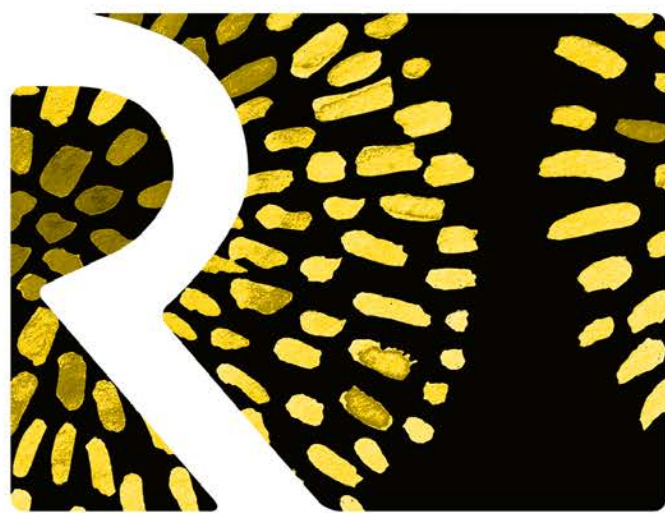


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ERIE READER

Jul. 4 - Jul. 17//Vol. 8, No. 14//ErieReader.com

REPRESENTING THE 814

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HOW IT WAS NEARLY TAKEN AWAY

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July 4, 2018

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From the Editors

Dialing into our independence

What do a tattoo parlor, daycare center, barber shop, vintage clothing boutique, oddities and antiques depot, herbalist, ice cream shop, barbecue restaurant, and hippie gift shop have in common? Ponder that for a moment. Certainly you could run through the list and find connections — for instance, barbecue and ice cream are items you might ingest; vintage clothing and antiques are items you might collect; and haircuts, childcare, and body art are services you might pay for. But the overarching theme is they are all different, yet they coexist.

Unique, eclectic, and maybe sometimes even a little weird (see Black Eagle Goods: where else do you see preserved frogs and pay phones in the same retail space?) — these businesses comprise the neighborhood known as Independence Hill, where all are free to do as they will. Nick Warren and Matt Swanseger spoke to some of the village elders as well as some newcomers in composing the content of this issue, as we pay homage to one of the bedrock ideals this country was founded on — the liberty to create one's own destiny as epitomized by small business and entrepreneurship.

As we celebrate Independence Day, we recognize the sanctity of individuality, but also realize our fates are bound together as a community. What's in store for the 814, as we've so lovingly come to term the Erie area (see Jonathan Burdick's wonderful retrospective on how the area code system was instituted, just in time for Erie Reader Volume 8, No. 14)? In the short term, a whole heck of a lot, as represented by our robust Spotlight on Erie and Calendar sections. This is truly a land of opportunity, with the freedom to choose from a plethora of events on any given day of the week. But as we savor our summer fun, let us not lose sight of the future. Are we a city, state, nation, and world we're proud to associate with as individuals?

At times it seems we're stuck playing a game *Whose World Is It Anyway?*, when in truth it should belong to all of us. Indeed, it can seem as if the rules are made up and our points don't matter. When it comes to freedom, we're not always the best improvisers (unlike the exceptional Colin Mochrie, whom we interview in this issue). But we can start by being good neighbors, whether that's between W. 26th and 24th streets on Peach or wherever you may make your home. Let's begin with being our best selves, and in turn becoming our best community.

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Erie at Large: Let Us Begin Anew

Looking at the future of Erie's Democratic Party



New Chairman of the Erie County Democratic Party Jim Wertz implores party members to put aside their internal squabbles and get back on track by voting with solidarity in the upcoming elections.

and I am humbled by the challenges we face as Democrats, in general, and as Erie County Democrats, in particular. The concept of unity within the party weighs heavily upon my decision making as the party evolves, expanding its base, speaking directly to and creating space for young people, African-Americans, New Americans, Organized Labor, LGBTQIA, and working families of every design. The ideological differences that have pushed us apart in recent campaigns are easily overcome by the principles of the Democratic Party — living wages, affordable healthcare, educational and occupational opportunities for everyone, voting rights, and common sense reforms — which brought us together to begin with.

These are times of renewal, as well as change.

In the last days of his 1960 presidential campaign, John F. Kennedy remarked that “the times are too grave, the challenges too urgent, and the stakes too high to permit the customary passions of political debate. We are not here to curse the darkness, but to light the candle that can guide us through that darkness to a safe and sane future.”

We find ourselves at such a moment once again.

The New Deal. The Great Society. Each inspired generations of Democrats and enabled the betterment of millions of Americans urban and rural, rich and poor; yet today the promises of these ideals remain largely unmet because past successes have been eroded and in some cases forgotten by decades of legislative and legal assault.

It's fundamental to the future of Pennsylvania and the future of the Democratic values we hold most dear that we re-elect Governor Wolf and his Progressive running mate, Braddock Mayor John Fetterman; and that we re-elect Senator Bob Casey; and that we christen our new 16th Congressional District by electing a new Congressman — Ron DiNicola — and that we pay tribute to the legislative legacy of Flo Fabrizio by electing Bob Merski as the 2nd District's

next State Representative.

You may have disagreed with any one of these gentlemen on a single issue or policy, but at the end of the day the decisions they make will represent the values you hold dear. Staying at home because your candidate didn't make it through the primary is not an option. It's a lesson we learned too late in 2016 and it is a mistake we can never make again.

Democrats may approach the fundamental issues of our time from different vantage points, but the goals remain the same: to build better communities and a stronger country by providing access to education and opportunity. Our shared purpose will inform our actions and civility will be our guiding light.

The ideological differences that have pushed us apart in recent campaigns are easily overcome by the principles of the Democratic Party — living wages, affordable healthcare, educational and occupational opportunities for everyone, voting rights, and common sense reforms — which brought us together to begin with.

Kennedy's inauguration speech in 1961 was titled, “The torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans.” It was a message to multiple generations of Americans who wanted similar things but believed in different means. The world had changed. The stakes were high. His speech was an attempt to inspire unity. When he reached the bridge of his message just before his refrain of “let both sides,” he spoke to his skeptics and to those who would believe only in the stagnant ways of the past to remind them “that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof.”

“Let us begin anew.”

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

By: Jim Wertz

The past few years have been difficult for Democrats inside the political arena. They've been difficult for folks standing on the sidelines as well. Vitriol, derision, and animosity have come to characterize politics in the United States. The worst part is that these have been the defining characteristics of intra-party politics just as much as they have defined the partisan lines between Democrats and Republicans.

For Democrats, in particular, it's cost us dearly.

Between 2010 and 2018 in Erie County more than 7,800 registered voters left the Democratic Party. Nearly 3,500 of them left the party and became registered Independents and nearly 2,400 registered as Republicans. Some of them just simply left.

The changes in voter registration were further compounded by the aforementioned intra-party schisms, which ultimately led to the election of Donald Trump in 2016. That dark night gave way to conservative immigration reform, the separation of families at the border, Supreme Court rulings that

affirm the sanctity of a slice of wedding cake rather than the love of the two men who wanted to share it, the critical weakening of organized labor resulting from the High Court's decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, and the recently announced retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy, which will undo the balance of power on the Supreme Court for decades to come.

Democrats will not soon forget the importance of unity.

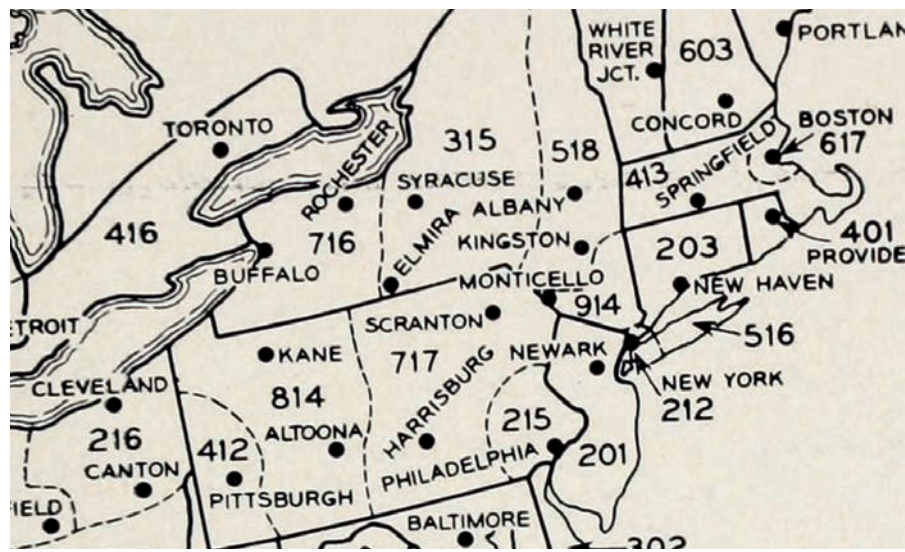
The factional differences between Bernie Sanders' Progressives and more traditional Clinton Democrats still linger within the Democratic Party. We're feeling it across the country as Progressive Democrats, many of whom are backed by the Democratic Socialists of America, are defeating incumbents and party-backed candidates near Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New York City.

Here in Erie we had more than 30 new Democratic committee people elected on May 15 to represent their communities in the Erie County Democratic Party. And on June 9, a coalition of Progressives and Party stalwarts helped me become the new Chairman of the Erie County Democratic Party.

I'm excited for the opportunity to lead

Representing the 814

How the area code became ours and how it was nearly taken away



The area codes that have become synonymous with geographical regions were devised by the Bell System and AT&T to create a consistent consumer dialing plan throughout the United States and neighboring countries.

United States (as well as neighboring North American countries). It divided geographic regions into number plan areas (NPAs) with unique number plan area codes. These designated three-digits could then be applied to existing seven-digit numbers. The original plan was designed so that the first number would be between 2 and 9, the second would either be a 0 or 1, and the third could be any single digit.

When they were first implemented, the codes were used by switchboard operators who would connect long-distance callers. By 1951 though, direct distancing dialing started to become available for callers themselves and was in widespread use by the 1960s.

"The entire program will take many years to realize," a 1952 essay in *The Bell System Technical Journal* reads, "but it is one which must be accomplished in order to ... make it possible for a customer at any telephone in the United States and Canada to reach a telephone anywhere in the two countries by dialing without the assistance of an operator."

Area codes weren't necessarily popular across the population either, particularly as they were being implemented as telephone exchange names (using letters) were being replaced by all-num-

ber calling.

"[Bell Systems] presupposed the blind acceptance of a benumbed and be-numbered public," *TIME Magazine* proclaimed in 1962. "They were wrong: the telephone company is now facing a minor rebellion."

An Anti-Digit Dialing League (ADDL) formed to oppose the new system. Some called operators just to harass and confuse them. Others had more practical strategies.

"There are legal channels to voice our protest and we plan to use them," one ADDL member told a Utah newspaper in 1962. "We are getting a hearing before the state public utilities commission and we will tell them that the company is not being realistic in expecting people to react like machines."

Now, people fiercely defend their area codes — and each code can serve just shy of eight million telephone numbers. This made things a little tricky with the spread of fax machines and pagers followed by the explosion of personal cell phone use. Most number plan areas throughout the United States have been altered in some way or, as previously mentioned, been overlaid with a second code — but the 814 has remained the sole Pennsylvania area code intact.

For now at least.

Back in 2010, it became a rather contentious issue when the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission approved to split the 814 geographically in two. The northwestern portion, including Erie

By: Jonathan Burdick

Eight. One. Four.
Three numbers — but for many, those digits together represent something more than a numerical value.

It's home.

The 814.

