987.

Set in the Great Plains in the year 1719, the film follows Naru (Amber Midthunder), a young Comanche woman out to prove herself worthy of joining her tribe's hunting party. The hunt takes a deadly turn, however, when the party soon learns it is being stalked by some unseen force. Naru must now use all of her skills to protect her tribe from an alien hunter who wants human skulls as trophies.

The wilderness setting gives the film a sense of danger that has been missing since John McTiernan's original



classic and the pre-industrial setting feels fresh. However, the fast pace and over-reliance on CGI make the film feel less raw than it should. Also, the Predator himself is too often shown (ironic for a villain who is literally invisible). Still, the plot is engaging and most of the characters are likable, making the film as a whole an entertaining watch. *Prey* isn't perfect, but with how bad this

series often gets, it feels like a mini-miracle. *Prey* is now showing exclusively on Hulu. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: Dan Trachtenberg // Written by: Patrick Aison // Starring: Amber Midthunder, Stormee Kipp, Michelle Thrush, Julian Black Antelope, Stefany Mathias, Nelson Leis, Bennett Taylor, Mike Paterson, Tyson Carter, and Dane DiLiegro // 100 minutes // Rated R // Hulu

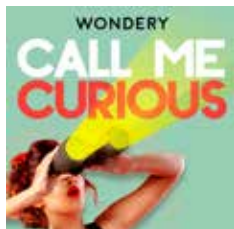
Our Monthly Podcast Picks

Take your ears to class

Call Me Curious

Hosted by: Nikki Boyer // Wonderly

You've probably heard the saying, "Breakfast is the most important meal of the day!" But have you ever found yourself wondering if that's really true? Don't worry; *Call Me Curious* has you covered.



Host Nikki Boyer (*Dying for Sex*, *The Daily Smile*) takes a dive into these things most people have heard of but don't really know about, bringing in not only public opinion — think "on the street" questions to people — but also researched info and experts who can attest to whether or not it is fact or fiction.

Each week, Boyer covers a new topic and often brings along her friend and neighbor Mr. Malone for the ride. Episodes include "Do You Really Need 8 Hours of Sleep?," "Does Intermittent Fasting Work?," "Are Dates on Food Just BS?," and "Could Your Neighbor Be a Witch?"

Perfect for those who want both the facts and the funny, Boyer and Malone create the perfect balance of education and comedy in each episode. Asking both serious and silly questions of the experts, they have a humorous way of finding facts and delivering them to the listener.

So if you're wondering whether sugar really is more addictive than cocaine or if you could fall prey to a cult, we might just have to call you curious. — Ally Kutz

Last Podcast on the Left

Hosted by: Marcus Parks, Henry Zebrowski, and Ben Kissel // lastpodcastnetwork.com

Recommending *Last Podcast on the Left* (LPotL) has about all the originality of saying someone should check out *This American Life*, but just in a more satanic way.

Having recently reached the milestone of their 500th proper episode, Marcus Parks, Henry Zebrowski, and Ben Kissel are still at the top of their game. Arguably the male counterpart to *My Favorite Murder*, LPotL dives into all the creepy, spooky and downright weird stuff you'll want to check out in time for Halloween as well as year-round. With episodes on aliens and UFOs, cults, conspiracy theories, historical atrocities, and serial killers, the boys have built a huge catalog to feast your freaky ears on.

Often mildly offensive (albeit with a strong social conscience) and always *unpredictable*, the episodes blend painstaking research from Parks along with madcap hilarity from actor/comedian Zebrowski and the befuddled, Bud Light Lime-addled brain of Kissel.

Since their debut in 2011, LPotL has continued to gain momentum, having one of the most devoted listenerships around. They've expanded into a true brand and an eponymous network with over a dozen shows under their wing. LPotL's main feed is broken up into three distinct types of show, including *Side Stories* and more lightly researched "Relaxed Fit" episodes. For a good example of a proper LPotL, check out their three-part series on the Salem Witch Trials, starting at episode 500. — Nick Warren



Script Apart

Hosted by: Al Horner // scriptapart.com

The premise of *Script Apart* — a podcast hosted by London-based film and music writer Al Horner and produced by filmmaker Kamil Dymek — is simple: Horner and a screenwriter sit down and discuss the *first* draft of their screenplay for a film or television pilot. As the conversation unfolds, they talk about the process of getting that first draft to the finished screenplay, exploring the unpredictability of the collaborative process, unraveling what did and did not change, and unpacking the motivation behind their storytelling decisions.