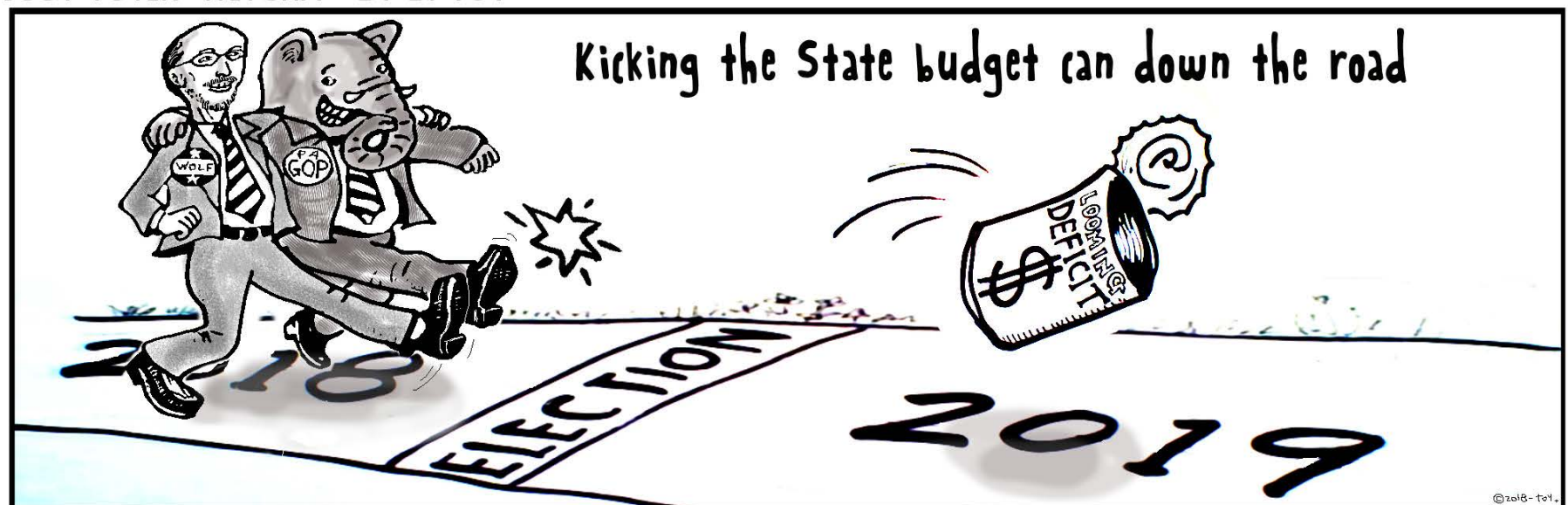
In just about every area code across the United States, you'll find people wearing t-shirts and hats customized with their own region's three digits, a numerical fragment of a collective identity. People tattoo the numbers on their bodies. They display them proudly in their social media profiles.

Those in the 814 have similar pride — although many aren't aware of the area code's distinctiveness. It's one of Pennsylvania's original four area codes (along with 215, 412, and 717) and the

only one left with its original boundaries. It is the only territory in Pennsylvania that uses a single area code — the rest have been overlaid with a second — and it sprawls a massive zone covering northwestern Pennsylvania down through the central part of the state bordering Maryland. It encompasses all or parts of twenty-seven different counties, including cities as widespread as Erie, DuBois, Punxsutawney, and Johnstown.

Area codes, including the 814, were created for more practical reasons than collective identity, of course. Such codes were established in 1947 with the implementation of the North American Numbering Plan. This was devised by the Bell System and AT&T as a means for creating a consistent consumer dialing plan throughout the

JUST TOYIN' WITCHA - BY B. TOY



NEWS & VIEWS

and most of Crawford County, was to be reassigned the new code of 582.

People were understandably up in arms, particularly business owners who argued that implementing such a change would disrupt their operations and add frustrating expenses to alter signage, advertising, forms, menus, and so on. Others demanded that the commission introduce the 582 as an overlay number instead, for new numbers only, which had been the original recommendation anyway — but some argued that this would require mandatory 10-digit dialing, even for local calls, and could also affect the programming of alarm and fire systems.

“With either a split or overlay,” Ken Springirth wrote in the Erie-Times News, “[the] cost will hit the consumer.”

In 2012, the commission voted to dismiss the plan due to over 40 formal public petitions being presented — but they warned that the issue will inevitably need to be revisited.

Nils Hagen-Frederiksen, Press Secretary for the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC), explains that

area codes are overseen by the North American Numbering Plan Administrator (NANPA) and usually two years before an anticipated exhaustion of an area code, they will file a petition with a state’s PUC.

“The petition, along with input from the public, telecommunications industry and other stakeholders, is then considered by the commission,” Hagen-Frederiksen explains. “Their current forecast is for the 814 area code to reach exhaustion in mid-2021.”

He adds that while changing area codes does inspire significant public interest, a new overlay code of 223 was put into service in the same geographic region as 717 this last August and there have been “no reported problems or technical issues.”

Still, for now, maybe postpone getting those 814 tattoos — but hey, in the meantime, you can still buy the shirt.

Jonathan Burdick runs the historical blog Rust & Dirt. Follow them on Twitter @RustDirt, and on Instagram @RustandDirt.



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COUNTRY FAIR

The Smoke Be With You Always

How Federal Hill Smokehouse came to flavor a neighborhood



The day starts early at Federal Hill Smokehouse, where owner Ryan Atzert is feeding the firebox of his reverse flow smoker and preparing brisket, ribs, pulled pork, and turkey for lunchtime as early as 5:30 a.m.

dian rhythms to roughly coincide with the smoker, he has a heat map of the chamber committed to memory. He knows the sweet spots for every form of meat he serves (brisket, pulled pork, ribs, turkey, and sausage) in every size and quantity. I observe him spritz each glorious hunk of beef with apple cider vinegar, wrap it in parchment, and return it to the far end of the smoker for its juices to settle.

I casually inquire about the significance of these steps, to which Atzert replies, “I don’t know why; it’s just something I saw and started doing.” (Though he reckons it enhances the bark, or flavorful outer crust of the cut that brisket connoisseurs have a cow over if deficient or absent).

This offhand remark more or less encapsulates how his operation came to be — he tried something and liked it, his family and friends started liking it (although he concedes “family is supposed to tell you you’re good at stuff”), and now a whole lot of strangers have come to try it and like it, and many have become friends along the way. His journey from pit-novice to pit-master was mainly one of trial-and-error.

“I washed dishes at the Avalon Hotel and dropped chicken cordon bleu in the fryer,” says Atzert of his previous experience in a professional kitchen. “But I’ve always felt I’ve been able to

adapt to cooking; it started as a hobby and blossomed into a business.”

Despite naysayers who said he would be a fool to open a restaurant in Federal Hill’s locale, he pushed forward with the knowledge that the infrastructure was already there (the former J & S Restaurant operated in the same building from 1963-94), the fact it would complement neighboring Ink Assassins well (satisfying hunger before or after lengthy tattoo sessions), and the confidence that “if it’s a good product, it will be successful,” no matter where it is.

Atzert’s connection to the Independence Hill neighborhood goes back nearly two decades. He first worked at Surprise Attack Records, a hardcore music label founded by Eric Michael Schaufele. Schaufele opened Ink Assassins at the corner of W. 26th and Peach in 2000 (with co-founder David Steele), and Atzert bought into it a few years later. Together the two also ran the Forward Hall concert venue from 2007-11, a premier destination for the hardcore and underground music scene. The alternative youth movement sweeping through the neighborhood at the time was not received warmly by the older shop owners, which always baffled Atzert somewhat.

“What’s the big deal with outsiders coming into your area and being seen? For example, the giant Martian grasshopper [painted on the Grasshopper clothing and gift shop] catches your eye.”

Customers have to be aware you exist, and to that end the Federal Hill Smokehouse has established itself nicely in

By: Matt Swanseger

Good barbecue doesn’t come without a little seasoning. Federal Hill Smokehouse proprietor Ryan Atzert has had plenty, especially these past couple months. The flames have been raging inside the firebox of his reverse flow smoker for seven straight weeks, a hot streak unrivaled in any game but lunch. Carnivore season is nearing its midsummer peak, and picnickers and gatherers all

around are clamoring for their piece of meat. That’s without mentioning the regular customers routinely forming lines out the door at 2609 Peach Street, an aromatic gateway to the burgeoning shopping area just beyond. It’s 5:30 a.m. on a Wednesday morning and Atzert is dutifully working to ensure that at least some of those carnal appetites go fulfilled, reaching deep into the cavity of the multi-tiered smoke chamber to pull briskets. After a year-and-a-half of syncing his Circa-

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FEATURE

just a short period. After initially suffering from the delusion that he could run a proper barbecue joint with a fleet of Big Green Egg patio smokers, Atzert embarked on a tour of the meaty meccas of the Midwest, including Austin, Dallas, Kansas City, and St. Louis for inspiration. The smoker he eventually ended up purchasing shipped from Texas in one piece, seemingly overnight.

"I was in the movie theater watching *The Force Awakens* and I saw I had a missed call from a Texas area code. I'm like 'It can't already be here, can it?!'"

The Force was not with him in the early goings, as he broke his leg shortly before the restaurant's debut in December 2016. Atzert's wife Autumn was instrumental in saving the business from falling to the dark side during those first three months, after which she implored her husband: "Don't get sick, don't take a day off, and I'll just do sides."

Since then, he has faithfully abided those instructions, harnessing the Force that is, in reality, the Smoke and it's all around us. The reverse flow smoker works via an offset design — oak logs are loaded into the firebox (something of a chimney) and smoke is forced into an inlet under the meat and back around over top. A dampener traps or releases heat in accordance with an internal thermostat that reads the ambient temperature. This feature has been indispensable during the harsh winter months when keeping things consistent can be difficult.

Beyond that, Atzert doesn't overcomplicate things. He does not enlist any sort of top-secret proprietary spice blend or magic powder in his cooking — in fact, the brisket and turkey are

seasoned with nothing more than salt and pepper (the ribs and pulled pork add paprika, garlic, and onion powder to the mix). It's the care and attention he takes that make all the difference, and have ironically transformed this champion of the underground into something of a sellout (he routinely prepares over 100 lbs. of meat a day, and it's usually gone by 3 p.m., when business hours end).

Despite this, he remains incredibly humble. "I just work, man. I'm tired a lot of the time but it's never tedious."

He leaves would-be Padawan pit-masters with the following advice:

1. Have patience — "Let the smoke do what it's supposed to do."
2. Have fun — "Don't make it stressful. Give yourself more time than you think you need."
3. Do your homework — "There is plenty of material online."
4. Stick to your strengths and listen to your spouse — "Sometimes I get excited [about something that comes to mind] and say: 'We're doing this!' And my wife is just like, 'No, you're not.'" (See the Blueberry Cobbler Riot of 2017; the couple quickly reverted back to the beloved peach variety)

Federal Hill Smoke House is located at 2609 Peach St. and is open Monday-Saturday for lunch, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. (or until the food sells out). View menu and prices at federalhillsmokehouse.com

Matt Swanseger, meanwhile, is still figuring out how to work his microwave. To get a conversation spinning, key mwsanseger@eriereader.com into your favorite e-mail application.



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Independence Hill: An Entrepreneurial Collage

Insights into the eclectic shopping district along 26th and Peach



[top left] The unicorn mannequin is the unofficial mascot of Fat Lenny's Ice Cream Shop, purveyor of unique "rolled" frozen treats. [bottom] Chicory Hill Herbs (left), one of the elder statesmen of the Independence Hill neighborhood, and Pointe Fourre Vintage Boutique (right), one of the youngbloods, represent the variety of small businesses that have evolved over the years.

man himself laughingly clarified "not everybody is a hippie, in all fairness."

One person who is definitely not a hippie is the owner of Black Eagle Goods, Dave Steele. Covered in tattoos from head to toe, the charismatic entrepreneur helped found Ink Assassins in 2000 along with Eric Michael Schaufele. After a few years in Philadelphia, he returned and eventually opened up his unique shop. "It was fun because people didn't know what to expect, and we really are taking a turn more towards the curiosity and oddity factor now. Bringing that to the neighborhood has been really fun and opened a little more weirdness to the eclectic powers of Independence Hill." The shop, filled with captivating vintage finds and taxidermied animals, expanded quickly, moving right across the street to a larger location. The old spot will soon be the home of the Topsy Bean

By Nick Warren

You've probably noticed it steadily taking shape, colorful storefronts popping up along Peach Street. No, not that part of Peach Street. The shopping district — between 26th and 24th streets in particular — is gaining more and more of an identity. It even picked a name for itself: Independence Hill.

It's a fitting name. Aside from the vaguely patriotic feelings it may or may not conjure up around the Fourth of July, it signifies an ownership, a groundswell of autonomy. Made up of a multitude of self-owned small businesses that extend past those two blocks, the name could also be thought of homophonically (albeit clunkily) as an "independent's hill."

From Federal Hill Smokehouse down to Interglasstic Studios, there's a lot to experience. There are anchors that have found success for over 20 years, like Grasshopper and Chicory Hill Herbs — heck, Ink Assassins just turned old enough to legally get tattooed.

There are fresh spaces finding fans like Dapper Don's Barber Shop and the Gypsy Jewelry Box. There are even shops about to sprout up as well, like the Topsy Bean coffeehouse.

"It's nice to be around other businesses, especially eclectic businesses" said Emily George, owner of Pointe Fourre Vintage Boutique. She confessed that "because we all have our own small businesses it's really hard to get together and try to get meetings going."

It was at one of those meetings that the group found a

name. The name was suggested by Scottie Freeman, owner of both Fat Lenny's ice cream shop and the Hippie and the Hound vape shop. Fat Lenny's is one of the quintessential shops along Independence Hill. Bursting with personality, its purple facade is flanked by bright flags and banners (keep an eye out for plenty of Ween Easter eggs, too), and of course, its faithful unicorn mannequin. Prior to coining the district's name, Freeman and others liked to refer to it as "Hippie Hill," but as Free-





NICK WARREN

Black Eagle Goods stocks an eclectic spectrum of wares, including antiques and taxidermied animals.

er Kenya Johnson sees that they “still mesh well with the neighborhood and other businesses. We brighten the area up with our little smiling faces as we take our daily walks.” A positive force surrounded by “good vibes,” Learning Ladder adds an important piece to the bigger picture that is Independence Hill. “We have high traffic in and out of our building due to the fact we have 65 chil-

dren enrolled that potentially get dropped off and picked up daily. We look at this as a good thing because it gives a chance for our parents and their children to experience all that is taking place on Independence Hill.” Started by Kenya and Sean Johnson, the business is located in the former Forward Hall building, and opened its doors in 2015 (and yes, there’s still a bowling alley in the

basement). The future looks bright for Independence Hill, but it still has its share of obstacles. George has her own vision for the district, drawing from similar locations in Toronto and Atlanta. Her wishlist includes artist-designed crosswalks, with signage lining the street, as seen in Little Italy and The Colony Plaza. The neighborhood is already at work designing and installing a lighting system that can be color-coordinated to suit the whims of each shop. “We’re trying to do anything sustainable, like with painting different planters or tires,” she added. All of these things, combined with the block’s already vibrant nature, will not only make it “pop,” but will potentially decrease traffic speeds as well.

Peach Street being one of the main thoroughfares in town is a double-edged sword. Though it’s an oft-traveled route for automobiles, it’s certainly not as pedestrian-friendly as it could be. Nieratko sees “lots of new store owners with fresh ideas coming into the neighborhood, promoting the neighborhood as a destination.” She’s also quick to note the snapshot of the district coming into focus, citing that “the creativity and individuality of each store has given the neighborhood a pulse of its own.” One time when that larger picture is clear is during the monthly Flagship Flea markets. The entire area pulls together, inviting other vendors and creates a unique open-air marketplace every second Saturday of the month, the next one taking place July 14. “We have a great family in the area and are ready to keep

stepping the game forward and onward,” asserted Steele. “The Independence Hill area is really striving to be the hip local spot to hang with friends, do some shopping, and become the safe little spot that you can plan a fun day trip around while meeting some friends or making some new ones,” he continued. “In the next few years, we see the Independence Hill neighborhood being a staple in the city where many can come and get away from their normal shopping experience,” Sean Johnson predicted. “We’re trying to rebuild this city. Let’s look to the future. The past is fine, there’s nothing wrong with it, but let’s not live in the past,” Freeman excitedly proclaimed. “Let’s look into the future, and for Erie, I think the future is independence.” Nick Warren can be reached at nwarren@eriereader.com



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A Chat With Colin Mochrie

Playing 'Whose Interview Is It Anyway?' with the popular Canadian comedian and improviser



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Matt Swanseger and Nick Warren

The Erie Reader was excited to learn that two stalwarts of the long-running TV comedy game show *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, Colin Mochrie and Brad Sherwood, were making their way to the nearby Chautauqua Institution as part of their “Scared Scriptless” tour on Friday, July 6. Much in the vein of the show that made them instantly recognizable in households across Britain (Channel 4) and the United States (ABC), the performance will hinge almost entirely on audience participation, with audience members taking the stage for improvised routines throughout the evening. Reader editors Matt Swanseger and Nick Warren were

equally giddy for the opportunity to speak with Mochrie, and despite some initial confusion as to who would have that honor, both got their wish. The Canadian Mochrie, a master of physical comedy and an ad-lib extraordinaire, reflects on his experiences in improvisational comedy and looks forward to the latest performance of his and Sherwood’s highly successful tour (which has been around for the better part of 15 years).

Matt Swanseger: Hello Colin, nice to talk to you. How are you doing?

Colin Mochrie: Good, how are you?

MS: Good, good. What have you been up to lately? Are there any projects or causes you’re involved in that our read-

ers should be made aware of?
CM: Mostly just touring. Yeah...that’s pretty much it.
MS: Nothing wrong with that. Improvisational comedy — is it more nature or nurture? Were you always able to think on your toes or was it a skill that you developed over time?
CM: I’m always able to think on my toes on stage, not so much off. So I don’t know what the difference is. I guess because I’m always working with people I know and trust, in an environment that’s safe for me, I seem to take to it quite easily. I mean, yeah, I had a couple classes, but it came naturally to me.
MS: To that point, how important is it to have a rapport or chemistry with your fellow improvisers? You had the opportunity to consistently work with a number of very talented comedians on *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, one of whom just so happens to be joining you on this tour. What are his strengths and how does what he does well sync with what you do well?

CM: Well, Brad is a very verbal player, he has a great vocabulary and likes to use words, whereas I tend to be more physical and I guess surreal? So we sort of complement one another that way. And it also helps that we’ve known each

other for over 30 years now. When we’re working, I probably know about 80 percent or 90 percent of the time where Brad is going to go with a scene, but when I don’t, I trust him enough to follow and see what happens.

Nick Warren: Hi Colin! My name is Nick and I’m just kind of popping in to join Matt. I’ve been a fan for years and years and I am geeking out to be able to talk to you as well. So the “Scared Scriptless” Tour sounds very interesting. Can you go into details about the format of that?
CM: It’s actually kind of like a live version of *Whose Line?*, without the tall guy or black guy [series regulars Ryan Stiles and Wayne Brady]. A lot of the games are familiar to fans of the show, and some games we’ve had to adapt because it’s just the two of us. It’s even more interactive than the TV show. Every scene starts with a suggestion from the audience, we have audience members on stage with us for about 80 percent of the games, so the audience is basically our third improv partner. They supply all the information we need.

NW: Is it mostly short form as *Whose Line?* is, or do any of the scenes weave together in Harold fashion or anything like that?
CM: Basically short form like *Whose Line?*, the difference is because we’re on stage, we have more time to sort of explore the scene. On television everything has to be in these three or four



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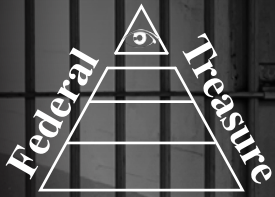


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NW: Right, right. It doesn't have to be edited down to sound bites.

MS: No commercials or anything.

CM: Exactly.

NW: Speaking of the short form versus long form schools of thought. Obviously you're on the Mt. Rushmore of short form improv. With the rise of podcasts and Upright Citizens Brigade [theaters and schools] stuff, do you have any opinion on where that's headed and where that's taking comedy and how both those formats can work together to make people laugh more efficiently?

CM: Yeah, I love the fact that people aren't satisfied with improv being just one thing. So the short form I love doing, but I've been doing a lot more long form with different companies around the country. In Edmonton they have something called Improvianza, where improv troupes from all over the world come and do shows and one of the shows I did was an improvised "Dungeons & Dragons." I have never played the game and realized I know nothing about it, but it was a lot of fun to be involved in something where you didn't quite know what you were doing.

NW: Canada's one of the areas that is bursting with new hotbeds for comedy. Are there any special improvisers you'd like to give a shout-out to or have kind of flown under the radar for a bit? I'm just getting familiar with Brad and watching his videos and he's fantastic.

CM: He's okay. [laughter] I'm really lucky that I've got to work with great improvisers, and not only the guys on *Whose Line?* There's a company in Atlanta called Dad's Garage, and they have an incredible stable of improvisers. There's a group in Portland called Curious Comedy — again, very talented. I think the guys on *Whose Line?* were all aware of how lucky we were that this show came along and gave us all careers and a chance to do improv around the world. It seems now that in every city there is an incredible core of improvisers, which is great.

NW: *Whose Line?* is very unique. There really hadn't been a way to televise a Harold routine successfully. It had been attempted a few times, but the massive, long-running success for *Whose Line Is It Anyway?* is totally special in that it could bring this improvisational comedy to the world. So thank you. What are the differences between doing it on TV and doing it live for you?

CM: The main difference is the time. We can take much more time, and we also don't have to worry about censorship. Not that all our scenes are dirty, but on television there is that concern in the back of your mind because you're never really sure where the line is. So a lot of the time, we're sort of flying blind hoping for the best. It's nice to have that freedom. Also on television you have so many people involved in the final product — network executives, producers, and so forth. What I love about the stage is everything depends on us. If the show sucks, it's because we suck; if it goes well, it's because we did well. So it's nice to have that responsibility.

MS: Are there any specific subjects or topics of discussion you're looking to touch on or avoid in the midst of your act?

CM: Off the top we decided we weren't going to do anything political, because what we found in the last few years is when you do something like that, you end up splitting the audience into two. Political comedy is not really our forte. Our satire comes down to, "Oh that's really stupid." There's no real incisive commentary about it. Satire I believe really has to be written — the idea has to be clear and you have to find the perfect point of view, which is really hard to do when you're improvising.

MS: Well, Colin, I believe that's all we have.

CM: Yeah, it's a really fun show. I mean, you're not going to learn anything or leave any smarter, but you'll have a couple of laughs.

MS: Delightful talking to you. I grew up watching your work on TV and have always been a huge fan, so thanks for taking the time out of your day to talk with us.

NW: Same here. Whenever my friends mention *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, [the prevailing sentiment] was "Colin Mochrie was the best" and that's kind of echoed across the Internet and in my own little sphere and taste in comedy.

CM: Well thank you. Obviously you have an intelligent group of friends. [laughter]

MS: Good luck with your tour and hope to see you soon.

CM: Excellent. Lovely talking to you guys.

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CALENDAR

Arundel Cellars & Brewing Company Keeps Summer Concerts Coming

FRIDAY, JULY 6

Arundel Cellars & Brewing Company will continue its traditional summer concert series this July and August.

Now in its fourth season, the Outdoor Summer Concerts feature regional performers every Friday from July 6 to Aug. 31.

Rick & the Roadhouse Rockers will kick off the series July 6. The Vendettas perform on July 13, Stiletto on July 20, Abbey Road on July 27, Key West Express on Aug. 3, The Breeze on Aug. 10, Sam Hyman on Aug. 17, The Ruby Port Band on Aug. 24 and Duke Sherman Band on Aug. 31.

"We try to provide a variety of music — something for everyone," said Dian Graham of Arundel Cellars.

The music series started in July 2015 as "Jammin' July," only a few months after the business's grand opening. But it grew so popular that the concerts were extended through August in 2016. This prompted the series to be renamed sim-

ply "The Outdoor Summer Concerts."

"Because we have an ideal location and ambiance for outdoor events in a meadow tucked away between our vineyards, and we know how much people enjoy free outdoor concerts, Summer Concerts seemed like a natural fit," Graham said about the beginnings of the series.

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Children and well-behaved dogs are welcome. Dogs are expected to stay on a leash.

No outside food or drinks are permitted. Food and beverages (wine, beer and non-alcoholic options) are available for purchase. — Tracy Geibel

6 to 9 p.m. every Friday from July 6 to Aug. 31 // Arundel Cellars & Brewing Company, 11727 E. Main Rd., North East // Free // 725-1079 // arundelcellars.com/events

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Jul. 4 — 1:30 p.m.

An exception to the usual evening Sunset Series events, Juvenile Characteristics, Falling Hollywood, JD Eicher and Stiletto will be performing on Beach 1 as part of a day-long event.

Beach 1 at Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. discoverpi.com.

Colton Pointz

Jul. 4, 11, 18 — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Room 33, 1033 State St. facebook.com.

Tiger Maple String Band

Jul. 4 — 6:30 p.m.
Sunset Grill, 508 Erie St, Edinboro, PA 16412 edinborolakeresort.com.

Tommy Link

Jul. 5 — 6:30 p.m.
Sunset Grill, 508 Erie St, Edinboro, PA 16412 edinborolakeresort.com.

Tennessee Backporch

Jul. 5 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
As part of the Arts in the Arboretum Concert Series, the versatile five-piece band Tennessee Backporch will take the stage.
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Thursday Concerts

Jul. 5, 12 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
McCain Outdoor Amphitheater in Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Great Blue Heron Music Festival

Jul. 6, 7, 8
The Heron, 2361 Waits Corners Rd, Sherman, NY 14781 greatblueheron.com.

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Sunset Grill, 508 Erie St, Edinboro, PA 16412 edinborolakeresort.com.

The Bootlegger's Bible Club

Jul. 6 — 7 p.m.
WQLN, 8425 Peach St. wqln.org.

This American Song

Jul. 6 — 8 p.m.
9th & State Beer Cafe, 832 State St. facebook.com.

Jesse James Weston + Friday Nite Nitro

Jul. 6 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Jasmine Cain

Jul. 6 — 9 p.m.
Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com.