The podcast has had an impressive array of screenwriting guests since launching in 2020. Horner has had conversations with Bob Gale about *Back to the Future*, Barry Jenkins about *Moonlight*, and Caroline Thompson about *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Edward Scissorhands*. He hosted a Christmas special with *Die Hard* screenwriter Steven E. de Souza, discussed the collaboration that was *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* with William Wisher, and talked about the journey of bringing *Brokeback Mountain* to the screen with Diana Ossana. It's not only the classics either: recent films are well-represented too.

It helps that Horner is clearly passionate and deeply knowledgeable, as well as a great conversationalist who deeply understands storytelling (particularly in the visual medium), which makes for compelling and enjoyable conversations about beloved movies and television shows. — Jonathan Burdick



Book Review: *I'm Glad My Mom Died*

Jennette McCurdy's new memoir reveals the complexity of abusive parental relationships

You may recognize her best from Nickelodeon's *iCarly* or *Sam & Cat*, but Jennette McCurdy wants you to know she's more than just a sitcom character and more than what her mother made of her.

Raised in Garden Grove, Calif., in a relatively poor Mormon family, McCurdy learned from a young age how to navigate the minefield that was her mom's moods, anticipating and avoiding anything that would set her off and focusing on what would keep her happy. Always wanting to please her mother and fulfill her mother's childhood dream of becoming an actress, McCurdy felt she had no choice but to say yes when her mother asked if she wanted to act.

What follows is an extremely complicated, tragic, and traumatic childhood in which McCurdy finds herself swept up not

only by her fame, but also by the demanding lifestyle her mother imposed on her. From acting and dancing classes dozens of times a week to teaching her daughter how to restrict calories, causing her to develop an eating disorder, McCurdy's mother inflicted both mental and physical abuse on her daughter until her death in 2013.

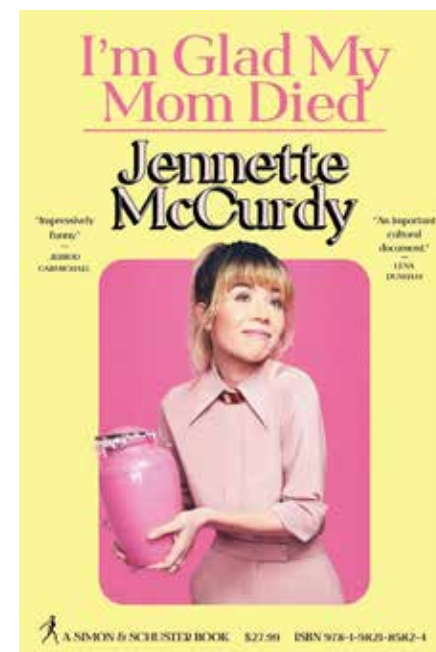
However, it took a long time for McCurdy to recognize these things as abuse. For most of her childhood and into adulthood, she often saw her mom as her best friend, only wanting what was best for her. Although she would eventually realize that the way her mom treated her was extremely toxic, it took her a long time to come to terms with it.