Six Year Stretch

Jul. 6 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Breaking Solace, Insult to Injury

Jul. 6 — 9:30 p.m.
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

East Ave

Jul. 7 — 5 to 9 p.m.
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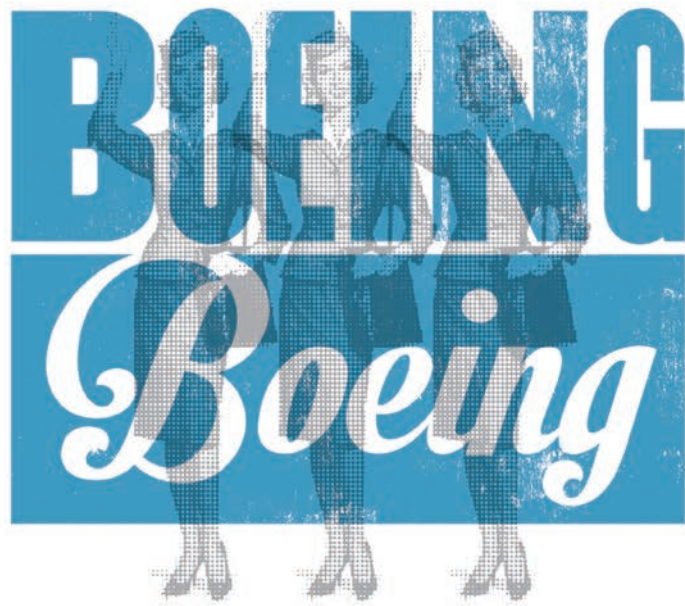
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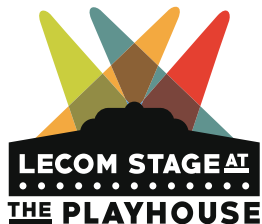
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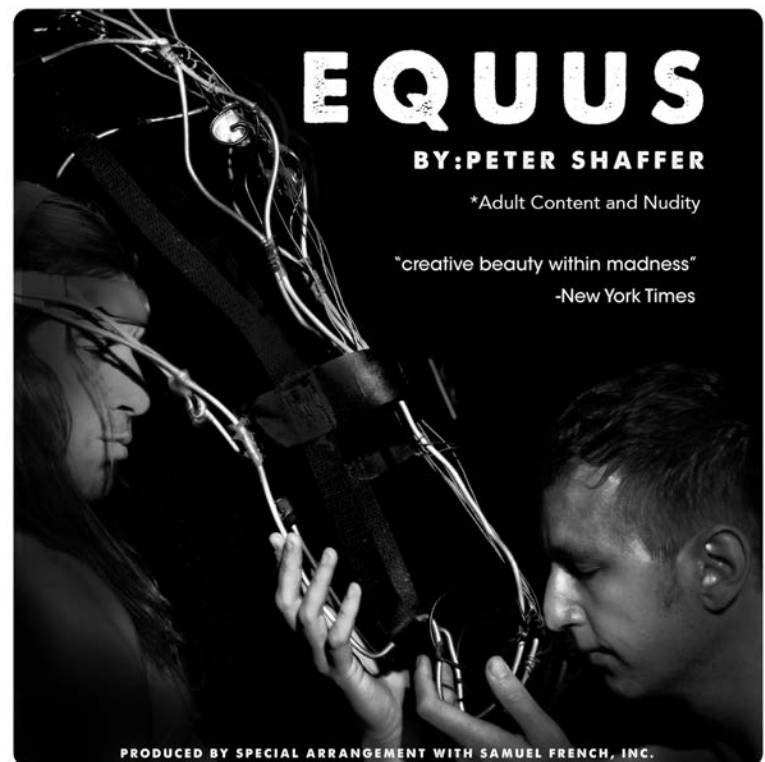
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Heralding the Arrival of Another Happy Heron



back down toward the stage. "Once a mom, always a mom."

I'd only been at my first Great Blue Heron Music Festival for about 10 minutes at that point in time. But, just in that one loved-up little moment, I was already feeling like everyone who makes their way there

STEVE LEITZINGER

FRIDAY, JULY 6

Flashback five years to July 2013: "You okay, brother?" I hear a woman's voice — calm, light — ask from somewhere nearby.

I'm crouching down, hurriedly combing around on the ground for all the important crap I'd just let tumble out of my open camera bag.

"You are stopped in a weird spot," I hear the voice say, closer this time.

Sounds like someone must be a little outta sorts somewhere close by, I think to myself. Well, that woman sounds nice, matronly — she'll take good care of them.

And then, before that thought even ended, I realize ... she's talking to me.

"Aw, yeah, I'm fine," I say as I look up and see the woman, who's probably in about her late-50s, pretty and white-haired, with kind eyes, a big, floppy sun hat and a long, flowing skirt.

I get up. She eyes me up. Gives me a friendly smile, puts a hand on my shoulder.

"I'm just a mom," she says on her way

is part of a really big little family.

That's just kinda the way it is there at those beautiful, lush farming and festival grounds in nearby Sherman, N.Y. There's something special about the Heron, too (it's been doing a whole lot of things right for, oh, 27 years now) and it's safe to say the thousands who make their way there each year would agree.

None of that's even mentioning the festival's lineup: An inclusive musical family reunion spotlighting many of the region's best live performers, the now-annual tradition of headliners Donna the Buffalo, and other toppers including the Felice Brothers, Giant Panda Guerrilla Dub Squad, the Suitcase Junket, the Gunpoets, the Town Pants and Driftwood.

It's one of local summer music fest-lovers' longest-standing traditions, and most deservedly favorite get-downs of every year. Happy Heron, everyone.

— Ryan Smith

Friday, July 6 through Sunday, July 8 // 2361 Waits Corners Rd, Sherman, NY // greatblueheron.com

Enjoy Sounds Around Town From Anywhere



MATT BOLAND

FRIDAY, JULY 6

For the fifth year, five family-friendly concerts will come to Erie as part of WQLN's Sounds Around Town series, beginning July 6 and continuing every Friday into August.

Launched in 2014, the series includes free 60- to 90-minute concerts that will be broadcast live on radio and TV for those unable to attend the event. Thanks to sponsorship from the Erie

Beer Company, Mill Creek Coffee Company and Smith's Provisions, free samples of beer, coffee and Smith's products will be available on-site for tasting.

This year's lineup consists of local favorites. The Bootleggers Bible Club will kick off the series with American roots tunes. Eric Brewer and Friends hold the second slot, which is sure to be full of funk the following Friday. The aptly named Matt Bennett Blues Band is set to perform on July 27, followed by alt-rockers, an alternative rock group. Closing out the series on Aug. 3, This American Song will take the stage to treat the crowd to some classic rock-n-roll. — Hannah McDonald

Fri. July 6, 13, 20, 27, Aug. 3, 7 p.m. // WQLN Pavilion, 8425 Peach St. // Free // wqln.org

McCain Outdoor Amphitheater in Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org. James McQuiston Jul. 8 — noon to 3 p.m. <i>Presque Isle Wine Cellars Isle House, 9440 W Main Road, North East, PA 16428 piwine.com</i> Boyd & Beth Jul. 8 — 1 to 4 p.m. <i>Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co., 11727 E. Main Rd., North East, PA 16428 arundelcellars.com</i> Rachel Short Jul. 8 — 6:30 p.m. <i>Sunset Grill, 508 Erie St, Edinboro, PA 16412 edinborolakeresort.com</i> Extinction A.D.	Jul. 8 — 8 p.m. <i>Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. facebook.com</i> Jake's Blues Jul. 10 — 6:30 p.m. Pittsburgh-based rock musician Norman Nardini will open for Jake's Blues during the second installment of 2018's 8 Great Tuesdays music series. <i>Highmark Amphitheater, Liberty Park, Erie, PA 16507 porterier.org</i> Lindsay Vendetti & Eric Brewer Jul. 11 — noon to 1 p.m. Lindsay Vendetti and Eric Brewer grace The Zaphiris Family Patio of the Erie Art Museum in this edition of the Mid-Day	Art Break concert series. <i>Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org</i> Lake Effect, Jackson Station Jul. 11 — 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. Following July 4's all-day event, the Sunset Music Series will return to its regular schedule, hosting Jackson Station and Lake Effect. <i>Beach 1 at Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. discoverpi.com</i> Katie & Jesse Jul. 12 — 6 to 9 p.m. <i>The Skunk and Goat Tavern, 17 W. Main St, North East, PA 16428 skunkandgoattavern.com</i>
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www.VisitGenevaOnTheLake.com
800.862.9948



www.VisitAshtabulaCounty.com

CALENDAR

Shores of French Creek Flood With Music



FRIDAY, JULY 6

If one were to paddle up the Mississippi River to the Ohio River, then into the Allegheny, they would eventually reach French Creek. A tributary of the Allegheny River, French Creek flows through Western New York and Northwestern Pennsylvania and is often referred to as the Venango River.

On those shores, the Venango Volunteer Fire Department is hosting a free music festival on July 6, 7 and 8 for the surrounding communities. Fresh off the heels of the Riverside Music Festival, this event — organized by Justin Moyer — is similarly being held to raise money

for the department.

As part of the festival, three venues will host a unique lineup of musicians. Those interested in an acoustic brunch, country, bluegrass and folk should visit the mainstage at the Venango General Store. For Americana and folk, head on

over to Sprague Farm and Brew Works. Double D's Blues Bar claims to have all the blues you could want, all night long.

In addition to musical entertainment, a BBQ chicken dinner, cheesesteaks, pulled pork, funnel cakes, and local craft and domestic beer will be available for listeners' enjoyment.

The event is open to all ages and no tickets are required. Additional information and a full list of musical acts can be found online at www.fcmf.rocks. — Hannah McDonald

July 6,7,8 // 21747 Cussewago St., Venango, PA 16440 // Free // fcmf.rocks

Music in the Vineyards, Just East of Erie



SATURDAY, JULY 7

Drifting through the rows of growing grapes, music can be heard every Saturday in July and August. Penn Shore Winery and Vineyards is hosting a summer concert series aptly named "Music in the Vineyards."

The concerts will take place each Saturday evening from 5 to 9. Both admission and parking are free for attendees. Music lovers of all ages are invited to bring a blanket or lawn chair to enjoy the show.

There will be food vendors on-site offering a wide variety of options — from waffles to tacos. The majority of these vendors will be local food trucks.

As far as beverages go, there is something for everyone. Non-alcoholic, local

beers and wine (by the glass or bottle) are available for purchase at the venue.

The first evening will kick off with rock originals from East Ave. The band is made up of three Vaheys — singer Elly, guitarist Pat, and drummer Joe — bassist Doug Russell, and Royce Wilson on guitar and mandolin. The Cluck Truk will be on-site as well.

Following the East Ave. kickoff, the series's lineup features a variety of genres. Some of the many notable performers include Key West Express, who will be bringing beach music from the shores to the bluffs on July 28 and the Duke Sherman Blues Band, who will perform on Aug. 5. Rounding out the season, the Kevin Howard Quartet will be playing a jazz set.

For the full lineup of food and musical entertainment each week, visit Penn Shore Winery and Vineyards' website. — Hannah McDonald

Every Saturday in July and Aug., 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. // 10225 E. Lake Road, North East, PA 16428 // Free // 814-725-8688 // pennshore.com

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Eerie Roller Girls Speed Back Around

Roller derby team ready to jam for home opener



SATURDAY, JULY 7

In 2016, things weren't looking so good for the Eerie Roller Girls. "We feared ERG might go to the great penalty box in the sky," confessed Sarah Mazzone, one of the team's coaches and original members. Erie's very own league of derby athletes saw their numbers whittled down to dangerous levels. "We had eight people in our league. You should roster at least 14 to play in a bout. That means with five people on the track most times, we only had three subs." They knew what they had to do: find new recruits. "Roller derby is highly dependent on recruiting skaters," said one of those new faces, Edith Dallenbach, a transfer from the Enchanted Mountains Roller Derby (EMRD) in Olean, New York. Their search for new members that year paid off in a big way.

"We went from eight skaters to 30 skaters in one season. It was incredible," Mazzone said.

Saturday, July 7 will be the team's home opener at the Bayfront Convention Center. "We ended last season and began this season with away games, so we've left a big derby hole in a lot of our fans' hearts," said Kristin "Box Cutta" Kriegbaum (blocker and ERG Events and Fundraising Coordinator). "Luckily, we have three home bouts this year, so there are several opportunities for Erie to come out and see us get our jam on," she laughed, referencing the team's "jammer" role and the game's division of periods. With the season starting off more than five hours away in Richmond, Indiana on Cinco De Mayo, this bout is truly the kickoff for Erie's derby season. In addition to the 7th, home

The Eerie Roller Girls roller derby team has grown markedly since recruiting efforts ramped up last year, up to 30 skaters after beginning last season with just eight.

games will be held on August 4 and September 22, but this first one will be the one that fans old and new won't want to miss. ERG will face off against the ladies of the Pittsburgh East Roller Villains, whose home league is also co-ed. With the bad guys so clearly obvious, Erieites should already know who to root for. Kriegbaum even offered a personal guarantee, saying that "if they don't like it, I will give each and every one of them an enthusiastic high five by way of apology. And when they love it, they will get an even more enthusiastic high five and maybe even a sweaty hug," she laughed.

The new faces for 2018, lovingly referred to as "freshies," are injecting new life into an already heart-pumping sport. "The freshies and rookies are doing so well," Mazzone observed. "They are dedicated, play hard, and train harder." That training is a serious commitment. Dallenbach, an experienced skater who now helps run training and drills, notes that "training is a process. Learning the skills is dependent

on the time our new skaters have." She continued, explaining that "it helps skaters and volunteers gain attributes such as confidence, self-control, determination, patience, perseverance and resilience." Having herself started the sport in her 30s, she reiterated that "anyone can do it regardless of age, but it takes a special breed to stick with it long term."

The Eerie Roller Girls are part of the Women's Flat Track Derby Association, the international governing body for the sport. For the uninitiated, the sport is fast paced and full-contact. The bout is made up of two 30-minute periods, wherein shorter "jams" take place. Each team has up to five players on the track. The team's "jammer" is generally one of their fastest skaters who scores the points (by lapping opposing teammates), and can be identified by the star on her helmet. The remainder of the team is made up of "blockers," who do just that, often shutting out the opposing team's jammer via pack skating or body checks. Additionally, one of these blockers can be a pivot (indicated by her helmet's stripe) who is able to switch from blocker to jammer. In addition to the skaters on the track and on the bench, there are coaches, referees,

and announcers involved, all who volunteer for the love of the sport.

Even if you've never been to an actual bout, it's likely that you've seen the Eerie Roller Girls out at some community functions. "Erie Promotions has graciously invited us back to Comicon this September and you can look to see us hosting a celebrity bartending evening in the months to come," Kriegbaum said, speaking of the future. "We've also helped with the Letter Carriers Food Drive, the Presque Isle Clean Up, and in August, we will be back at Shriner's for their wheelchair basketball," she added. Mazzone elaborated, noting that in and of itself "Roller Derby is a commitment and a community. No matter who you are, your age, your athleticism, your profession, your political affiliations, or religious beliefs, if you commit to Roller Derby you will find your community." — Nick Warren

6:30 p.m. doors open, 7:30 p.m. whistle blows // Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafraz Pier // \$12 at the door, \$10 pre-sale (door tickets \$2 off with non-perishable food item, donations going to Second Harvest Food Bank) // eerieollergirls.com

Jay Baumgardner

Jul. 12 — 6:30 p.m.
Sunset Grill, 508 Erie St,
Edinboro, PA 16412 edinborolakeresort.com.

Mambo

Jul. 12 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
The Arts in the Arboretum Concert Series will host Mambo, a latin, jazz and merengue band featuring Monica Lewis.
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Smith Carillon Concert Series

Jul. 12, 19, 26 & Aug. 2 — 7 to 8 p.m.
Penn State Behrend, 4701 College Dr. behrend.psu.edu.

The Groove

Jul. 13 — 6 p.m.
Coconut Joe's, 28 N. Park Row, cjoes.com.

The Vendettas

Jul. 13 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co., 11727 E. Main Rd., North East, PA 16428 arundelcellars.com.

The Highlife

Jul. 13 — 6:30 p.m.
Sunset Grill, 508 Erie St, Edinboro, PA 16412 edinborolakeresort.com.

Eric Brewer & Friends

Jul. 13 — 7 p.m.
WQLN, 8425 Peach St. wqln.org.

PaleFace

Jul. 13 — 7 to 9 p.m.
PaleFace, who has worked

with The Avett Brothers and Beck, comes to Erie to play a two-hour show.
Lavery Brewing Co., 128 W. 12th St. facebook.com

Jeff Glover + Friday Nite Nitro

Jul. 13 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

The i-90s

Jul. 13 — 9 p.m.
Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com.

Crooked Creek Brothers

Jul. 13 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Maniacal Device, Mala Sangre, Save Yourself, Pure Heel

Jul. 13 — 9:30 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

814 Metal Fest

Jul. 13, 14, 15
The 7th Annual 814 Metal Festival will host bands such as Sentinel, Bravura and Sudden Frost. Full lineup can be found on the event's Facebook page.
Wattsburg County Fair, 13993 Route 8, Wattsburg, PA 16442 facebook.com

Abbey Road

Jul. 14 — 5 to 9 p.m.
As part of "Music in the Vineyard" series, Abbey Road will perform covers of famous songs by The Beatles.
Penn Shore Winery and Vineyards, 10225 E. Lake Rd, North

East PA, 16428 pennshore.com.

Dionisio/Colette Bone

Jul. 14 — 6:30 p.m.
Sunset Grill, 508 Erie St, Edinboro, PA 16412 edinborolakeresort.com.

Eli Flynn + Chill Vibes w/ Luis Pontillo

Jul. 14 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Wild and Crazy Guys

Jul. 14 — 9 p.m.
Sherlocks, 508 State St. facebook.com.

The Vendettas

Jul. 14 — 9 p.m.
Presque Isle Downs, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Rodger Montgomery

Jul. 14 — 9:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

Good for Nuthin' String Band

Jul. 15 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
The Skunk and Goat Tavern, 17 W. Main St, North East, PA 16428 skunk-andgoattavern.com.

Tyler Smilo

Jul. 15 — 6:30 p.m.
Sunset Grill, 508 Erie St, Edinboro, PA 16412 edinborolakeresort.com.

Separate Ways (Journey Tribute)

Jul. 17 — 6:30 p.m.
Journey tribute band Separate Ways and Malpractice to play the third of

CALENDAR

On the Brink of Extinction A.D.



SUNDAY, JULY 8

Despite what some cynics may say, heavy metal, hardcore, and punk-rock are far from extinct, and Basement Transmissions will prove it when Extinction A.D. rolls into Erie on Sunday, July 8. The Long Island thrash quintet is unrelenting in their energy and in-your-face style of metal featured throughout their discography. Extinction A.D.'s virtuosity combined with crushing riffage allow them to appeal to any hardcore or heavy metal fan.

Opening acts for the night include Ashtabula's Cringe, whose brand of metal zigzags back and forth between thrash and grindcore (with the occasional moshcore riff thrown in, as seen on their EPs *Memento Mori* and *Through the Mist*); Shattered Utopia, the latest band in Erie to wave the Lake Effect Hardcore flag; and professional

wrestling-themed punk-rock band Heel Turn.

If you're a fan of heavy music in any capacity, this is not a show you'll want to miss. Each band offers something different across the widely varied spectrum that is metal. So come out and support the local scene and touring bands. — Tommy Shannon

7:30 p.m. // Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11th St. // \$10 // All Ages // facebook.com/basement.transmissions

Experience Timeless Tradition at the North East Firemen's Cherry Festival



TUESDAY, JULY 10TH

There are events that surprise us — concerts, film screenings, benefits, etc. — and then there are those that we anticipate yearly. The North East Firemen's Cherry Festival (or Cherryfest, as the locals call it) is one of the latter. Over the span of five days, rides, exclusive foods, and events are contained within the festival's free fairgrounds.

Upon entry, festival-goers have the option of purchasing a daily Ride-A-Ra-

ma pass. If fair rides make your stomach churn, perhaps the Sausage Tent or Fry Barn will be your speed; the latter features a special "once-a-year blend" made by Smiths Provisions, used to create the iconic sausage sandwich served at the tent. Elsewhere, the Ladies Auxiliary tent offers Cherryfest's "official cherry pie" alongside numerous Greek sauce-covered meats. Of course, this is all secondary to the main events: Saturday's 4 p.m. parade and the crowning of a Cherry Queen on Thursday at 7 p.m. Whatever your reason for attending, Cherryfest is the perfect excuse for the entire family to take part in a wealth of local customs. — Aaron Mook

Tuesday through Friday, 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. and Saturday, noon to 11 p.m. // 311 North Lake Street // necherryfestival.com

2018's 8 Great Tuesdays.

Highmark Amphitheater, Liberty Park, Erie, PA 16507 porterie.org.

Erie Philharmonic Brass Quintet

Jul. 18 — noon to 1 p.m.
Erie Philharmonic Brass Quintet set to play as part of Mid-Day Art Break.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Jon Halmi, Tennessee Backporch

Jul. 18 — 5:30 to 10:30 p.m.
Beach 1 at Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. discoverpi.com.

DANCE

Expand: The Dance Experience

Jul. 14 — 10 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.
Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. eriedanceconsortium.org.

FOOD & DRINK

Picnic in the Park

Jul. 5, 12 — 11:30 a.m.
Gibson Park, North East, PA 16428 nechamber.org.

Hippoh Launch Pub Crawl

Jul. 6 — 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Calamari's Squid Row, 1317 State St. facebook.com.

Yappy Hour

Jul. 6, 13 — 5 to 8 p.m.
The Brewerie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. brewerie.com.

Downtown Erie Food Tour

Jul. 6, 7, 13, 14 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Like My Thai, 827 State St. eriefoodtours.com.

Sangria Saturdays

Jul. 7, 14, 28 — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars - Isle House, 9440 W. Main Rd, North East, PA 16428 facebook.com.

Sip N' Paint

Jul. 7 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars - Isle House, 9440 W. Main Rd, North East, PA 16428 facebook.com.

North East Food Tour

Jul. 8 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
The Bean Coffee Shop, 12 S. Lake St, North East, PA 16428 eriefoodtours.com.

Cocktails 101: The Golden Age

Jul. 9 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Room 33, 1033 State St. facebook.com.

Mind, Body, Beer

Jul. 10 — 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St. facebook.com.

Happy-Appy Food Tour

Jul. 11, 18 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Room 33, 1033 State St. eriefoodtours.com.

Vertical Wine Tasting

Jul. 13 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars Isle House, 9440 W Main Road, North East, PA 16428, piwine.com.

Good Vibes Beer Fest

Jul. 14 — noon to 3 p.m.
834 Bessemer Street, Meadville, PA 16335 goodvibesbeerfest.com.

Mid-Summer Wine Festival

Jul. 14 — 2 to 8 p.m.
Lake Erie Speedway, 10700 Delmas Dr., North East, PA 16428 lakeeriespeedway.com.

Botanical Beverages

Jul. 14 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Goodell Gardens & Homestead, 221 Waterford St, Edinboro, PA 16412 goodellgardens.org.

Mimosa Sundays

Jul. 15, 29 — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars - Isle House, 9440 W. Main Rd, North East, PA 16428 facebook.com.

Cocktails & Clay

Jul. 16 — 5:30 to 8 p.m.
Erie Clayspace, 1505 State St. erieclayspace.com.

MOVIES

Flight of the Butterflies

Ongoing — 11 a.m. & 4 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Earthflight

Ongoing — noon & 3 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Mysteries of the Great Lakes

Ongoing — 1 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Aircraft Carrier

Ongoing — 2 p.m. & 5 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Spirit Quest Film Festival

Jul. 6, 7 — 6 to 11 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

Black Panther (2018)

Jul. 11 — 5:30 p.m.
The Film Society of North-western Pennsylvania will show 2018's *Black Panther* as part of ongoing Film Grain series at Bourbon Barrel.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. filmsocietynwpa.org.

Easy Rider (1969)

Jul. 18 — 5:30 p.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. filmsocietynwpa.org.

VISUAL ARTS

Sr. Angelica Cummings
Ongoing through Aug. 10

Mercyhurst University Cummings Gallery, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Erie County Art Teachers Exhibition

Ongoing through Aug. 11
Mercyhurst University Cummings Gallery, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Erie's Historic Lakefront: from Harbor to Point

Ongoing through Sept. 2
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Vintage Neon: Images by Chuck Biddle

Ongoing through Sept. 9
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Archiving Ephemeral Beauty

Ongoing through Sept. 16
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Mary Beth McKenzie: A Life in Art

Opening July 13, through Sept. 24
Mary Beth McKenzie, whose work has been featured in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, will open a gallery at the Erie Art Museum.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Gary Spinosa: Divine Instinct

Ongoing through Jan. 6, 2019
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

James McMurray: Faces and Paces

Ongoing through June 10, 2019
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Maria Spaeder Haas: Paintings & Assemblages

Jul. 13 through Sept. 4
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St. glassgrowersgallery.com.

THEATER

Boeing Boeing

Jul. 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28 — 7:30 p.m. & Jul. 22, 29 — 2 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. erieplayhouse.org.

The Chicago Speakeasy

Jul. 7, 14 — 5:30 p.m. & Jul. 8 — 2:30 p.m. & Jul. 11, 18 — noon & Jul. 13, 17 — 7 p.m.
Take a journey through time to a Chicago speakeasy at The Station Dinner Theater, starting this month.
Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

Equus

Jul. 13, 14 — 8 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St. paca1505.com.

Macbeth

Jul. 16, 17, 18 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.