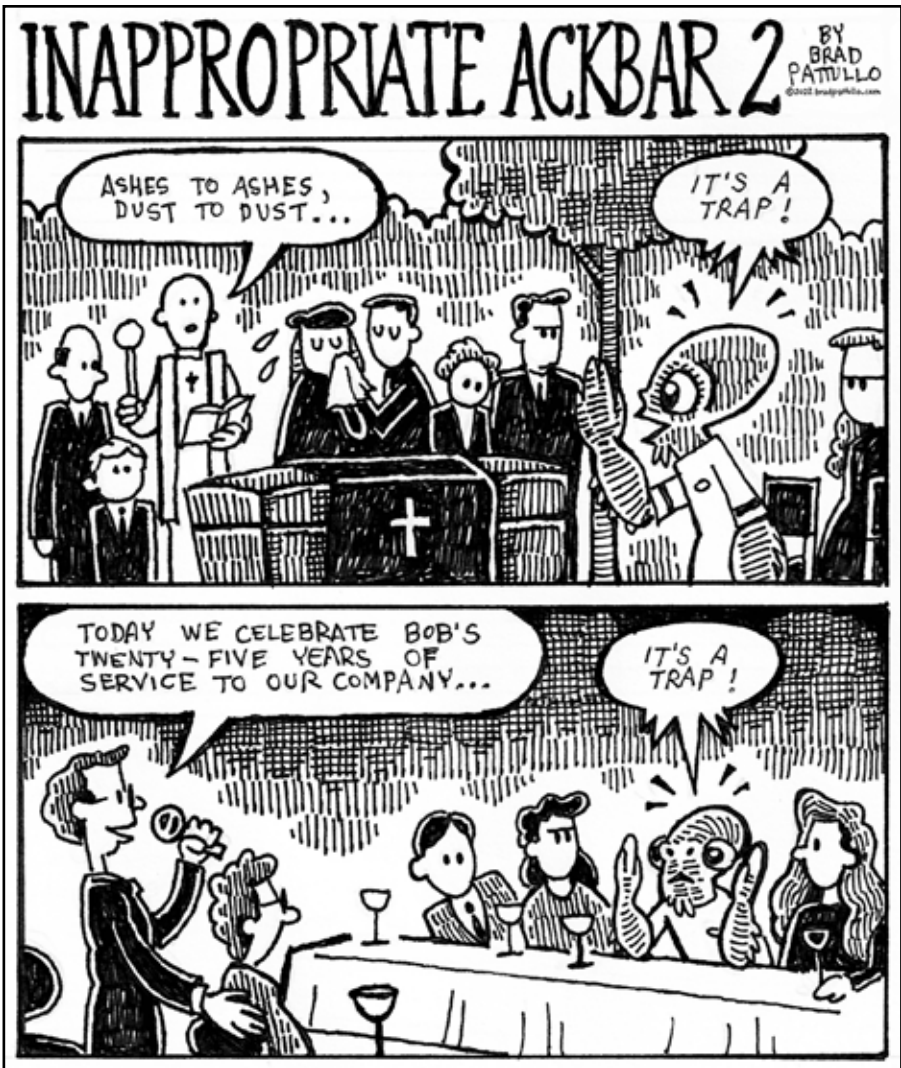
While humor is often employed in memoirs, many authors choose to either sprin-

kle it in too lightly or lay it on too heavy, but McCurdy finds that perfect balance between the two. Inherently funny, she somehow manages to make reading about such a complex, abusive relationship between her mother and herself into something more palatable. Using that humor, she helps readers to understand not only her pain, but how it has helped her heal.

With a strong voice and even stronger personality, McCurdy allows a view into her tumultuous life, from her swift rise to fame to her ultimately quitting acting to pursue other interests. Written in a way that captivates readers from the beginning, *I'm Glad My Mom Died* is a memoir to remember. — Ally Kutz

Simon & Schuster // 319 pages // Nonfiction, Memoir



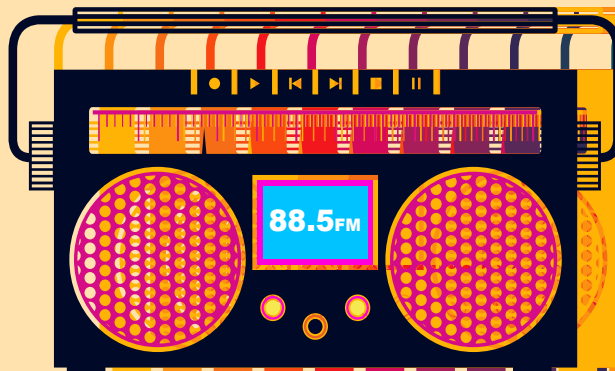


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Gem City Style: Alexandria Ellis of SHE Vintage

A Q&A with the owner and founder of one of downtown's newest boutiques

By: Jessica Hunter

Jessica Hunter: For those who haven't been there yet, can you describe SHE Vintage?

Alexandria Ellis: SHE Vintage is a lifestyle brand where sustainability meets luxury. My goal is that when you walk in, you're walking into an experience. There's upbeat music playing, music that gives you nostalgia of good times and good vibes. There are candles burning, and the pieces are pleasing to the eye. Everything is placed with intention, every piece has a story, every rack has a scheme. The boutique is carefully curated in order to exemplify the importance of embracing your personal and unique style.

JH: How has the boutique evolved since it began in 2013?

AE: I started SHE Vintage in 2013 as a pet project. It started with me having an overabundance of clothing and accessories that I had thrifted over time. I went from selling online to vending at day parties in Pittsburgh and symposiums in Erie, to selling out my website after an Instagram shout-out from an influencer.

In 2016 I decided to put SHE vintage on the back burner due to life (raising a child, and moving to Indiana to work full time as a visual merchandiser). In 2018, I moved back to Erie and worked a few nail/spa jobs — I am also a licensed cosmetologist. In 2019, I decided that I was done working for other people and that I would revive SHE Vintage for good. So that same year, my partner found a building on Peach St. and I immediately moved in and started doing nails just to make ends meet, but I always knew the boutique would be the end goal. As soon as my clientele picked up — boom — COVID hit and I was forced to shut down. Instead of being upset, I took it as a sign that it was time to pivot and shift. Fast forward through the pandemic, and SHE Vintage has taken off in ways I could not have imagined. To name a few, I have hosted several successful pop-up shop experiences, I personally have partnered with the Erie Downtown Development Corporation as the retail space and experience manager for the Cashier's House, and SHE Vintage has a newly built

store in historic Downtown Erie.

JH: What styles are you inspired by?

AE: In terms of vintage, I am inspired by the urban styles of late '70s, '80s and early-to-mid '90s. Think the glamor of Diana Ross and Donna Summer meets Denise Huxtable, meets the *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. My signature staples of the boutique are sequins, bold patterns, bright colors, and unorthodox silhouettes, gold jewelry, and unique accessories. When styling, I am inspired by the street styles of New York City, with a mix of the ultra feminine and a splash of Boho. It's like if *Sex & the City* and *A Different World* had a baby.

Being a business owner, entrepreneur, and full-time mama to a 12-year-old and a seven-month-old, my personal style has definitely evolved over the past year. So right now I am inspired by the comfy/chic look. With working, being in the public and attending meetings, I have to look polished and put together, but at the same time I'm always running around with the kids so comfortability is essential. Pinterest is definitely my go-to for inspiration.

JH: During Celebrate Erie, you interacted with Mýa and Ja Rule, how did that come about and what were their impressions of SHE Vintage, etc?

AE: That was so exciting! Honestly, it came about because I was determined to get my business out there! I am a go-getter, and when I put my mind to something, I see it through and accomplish it. Once I heard that the talent was Mýa and Ja Rule, I wanted to somehow get Mýa introduced to my business, being a Black woman-owned business newly located downtown. They say there are only six degrees of separation between everyone in the world, so I knew it wouldn't be too hard to get in contact. So I sent a few emails and calls and requested a meet and greet with Mýa at my store. She wasn't able to accommodate that due to a tight schedule, so I curated a gift bag for her instead as a way to say "Welcome to Erie."

She called when she arrived and I was able to go backstage before her soundcheck and gift everything to her ... Mýa is vegan, an animal rights activist, and strictly against animal cruelty.



JESSICA HUNTER

Alexandria Ellis, owner and founder of SHE Vintage, describes her sense of style as "a mix of ultra feminine with a splash of Boho. It's like *Sex & The City* and *A Different World* had a baby."

So I made sure that everything I selected was cruelty free which meant absolutely no leather, wool, fur, feathers, or suede ... She was super sweet and her dancers loved everything so much that two of them shared their home address to send merch and will endorse SHE Vintage on their tours with Mýa and Justin Bieber.

Now Ja Rule wasn't planned, he was just a casualty of my determination. I waited until after his soundcheck and I was able to take a gift bag back to him, which consisted of a few t-shirts from SHE Vintage and Rabbit 3. He was super cool and so nice and down to earth. It was an amazing opportunity!

JH: In addition to being a storefront, what other services does SHE Vintage provide?