CALENDAR

Rust Belt New Americans Welcomes Immigrants and Refugees in a Time of Crisis



MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

WEDNESDAY, JULY 11

Last February, you may recall a feature in our paper profiling 30 refugees in the Erie region. The project was the brainchild of our resident photojournalist, Maitham Basha-Agha — who himself fled Iraq for our city at age twelve. In partnership with local photographer Erica Whiting, Basha-Agha combined crisp black and white photos with brief stories of perseverance from some of our newest citizens. The results, collectively titled *Rust Belt New Americans*, were also featured in a gallery exhibition at Bloom Collaborative.

If that project made you proud of our city's diverse population, there is more good news. A film based on the photo series is set to premiere soon, and it promises a more in-depth exploration of the immigrant experience in Erie. You'll hear firsthand about life in Iraq prior to Saddam Hussein, what it was like to experience the Sudanese civil war, and how the hundreds of new Erieites from places like Bhutan, Kosovo, and Syria are faring.

The documentary, which was created in partnership with MenajErie Studios, attempts to "remind humanity how to be compassionate and educate those who may not have a personal connection to the refugee crisis." On July 11, it will be screened at the perfect location — the Jefferson Educational Society, whose president Ferki Ferati is a refugee from Kosovo himself.

Frankly, the film couldn't arrive at a better time. Erie has long been a welcome home to immigrants and refugees, but the Trump administration's cruel immigration policies are making it harder to be inclusive. *Rust Belt New Americans* puts a human face on the immigrant experience, unpacking the stereotypes and fear-mongering that often circulate in our media. If you value diversity in our region, be sure to save the date. — Dan Schank

6 p.m. to 9 p.m. // Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. // rustbeltnewamericans.com

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Don't drink and drive!

CALENDAR

Delightful Ringing In Your Ears at Smith Carillon Series



THURSDAY, JULY 12

"I can hear the bells," the famous song from *Hairspray* begins, and while it very likely wasn't secretly written for the Smith Chapel's Floyd and Juanita Smith Carillon (a carillon is

the set of bells themselves, in this case 48 of them, housed in the bell tower), you might find yourself humming it as you make your way to the Penn State Behrend campus for the first installment of their Smith Carillon Concert Series, which begins in July.

With four dates, going into August, audiences will have the opportunity to hear some glorious carillon music, starting off with accomplished carillonneur Tatiana Lukyanova, who has trained in both St. Petersburg, Russia and Mechelen, Belgium. Her impressive repertoire includes both classical and contemporary works. Jim Fackenthal, Gordon Slater, and Carlo van Ulfth will take over Lukyanova's role each successive Thursday.

Guests are invited to bring a seat for this outdoor series (which will take place inside the Smith Chapel in the event of rain), and enjoy the free hot dogs and other snacks provided.
— Cara Suppa

Thursdays July 12 - August 2, 7 p.m. // 4701 College Dr. // Free
// behrend.psu.edu/student-life

Gather for July's Gallery Night Around Town



Ember + Forge patrons chat and view photographs at a previous installment of the Erie Museum's popular Gallery Night series, taking place simultaneously at venues around town.

FRIDAY, JULY 13

In case this summer doesn't feel as though it is flying by fast enough for you, it is already time for the July edition of the Erie Art Museum's Gallery Night, the exciting art series in which locally owned galleries and boutiques simultaneously open their doors for an evening of imagination, conversation and collaboration.

As always, there will be something intriguing at the Erie Art Museum itself, and this month patrons can look forward to three new exhibits: the Pennsylvania garden-themed *Archiving Ephemeral Beauty*, photography celebrating Erie's waterfront in *Erie's Historic Lakefront: Harbor to Point*, and Impressionism-tinged paintings from *Mary Beth McKenzie: A Life in Art*.

If you wanted to stay a spell downtown, there is the already-essential coffee shop Ember + Forge just a hop, skip and a jump away from the EAM's steps,

with a mystical yet vivid display of watercolors and oils by Mercy Maclay. Just east, Pufferbelly Restaurant nostalgists can visit a significant building from Erie's past, re-minted as The Events Center at the Firehouse, now owned by ERIE Insurance, where David Ludwick will be featured, along with nearly 50 other local artists. And the opening of Jared K. Faulkner's *Cowboys Are Dead* at the Erie Art Gallery on West 8th Street promises to be an experience of extraordinary passion and provocation.

Further up State Street, the always-busy PACA building has two businesses hosting artist space. The Elusive Fox Boutique, which just celebrated its grand opening, and the Erie ClaySpace will be all about getting your hands dirty on the potter's wheel, but make sure you give them a good wash before touching any of the original pieces and boutique goods for sale.

Artlore Studio is always worth a trip west, and this Gallery Night will be a

special treat with *I Am Magic*, *The Work of Nancy Bryan*. Not only does the artist work in a variety of mediums, the gallery and studio is hosting live folk/alternative music by Mike Abadon Faluz and will provide refreshments.

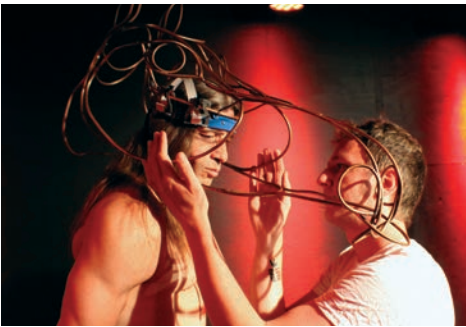
Out on 26th, B3 Gallery and Gifts is celebrating its one-year anniversary, and its owners are giving back by hosting a benefit for Project Love, a crucial charity which ensures that underprivileged children receive Christmas gifts during the holiday season, when they would not otherwise. You can show your support for this mission by stopping by B3, where artist Erin Zaiger's medium of choice is paint on reclaimed wood and canvas, and where the shop will have giveaways, tip boards and a toy drive (a donation nets you a coupon for B3), plus Rusty Wheel Food Truck and the Erie Beer and Courtyard Winery on hand for refreshments.

Check out the link below for a full listing of the host stops which are opening their doors to the public around town, and bear in mind that if you miss July's Gallery Night, you won't have the opportunity to attend another until September. — Cara Suppa

7 p.m. to 10 p.m. // Various locations // Free // erieartmuseum.org

PACA Not Horsing Around with *Equus* Run

Climb in the saddle and hold on for dear life; *Equus* at PACA is going full tilt.



John Schaaf (left) and Eli Coppock star in Sir Peter Shaffer’s “fervent and terrifying” *Equus*, which opens a summer run at PACA on Friday, July 13.

FRIDAY, JULY 13

In 1971, playwright Sir Peter Shaffer was talking to a friend who had attended a dinner party, at which the topic of conversation included a disturbed young man who had used a spike to blind 26 horses. The friend relayed this gruesome anecdote, but failed to expound on the details. Shaffer wrote in 1973, “...it was enough to arouse in me an intense fascination.”

Intense, indeed. From that encounter came *Equus*, Shaffer’s fictional examination of Alan Strang, a 17-year-old boy with an almost religious obsession with horses, and his psychiatrist, the dissatisfied Dr. Martin Dysart. When the play opens, Strang — a disturbed but passionate youth whose combative, sullen exterior veils the darkness underneath — has blinded six horses and been brought in to Dysart for psychological treatment.

“Everyone has interior motivation for actions they conduct...everyone has an untold life. This play allows the audience to unravel that mystery as they see Alan unravel his,” Mark Tanenbaum, co-director with Karen Schelinski, said. “The most important element is the storyline, which is rugged and true to life and allows the actors to sink deeply into their roles and characters. This play is a masterwork.”

Audiences at the Performing Artists Collective Alliance (PACA) downtown can expect to be bolted to their seats by the emotional and psychological impact of Shaffer’s fervent, terrifying script. “There are few plays written which have such a visceral effect on the audience,” Tanenbaum continued. “Ask anyone who has seen any production of the show, they will all say that it is life-altering to sit in the theater and see the story unfold.” — Cara Suppa

Equus contains adult situations and nudity and is intended only for mature audiences.

Fridays and Saturdays, July 13 - 28, Sunday, July 29, 8 p.m. // 1505 State Street // \$15// paca1505.com

Boeing Boeing Brings French Comedy to Playhouse Mainstage Series



FRIDAY, JULY 13

Direct translations don’t always come across as intended. Especially when it comes to comedy. Take Gad Elmaleh for example. A very successful comedian in France, Elmaleh struggled with comedy when he came to tour in America earlier this decade.

On the other hand, one American comedian famously did very well in France. That man, Jerry Lewis, was one of the stars in the film version of *Boeing Boeing* in 1965.

The play premiered in 1960, and was translated to English two years later, becoming a transatlantic comic hit, and is ready to take off soon at The Erie Playhouse.

“It’s a farce,” Jessie Thorpe, one of the lead actresses in the production, said in an interview, “which tends to translate well by the nature of the genre. There are a few lines that seem to be more lit-

eral translations of French idioms, but otherwise the jokes are pretty universal and often risqué, per the genre.”

Thorpe plays Gloria in The Playhouse’s production, which will premiere on July 13. Gloria is one of the three unknowing stewardesses engaged to Bernard, a bachelor living in France. Of her character, Thorpe said: “I would call her the forward-thinking feminist of the group. She has very strong opinions, looks out for herself, and (has a) strange taste in food.”

Through the unplanned speed of the new Boeing jet, Gloria and Bernard’s other two women happen upon the same city at the same time.

“Since it’s such a small cast and the characters are so different, all of the relationships have their own clear dynamics,” Thorpe said. “All of the women in the show have different accents and backgrounds, and those are comically integrated into their characters.”

The Playhouse will host *Boeing Boeing* on the Mainstage beginning in the second week of July and continuing until July 29. Thorpe is joined by Bill Speros, Sue Hansen, Chris Bucci (in Lewis’ role), Kelley McDonald, and Adele Crotty. — Hannah McDonald

July 13-29. Thurs., Fri., Sat., shows at 7:30 p.m., Sun. shows at 2 p.m. // 13 W. 10th St. // Tickets range from \$12.00 to \$20.25 // erieplayhouse.org





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Erie’s Greek Festival Returns



Panegyri, otherwise known as “the Greek Festival,” celebrates its 30th year at Assumption Greek Orthodox Church this July.

FRIDAY, JULY 13

People come from all over the United States to experience a little piece of Greece at the Assumption Greek Orthodox Church’s annual Panegyri. Now in its 30th year, the annual festival is expected to attract thousands of people who wish to experience the Mediterranean country’s food, music and more. Guests can enjoy lamb, chicken ,or

fish dinners or sample other Greek specialties, such as pastries, wine and calamari. The festival also features live music, folk dancing and church tours. Fireworks will be set off at dusk on Saturday. Raffles will take place throughout the festival. One prize is a trip for two to Greece. Money raised benefits the church and its endowment fund. — Tracy Geibel

2:30 to 11 p.m. Friday, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday, noon to 7 p.m. Sunday // Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, 4376 W. Lake Rd. // Free // 838-8808 // erieorthodox.org

Maniacal Device Reaps Analog Revenge



NICK WARREN

FRIDAY, JULY 13

Erie’s seedy underground punk community is celebrating the release of one of their premier bands’ new albums, and what better time than on Friday the 13th? Maniacal Device is set to drop their latest and highly anticipated album on 10” vinyl, aptly named *Analog Revenge*, through local label Presque Isle Re-

cords. The band’s cross-over thrash-punk style in the vein of Municipal Waste-meets-Suicidal Tendencies has persevered throughout every release, and their fans can likely expect the rapid-fire song-writing approach that they’ve come to know and love on this new record. Filling out the bill for the evening are fellow Erie punk rockers Mala Sangre, new Erie metalheads Save Yourself, and Buffalo hardcore punks from Pure Heel. In addition to the bands and keeping with the spirit of a vinyl record release, DJ Stephen Maynard will be spinning classic metal and punk vinyl records in the lounge area between performances. — Tommy Shannon

9:30 p.m. // *Scotty’s Martini Lounge* // 301 German St. // 21+ // \$5 // facebook.com/scottys.martini

McCain Outdoor Amphitheater in Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

SPORTS

LECOM Health Challenge

Jul. 5, 6, 7, 8
Peek ‘n Peak Resort, 1405 Olde Road, Clymer, N.Y. 14724 lecomhealthchallenge.com.

Volleyball Doubles League

Jul. 10, 17, 24, 31 & Aug. 7, 14 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Beach 6 Volleyball Courts at Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. trepci.org.

Erie SeaWolves vs. Altoona Curve

Jul. 12, 13, 14 — 7 p.m. & Jul. 15 — 1:30 p.m.
UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th St. milb.com.

Don’t Give Up The Disc

Jul. 14, 15
Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. eriesports-commission.com.

HydroFlight National Tour

Jul. 14 — 10 a.m.
Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel, 55 W. Bay Dr. eriesports-commission.com.