AE: Right now, I have been so heavily focused on getting the store set up and feeling just right so that it looks and feels exactly as I've been manifesting. Beginning in October, we will be offering space to rental services, with a hostess incentive program (think the days of fabulous Tupperware, Avon and Mary Kay parties). We have a beautiful lobby attached to the

boutique that's perfect for intimate gatherings such as "sip n slay" events, jewelry parties, pop-ups to introduce your brand, private shopping events, etc.

We also offer personal shopping services and personal styling. Like if there is anything specific you are looking for, whether vintage or not, need styled for an event, need looks pulled for vacation, I will provide that service, just call!

JH: What do you see for the future of fashion in Erie?

AE: I see Erie bouncing back from the fashion drought. I think that with all of the new developments happening and having younger people with more diverse ideas sitting on boards, Erie will begin to thrive again. I have big plans for SHE Vintage as a brand, with several locations offering more than just "vintage." I plan on bringing and sharing my knowledge of retail, management, sourcing, merchandising, and visuals throughout Erie so that the fashion market breathes again.

Jessica Hunter can be found at jessicahunterphotos.com

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ALBUM REVIEWS

Jack White
Entering Heaven Alive
Third Man Records

★★★★★

On Jack White's second re-release of 2022, and fifth overall solo album, we have a companion piece to *Fear of the Dawn*, which was released in April of this year. Unlike its predecessor, *Entering Heaven Alive* is rooted in folk, jazz, and psychedelic rock and less in guitar-driven stadium anthems. These two records complement each other nicely, as the last track on *Fear of the Dawn* flows right into the opening track "A Tip from You and Me." The song "All Along the Way" is reminiscent of The Raconteurs (White's other project), while "Love Is Selfish" could have easily been a White Stripes tune. There is more acoustic guitar, piano, and violin on this record with standout songs like "I've Got You Surrounded (With My Love)," "A Madman from Manhattan," and "Queen of the Bees", which is written in a Dixieland style. The album closes with "Taking Me Back (Gently)," an alternate version to the opening track "Taking Me Back" from *Fear of The Dawn*, which was soaked in heavy guitar. This version sounds as if he recorded it as a minstrel performing it in a ragtime style. At this point in White's career, he is still finding ways to reinvent himself without sounding cliché. — Larry Wheaton



Ezra Furman
All Of Us Flames
Anti-

★★★★★

This record is exciting. Ezra Furman returns with the conclusion to her three-album series, which began with the watershed album *Transangelic Exodus* in 2018, continued with *Twelve Nudes* the following year, and now ends with *All Of Us Flames*. Between this trio of concept albums, she's also been one of the composers for the Netflix series *Sex Education*. In April of 2021, Furman came out as a trans woman. Without conflating art and artist, this comes as little surprise if you've followed the lyrics to her prior two albums, or really, kept up with her at all. This album surrounds itself with massively anthemic earworms, built upon classic chord progressions, with a nearly perfect blend of fuzz-laden electrics and blistering acoustics. Looking for examples? Immediately check out the absolute bangers "Forever In Sunset" and "Point Me Toward the Real," with a chorus you'll be singing along to and empathizing with. Drawing many an apt comparison to mid-career Bruce Springsteen (see winning tracks like "Lilac And Black"), Furman goes on her own existential journey, and is currently enrolled at Newton Massachusetts' Hebrew College studying to become a rabbi. We just hope she keeps making music. — Nick Warren



Wiz Khalifa
Multiverse
TaylorGangEntertainment and Asylum Records

★★★★

Pittsburgh artist Wiz Khalifa has played an interesting role in hip-hop culture. Emerging in the mid 2000s with a stream of mixtapes and independent albums that led him to a record deal with Warner Music, the 412 stoner has since provided the soundtrack for many a young party animal and those who like to kick back and roll one. Previously never leaving the subject matter of high times, raging, and simply being the prince of his city, Wiz takes a different approach on his latest album *Multiverse*. The experimentation and transparency in this record might catch Khalifa's strong following off guard, but it's a refreshing and welcome surprise. Vintage Wiz is still alive in the beginning stages of this album, but the further you go into it, the layers of Khalifa start to peel away as he opens up about love, loss of friends, and even family. *Multiverse* lets you in on what the rapper has probably been capable of doing for some time. It's much in line with the more trauma-based and revealing direction hip-hop has been trending toward as of late, and feels timely in that sense. Some may find *Multiverse* strange, while others will appreciate Wiz's growth as an artist as he flows effortlessly with a new view on life. — Charles Brown



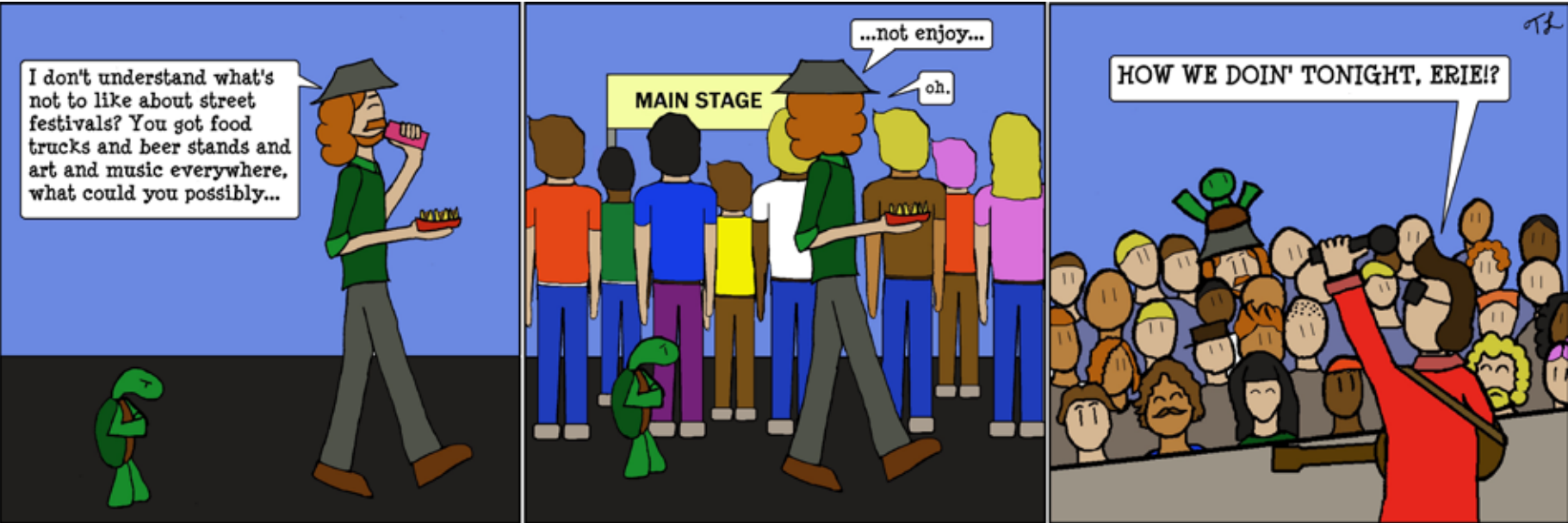
Julia Jacklin
Pre Pleasure
Polyvinyl

★★★★★

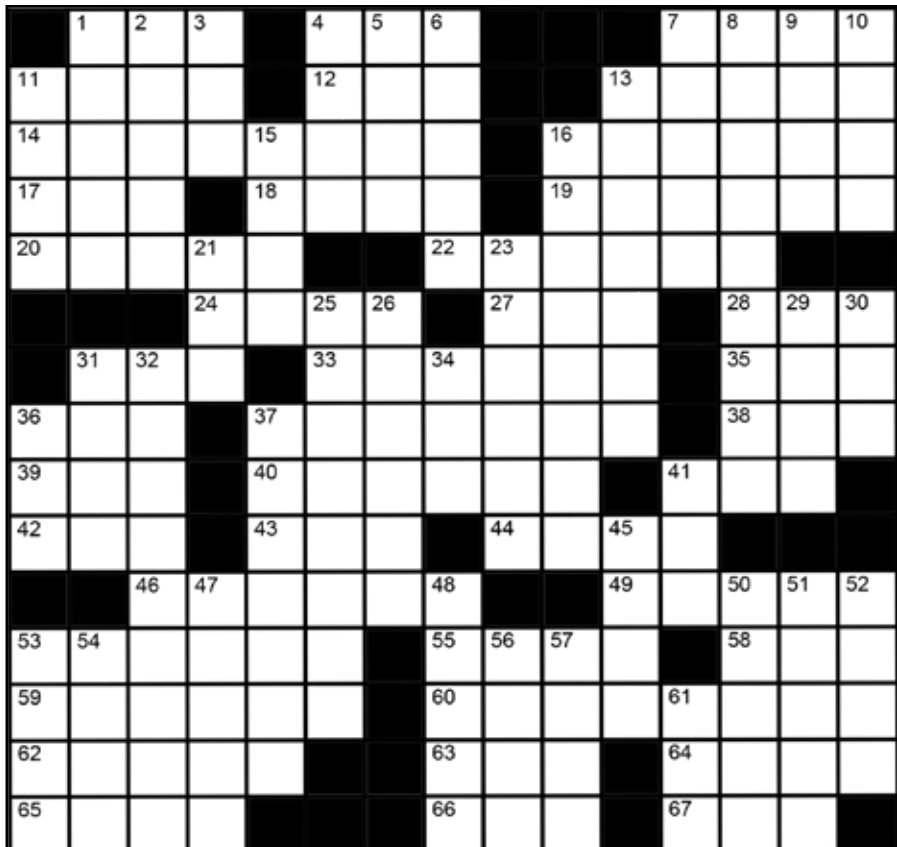
The follow-up to 2019's masterful album *Crushing*, *Pre Pleasure* gives us everything we wanted and expected from the Australian songwriter. Moving perfectly within her oeuvre of soulful sad girl rock, Jacklin finds herself a little more lively than when we last left her, as evidenced in tracks like "Love, Try Not To Let Go" with its echoes of Sharon Van Etten or Angel Olsen during her *My Woman* phase. Jacklin is incredibly emotive, and isn't afraid to be evocative and romantic, while seemingly making every choice she feels to be right. There are even tracks that verge on rock, like "I Was Neon" and "Be Careful With Yourself" working within the album to great success, providing dynamic peaks and valleys within the album's 10 tracks. While *Crushing* might have come at a landmark point for the subgenre that Jacklin inhabits, *Pre Pleasure* might be an even more impressive offering. The blend of alt-country and dream pop works synergistically in tandem, crafting a nearly perfect example others will hopefully take heed of. Her lyricism is both sensitive and strong-willed, a self-assured brand of emotional introspection, combined with a longing to connect. — Nick Warren



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CROSSWORD



Across

- Brooks who wrote the 2021 memoir "All About Me!"
- Test the water?
- Year the mathematician Pierre de Fermat was born
- Simone known as the "High Priestess of Soul"
- Boston Garden legend Bobby
- Writers Collins and Sheehy
- *Snow-capped peak of song
- Mr. Miyagi, for one
- Drink in a tavern
- Website with a Seller Handbook
- Writer Jong and others
- Ran out of patience
- High-ranking noncom
- "The King of Clay," familiarly
- Org. that publishes the journal Emotion
- Like 2021
- Loops into a conversation, briefly
- Uses, as a hammock
- Soft murmur
- "For me, a good bowl of ____ will always make me happy": Anthony Bourdain
- Fully equipped and ready to go ... or a hint to answering the asterisked clues
- "Sound of da Police"