SUPcross Tour

Jul. 15 — 9:30 a.m.
Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel, 55 W. Bay Dr. eriesports-commission.com.

PI Lagoon EcoPaddle

Jul. 15 — 1 to 2:30 p.m.
The Lagoons at Presque

Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. trepci.org.

Mercyhurst University Elite Lacrosse Skills Camp

Jul. 16 — 8:30 a.m. to noon
Tulio Field at Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. mercyhurst.edu.

COMMUNITY

Friends and Family Day

Jul. 4 — 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Erie Maritime Museum, 150 E. Front St. Ste. 100 // flagshipniagara.org

Lagoon by Pontoon

Jul. 4 — 10 a.m.
Lagoon Boat Launch in Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. trepci.org.

Roaring ‘20s Superhero Party

Jul. 5 — 5 to 8 p.m.
Gatsby in a cape? Perhaps. Room 33 and The GeekErie are hosting a Roaring 20’s superhero- themed party to benefit The GeekErie, an organization serving the City of Erie and Erie County. Room 33, 1033 State St. facebook.com.

Block Party

Jul. 5 — 6:30 to 10:30 p.m.
Upcoming Block Party to be held in home of the SeaWolves and features local musicians Crooked Creek Brothers and REFUGE.

UPMC Park, 110 E. 10th St. visiterie.com.

Branching Out

Jul. 5, 10, 12, 17 — 10 to 11 a.m. & noon to 1:30 p.m.
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Ceramics Class: Wheel and Hand-built Techniques

Jul. 5, 12 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Erie Clayspace, 1505 State St. erieclayspace.com.

Karaoke Nite w/ Brooke

Jul. 5 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Ladies Night Out

Jul. 6 — 6 p.m.
Sparrow Pond Campground, 11103 US-19, Waterford, PA 16441 sparrowpond.com.

Evening Campfire on the Beach

Jul. 6 — 7 to 8 p.m.
Learn about the wildlife of the peninsula and enjoy a campfire on Beach 11 as part of this educational, family-friendly event. Beach 11 at Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr., trepci.org.

Candlelight Ghost Walks

Jul. 6, 7, 13, 14 — 8 to 9:30 p.m.
Dobbins Landing, 1 State St. candlelightghostwalks.com.

Red, White and Splash

Jul. 7
Splash Lagoon Indoor Water Park, 8091 Peach

St. splashlagoon.com.

Second Sundays

Jul. 8 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Community members of all ages are invited to indulge their senses in the Erie Art Museum herb garden and learn how to create handmade paper as part of the Second Sunday series. Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Erie Zoo Visits

Jul. 9 — 10 a.m.
Edinboro Branch Library, 413 W. Plum St., Edinboro, PA 16412 erielibrary.org.

Exercise Your Mind

Jul. 9 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Sizzlin’ Summer Bingo Bonanza

Jul. 9 — 12:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Little Italy Farmers Market

Jul. 9, 16, 23, 30 & Aug. 6, 13, 20, 27 & Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24 — 3 to 6 p.m.
Little Italy, 331 W. 18th St. ssjnn.org.

Firemen’s Cherry Festival

Jul. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
Heard Park, 31 N. Lake St., North East, PA 16428 necherryfestival.com.

The Problem with Plastics

Jul. 10 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

History by Pontoon Boat

Jul. 10 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Presque Isle State Park, 301 Peninsula Dr. Ste. 1, trepci.org

Gentle Yoga & Meditation - Level 2

Jul. 10, 17 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Edinboro Branch Library, 413 Plum St., Edinboro, PA 16412 erielibrary.org.

Poetry Night

Jul. 10, 17 — 6:30 p.m.
Calamari’s Squid Row, 1317 State St. facebook.com.

Read to a Therapy Dog

Jul. 10 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Iroquois Avenue Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. erielibrary.org.

Erie SeaWolves Family Storytime

Jul. 11 — 10 a.m.
Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Rd. Ste. 280 erielibrary.org.

Presque Isle Garden Club Flower Show

Jul. 11 — noon to 3 p.m.
Hoss’s Steak and Sea House, 3302 W. 26th St. greeneriepa.org.

Understanding Recycling

Jul. 11 — 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Goodell Gardens Farmers Market

Jul. 11, 18 — 3 to 6 p.m.
Goodell Gardens & Homestead, 221 Waterford St, Edinboro,

PA 16412 goodellgardens.org.

Summer Clay for Kids: Elementary Hand Building

Jul. 11 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.
Erie Clayspace, 1505 State St. erieclayspace.com.

Summer Clay for Kids: Elementary Wheel Throwing

Jul. 11 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Erie Clayspace, 1505 State St. erieclayspace.com.

History of the Brig Niagara

Jul. 12 — 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Game Nite w/ Brooke

Jul. 12 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Heart of the Arts Festival

Jul. 13
Featuring outdoor concerts and activities for kids, the Heart of the Arts Folk Festival will be hosted an hour south of Erie. Titusville PA, 16354 // hotafest.com.

Panegyri Greek Festival

Jul. 13, 14, 15
Assumption Greek Orthodox Church, 4376 W. Lake Rd. erieorthodox.org.

Harley Davidson Bikefest

Jul. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20
Sixth Annual Harley Davidson Bikefest returns to Erie for seven days, featuring local

All-American Mixture

The AmeriMasala hopes art can dissolve humanity's artificial divisions



CASEY C. ROSS

Batale New York, an all-female Brazilian samba reggae percussion group of international renown, will provide intricate rhythms at the AmeriMasala multicultural festival at Perry Square, back for the first time since 2006.

"masala" (blend of spices) is a "grass-roots movement to counter hatred and confront racism and oppression."

The purest way of achieving that aim is through art. Imagination channeled outward leads us to create these artificial barriers; but by channeling it inward, by plumbing our depths, we can get at the essence of what makes us human — and that is the ability to express ourselves as *individuals* while simultaneously calling toward our collective spirit. Art is about more than one person; rather it is something shared by the community. Even if each individual reacts to it differently, it at the very least invites discourse. And that's a start if we are ever going to subvert something so entrenched as racism or sexism.

Johnson says we need to "unplug" our mainframes from running these tired scripts, to deprogram ourselves and create something new together. After a hiatus of 12 years, the AmeriMasala's UnoWE Parade represents the first steps to doing just that. The UnoWE Parade draws inspiration heavily from the Cleveland Museum of Art's Parade the Circle event, a nearly 30-year tradition in which Cleveland's University Circle is flooded with colorful costumes, wildly inventive floats, and towering giant puppets. All references to commercial, political, or religious affiliation are jettisoned — labels are not allowed because humanity is the brand. There are no motors because creativity is the engine.

SATURDAY, JULY 14

AmeriMasala organizer Lynn Johnson wishes people loved one another the way they love classifying one another. While baseball has long served its role as America's favorite pastime and soccer has captivated the rest of the civilized world, humanity has *forever* obsessed itself with categorization. In Biblical lore, it began with naming the animals. As cities were erected and the structure of the nation-state took hold, we began deepening and diversifying our methods for dividing ourselves. Soon enough, categories became hierarchies, strings by which "better" people could puppeteer "lesser" people to maintain their status.

As an African-American man who has encountered prejudice at several junctures in his professional and civilian life, Johnson has felt the tug and tension in those wires — and spoken out about it. He is an amiable personality, enthusiastic, engaging, and friendly — but he is certainly not naïve. He compares combating racism to mowing the lawn; the longer we don't pay attention to it, the

uglier it gets. And have things ever gotten ugly over the past few years as anger and outrage have overgrown the yard.

According to Johnson, we've become so wound up in race, class, in gender that we have trouble tracing the strings to where they started — at the top. We're like dogs that have wrapped ourselves around some vertical object, barking because we're feeling trapped, confused, and scared. But what if we could help one another unwind that lead and meet out in the open? And once we finally have that space to run free in, might it even be ... fun? Once we're playing together, would it even matter that we were barking just a short while ago?

This is the mentality Johnson has sought to create with his AmeriMasala project, which he initiated in 1995 "to inspire a community philosophy which promotes the value and nobility of all people and encourages dialogue across the lines of race, ethnicity, gender, and class through accessible public presentations of the cultural arts, workshops and lectures." The AmeriMasala, which is a portmanteau of "American" and

The UnoWE Parade will begin at the Erie Art Museum and stop in Perry Square, where participants will be able to listen to musical styles from around the world, courtesy of One World Tribe, The Mulligans, Aka Jama Aka (Senegalese dance and drum group), and more. Headlining the festivities and joining the procession up State Street will be Batale New York, an all-female Afro-Brazilian samba reggae percussion band. No cosmopolitan congregation of this magnitude (there really is no other in Erie) would be complete without ethnic cuisines, and Johnson is hoping for an array that includes Thai, Mexican, Nepalese, Middle Eastern, and soul food in the park (he is still finalizing a few finer details as of press time).

Above any one food item, Johnson hopes that this event offers food for thought. Workshops to help newcomers craft the elaborate costumes and puppets seen in the parade are on the horizon for future iterations of the AmeriMasala, but for now he is hoping this reboot inspires creativity and sparks the desire for collaboration. In time, he envisions a self-sustaining phenomenon in which people of all backgrounds will want to get involved.

"I want a Black family run into a White family at the craft store and say 'Oh you're working on a giant puppet, too?'"

And this time, it will be the *individuals* pulling the strings. — Matt Swanseger

11 a.m. // Perry Square // Free and open to the human community // Visit the AmeriMasala's event page on Facebook.

Matt Swanseger can be reached at mswanseger@eriereader.com

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Shake Up Your Week with Shakespeare Summer Nights



MONDAY, JULY 16

The city gem that is Frontier Park is never more alive than in the summer, when on any given evening you might hear symphonic winds, the boom of fireworks, the sounds of soccer denizens screeching, or courtly iambic pentameter that begins, "To be or not to be..."

In the last scenario, you would be audience to *Macbeth*, the first of two productions known collectively as Shakespeare Summer Nights, a continuing tradition put on by Gannon University and its Schuster Theater. Sharing hosting duties is the Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, or LEAF, that half-dome covered stage which rests at the foot of a series of stone risers — a perfectly picturesque amphitheater setting for some old school drama.

Fans of theater (and the great outdoors) have three opportunities to take in Shakespeare's famous play about murder and intrigue in the rotten old court of Denmark, which has been adapted (you weren't really going to sit for four hours on a stone bench, were

you?) by F. Shawn Clerkin and will be directed by Almi Clerkin, Gannon alum and previous executive director at the Erie Playhouse. Likewise, a rather less staid performance called *Stand Up Shakespeare* — featuring music set to the Bard's text — will run for three performances on three consecutive nights the following week under the direction of Ellise Chase.

As always, guests are invited to bring their own blankets or chairs (or bean bag seat, whatever is most comfortable for you), and everyone planning to attend should be aware that the if the rain begins to fall, performances will be moved to the Gannon Schuster Theatre at 620 Sassafras. Announcements concerning rain performances will be made on all of the Schuster Theatre's social media accounts in order to get the word out. — Cara Suppa

Macbeth: July 16 - 18; *Standup Shakespeare*: July 23 - 25, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. // 1501 W. 6th St. // Free // leaferie.org

food and entertainment.
Harley Davidson of Erie, 3712 W. 12th St. hderiebikefest.com.

DiscoverE: Family Recreation Day

Jul. 14 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Beach 11 at Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr., trecepi.org.

Flagship Flea Market

Jul. 14 — 11:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Independence Hill, Peach St. (between W. 26th & 24th streets) // facebook.com

The AmeriMasala

Jul. 14 — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Perry Square, 568 State St. facebook.com.

Kenneth Snider Memorial Car Cruise

Jul. 15 — 1 to 4 p.m.
St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, 950 W. 7th St. wctl.org.

Erie Seawolves Family Storytime

Jul. 16 — 10 to 10:30 a.m.
Edinboro Branch Library, 413 Plum Street, Edinboro, PA 16412 erielibrary.org.

Little Leaves

Jul. 16 — 10 to 10:45 a.m. & 11:15 a.m. to noon
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Sustainable Agriculture

Jul. 17 — 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Tech Toolbox

Jul. 17 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Iroquois Avenue Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. erielibrary.org.

Active Apples

Jul. 18 — 10:30 to 11:15 a.m.

Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body

Jul. 18 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Clown Storytime

Jul. 18 — 10 a.m.
Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Rd. Suite 280 erielibrary.org.

Read to a Therapy Dog

Jul. 18 — 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Edinboro Branch Library, 413 Plum Street, Edinboro, PA 16412 erielibrary.org.

Mindful Nutrition

Jul. 18 — 6 to 7 p.m.
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So Far, So Good: The Top 10 Albums of 2018

By Aaron Mook and Nick Warren

Crowning albums and heralding them as new classics – it's a ceremony usually reserved for the end of the calendar year. Rather than make the made scramble in December to figure out what records stood out, why not take a breath and enjoy some of that summer air? Here are ten albums worth checking out now; maybe you'll find your album of the summer, or even album of the year.