rapper ____-One

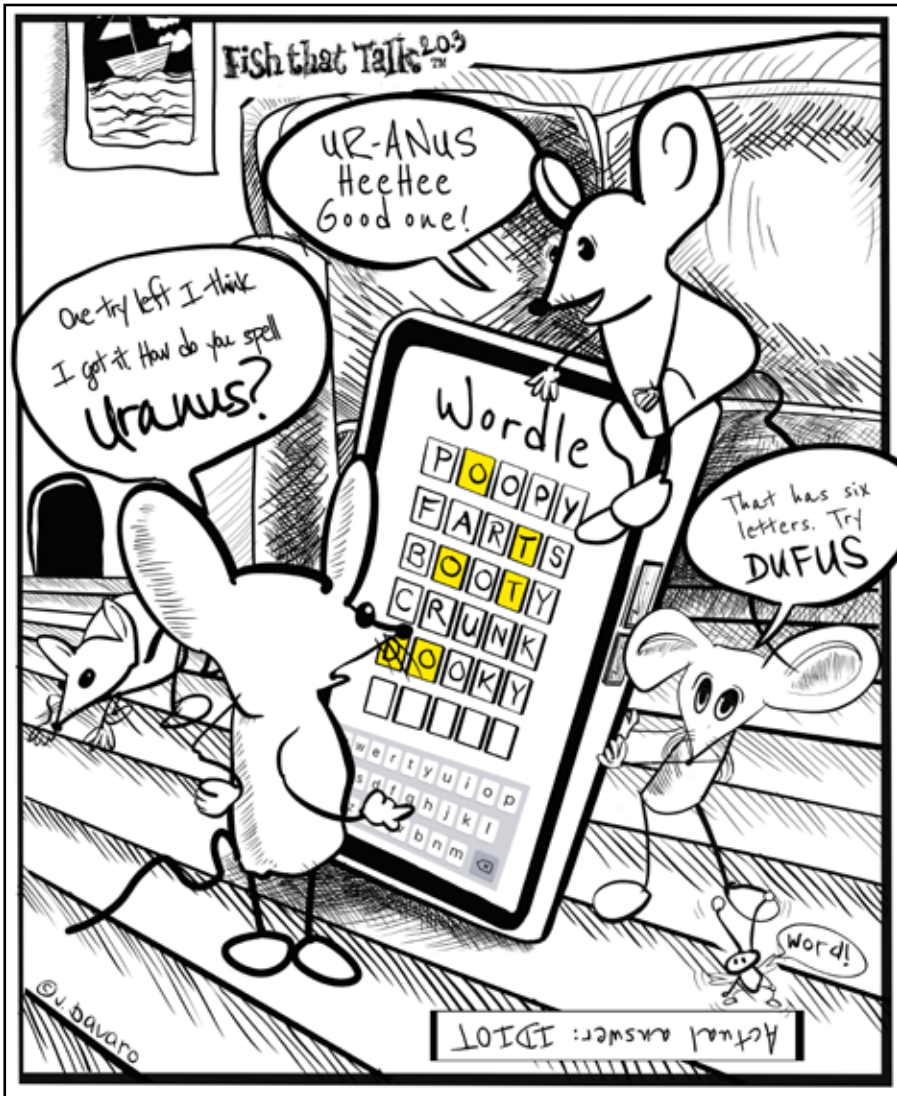
- Be down with something
- Household skills class, for short
- Youngest recipient of the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor (2010)
- Scoundrel
- "Blood hath been shed ____ now": Macbeth
- Rodin's thinker?
- Like a good workout
- ____ board
- Ejected, as froth
- Space balls?
- Sea-____ Airport
- "My little" girl of '50s TV
- *Thingamajig
- Language in which "Shazbot!" is a profanity
- Dungeons & Dragons genre, briefly
- Nonbinary gender pronoun
- Jennifer of "Dirty Dancing"
- "Without a doubt!"
- Kvetching cries

Down

- Jovovich of "He Got Game"
- Put a stop to
- "____ Mañanitas" (traditional Mexican birthday song)
- Grime on Santa's suit
- Ruffles the feathers of clues
- Hunts, with "on"
- Frenzy

8. *Record player

- DuVall of "21 Grams"
- Egyptian fertility goddess
- "The Daily Show" host Trevor
- Country that's got Meg Ryan all mixed up?
- Self-referential
- Bit of stage scenery
- Form 1099 agcy.
- Sealing ring
- Toothpaste additive
- Tuskegee ____ (Second World War regiment)
- Small rowboat
- ____ Equis
- Seeds some put in yogurt
- wWay to kick a habit
- Opposite of WSW
- Lobbying grp.
- Regarding that matter
- Pot-au-____ (French stew)
- Peter with the debut solo album "Legalize It"
- Out cry?
- Stop producing water, as a well
- In need of calamine lotion
- "The Two ____" ("Chinatown" sequel)
- ____-deucey
- Clean Air Act target
- Henry VIII's sixth
- What's pulled through a pulley
- Weights (down)
- "How was ____ know?"



Answers to last puzzle



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