1. Caroline Rose – *Loner*

In a year somehow even more tumultuous than 2017, Caroline Rose understands the importance



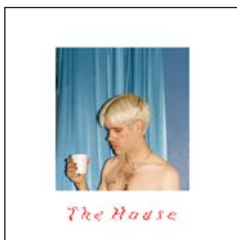
of laughter. From *Loner's* cover art down to its my joyful single ("Soul No. 5"), *Loner* is an album that isn't afraid to make you smile. Even when Rose does have something important to convey, such as the emotional isolation captured on opening track "More of the Same" or the defiant feminism of "Bikini," she does so over off-kilter organ swells and surf-drenched chord progressions. Put simply, *Loner* is the kind of album we could desperately use more of in 2018.

2. Ezra Furman – *Transangelic Exodus*
Filled with humor, anger, and unique perspectives, Ezra Furman's fourth solo record immediately grabs you and

doesn't let go. It has this bizarre jauntness that's as inviting as it is perplexing. The androgynous Chicagoan is an expert at crafting kaleidoscopic garage rock with all the pacing and theatricality of a rock opera (complete with a subplot featuring a post-op angel), but none of the hollowness. Escapist fun sung through a bitten-lipped growl, it's the right mix of genre-bending and gender bending, producing a wholly original masterpiece. Expertly crafted, it's a rare example of top-tier idiosyncratic songwriting.

3. Porches – *The House*

When an album like *The House* gets described as "sadboy club music," there's a good chance you'll know whether it's up your alley almost instantly. *The House* is, in fact, decidedly introspective, featuring songs about staying in over beats best danced to while going out. Equal parts M83 ("Find Me"), Frank Ocean ("Country"), and Elliott Smith, auteur Aaron Maine distills all of these distinct influences into something unique and, to some, irresistible.



ible. Universal throughout and visceral when it needs to be, *The House* is one of the year's most poignant and emotionally resonant releases to date.

4. Illuminati Hotties – *Kiss Yr Frenemies*

It's not every day when an album clicks so immediately. Los Angeles producer Sarah Tudzin has amassed all the experience needed to do just that. Packed with poppy indie punk anthems, *Kiss Yr Frenemies* is like Best Coast's more intellectual younger sister, able to dispense sage advice with wry wit, all while being entirely sympathetic. The uptempo, clever songs – like the album's real starter "(You're Better) Than Ever," and the debt-ridden "Paying Off the Happiness" – succeed as often as the lamentations of "Patience" and "Declutter," selling an entire array of emotions in just over a half an hour.

5. Confidence Man – *Confident Music for Confident People*

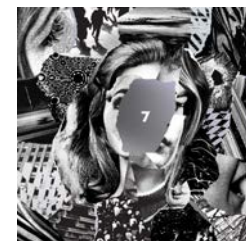
Maybe it's just summer talking, but lighter, slightly tongue-in-cheek albums are heartily welcomed. There's probably no better example of this than *Confident Music for*



Confident People. It's nerdy, funny, weird, and insanely infectious. Not since Junior Senior has there been a better one-stop party album (okay, maybe Girl Talk's *Feed the Animals*, and every LCD Soundsystem record) for dorky suburban kids. This quartet from Brisbane, Australia have made a bouquet of electro-dance anthems that, while being unfathomably sugary, are works of pure, unbridled joy.

6. Beach House – *7*

The title of Beach House's seventh studio album, is apt not only for its bluntness but in the way it represents



everything the dream-pop duo has been building toward over the past decade. Grounded at times ("Pay No Mind") and ethereal in all the right places ("Dark Spring," "Lemon Glow"), *7* is a journey through the band's entire catalog, allowing their best habits to shine through in some of their finest songwriting yet. And not that it matters as much as the music, but the album's shimmering artwork and packaging (complemented by a warped checkerboard pattern) is some of the year's best.

7. Speedy Ortiz – *Twerp Verse*

A sleeper hit from somewhat of a sleeper band, *Twerp Verse* finds the Northampton, Massachusetts four piece hitting their stride. The 90s alt-rock in-

TOMMY IN TOON — BY TOMMY LINK



MUSIC REVIEWS

strumentation is inviting, and frontwoman Sadie Dupuis' songwriting is addictively artisanal. It's quirky, it's dense, and it truly grows on the listener in a major way. Tracks like "Lucky 88" and "Alone With Girls" are packed with enough hummable melodies to lift anyone out of the doldrums. The record finds a balance of sullen indie apathy and winking frivolity, becoming wonderfully rewarding upon multiple listens.



ed by two things: critical acclaim, and a number of tired comparisons to Band of Horses. With feet planted firmly in both emo and indie-rock camps, *Happiness Hours* is the rare album that transcends genres to create something that sounds both nostalgic and timeless. Blasts of upbeat power-pop propel the release, from jangly Smiths worship ("Win Affection") and dancey numbers about not dancing to sun-soaked singalongs ("Weed Tent"). Fortunately, *Happiness Hours* is another record unafraid to highlight the lighter side of life.



8. Father John Misty – *God's Favorite Customer*

It's no secret that Josh Tillman is one of the more divisive voices in indie rock, meaning *God's Favorite Customer* might be the most controversial contender on this list. Perhaps it shouldn't be; where Tillman's brand of theatrical irony tired many on last year's exhaustive *Pure Comedy*, he now returns with his most succinct and genuine album yet. Rooted in heartbreak and minimalist, piano-based arrangements, *God's Favorite Customer* starts bleak and hardly lets up over its 38-minutes. If there were ever a Tillman record to sway a skeptic, this would be it.

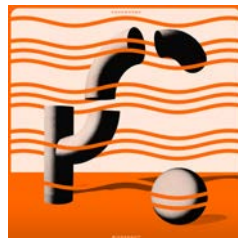


9. The Sidekicks – *Happiness Hours*

Runners in the Nerved World, The Sidekicks' previous album, was greet-

10. Hookworms - *Microshift*

A hypnotic mix of post punk and electronica, *Microshift* is captivating from front-to-back. For their third album, the Leeds quartet has honed in on an ideal sound, a clearer vision of their fuzzier, more chaotic efforts. The record features plenty of lengthy, centerpiece tracks ("Ullswater," "Opener") that bleed into each other amid pulsating programmed beats and swirling static feedback. Still though, the hooks aren't lost on these worms, with well-crafted choruses in equal supply to neo-psychedelic journeys.



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MOVIE REVIEWS

'There's the Road!': *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* is a B-Movie in Every Sense of the Word

★★

In the 1970s, movies like *Jaws*, *Star Wars*, and *Alien* re-invigorated Hollywood by infusing B-movie storylines with A-movie talent. *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* continues in that tradition by feeling like the demented fever-dreams of Roger Corman on a \$250 million budget. However, instead of invigorating, this film is simply infuriating.



UNIVERSAL PICTURES

It's three years after the disaster at Jurassic World and the dinos are roaming free on Isla Nublar, but a volcano threatens to eliminate them and Owen Grady and Claire Dearing (Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard) are tasked with saving them before the eruption. However, sinister corporate-types are also after the dinosaurs for their own nefarious purposes that mainly involve genetically modifying them into the perfect biological weapons (why do evil corporations always insist on turning uncontrollable wild animals into weapons?).

There are some great dinosaur sequences, including a thrilling scene of a stampede at the base of an erupting volcano, as well as appearances by some cool new dinos (Carnotaurus? Yay!). Unfortunately, the film then spends all its time in a mansion/facility, making the whole experience feel cold and claustrophobic. The human characters are so bland they might as well be made of cardboard and near the end, some of them make the absolute dumbest decisions I've ever seen. I can't describe them without spoiling the movie but these decisions are so stupid I had to stop myself from shouting out in the theater. In the end, *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* is so hollow and joyless that it feels less like Spielberg's ingenious original and more like a big-budget sequel to the *Carnosaur* films. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: Juan Antonio Bayona // Written by: Derek Connolly and Colin Trevorrow // Starring: Chris Pratt, Bryce Dallas Howard, Rafe Spall, Justice Smith, Daniella Pineda, James Cromwell, Toby Jones, Ted Levine, B.D. Wong, Isabella Sermon, Geraldine Chaplin and Jeff Goldblum // 128 minutes

'A Land of Wolves': *Sicario: Day of the Soldado* Pales in Comparison to the Original

★★★

Denis Villeneuve's *Sicario* was a grim, gritty thriller that also worked as a mildly thought-provoking treatise on the lengths we would go to win this so-called "Drug War". The sequel, *Day of the Soldado* gets the grim and gritty parts right, but leaves all thought out to dry.

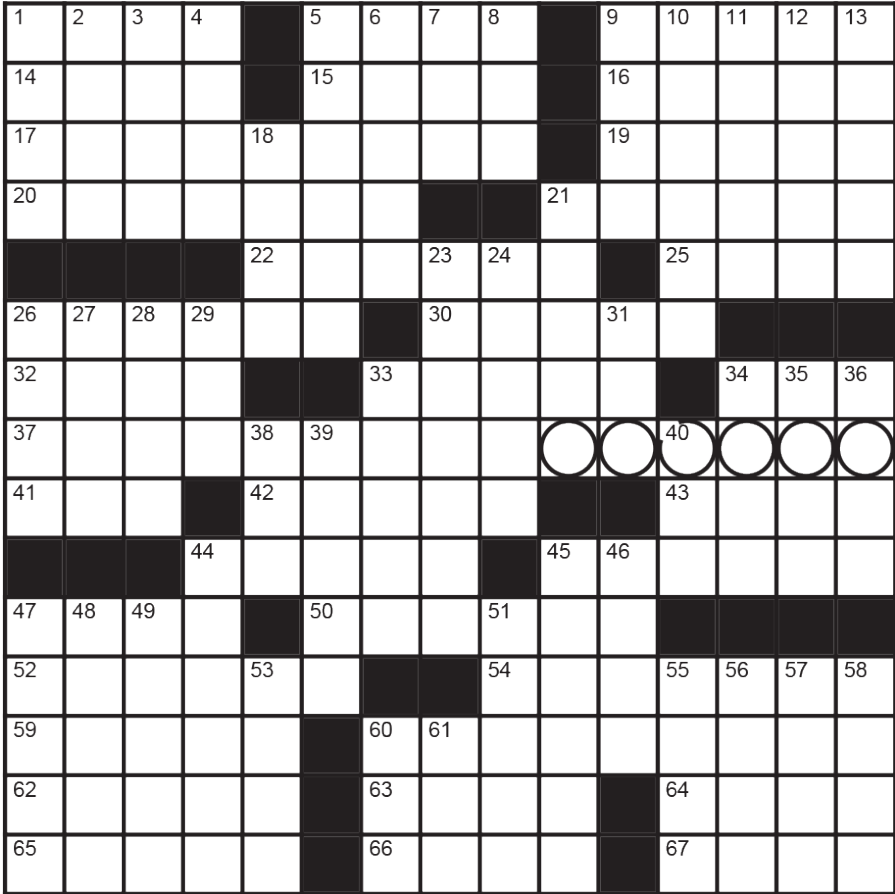


COLUMBIA PICTURES

Giving us a depressingly relevant story about human trafficking across the border, the film begins with a bombing from terrorists who seem to have come here from Mexico. Due to this, the Government grants FBI agent Matt Graver (Josh Brolin) and his secret weapon Alejandro Gillick (Benicio del Toro) carte blanche to fight the cartels. Their plan involves kidnapping the daughter of a drug lord in an attempt to kick off a gang war, but chaos ensues in the aftermath and things only go from bad to worse.

The original worked so well because it presented an interesting discussion about how the pursuit of a monstrous enemy can turn us into monsters. This film pays lip-service to that, but it desperately needs an Emily Blunt character to lend a touch of humanity to the proceedings. It tries to give us some sympathy towards del Toro's character but after the shocking finale of the first film, I'm just not buying it. No, this film is perfectly content being a straight action film and with very tight editing and excellent camerawork, it's a fine one. I just wished they could offer a little heart, even in a world as bleak as this. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: Stefano Sollima // Written by: Taylor Sheridan // Starring: Benicio del Toro, Josh Brolin, Isabela Moner, Catherine Keener, Matthew Modine, David Castaneda, Jeffery Donovan, Ian Bohan and Manuel Garcia-Rulfo // 122 minutes



Across

- 1. "Stop that!"
- 5. Degs. held by George W. Bush and Colin Powell
- 9. Anticipate
- 14. "Now ____ me down ..."
- 15. "I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'," e.g.
- 16. Baby monitor?
- 17. With the grid's circled letters, what Ernest Moniz became in 2013
- 19. With the grid's circled letters, Red Bull, e.g.
- 20. The FCC first authorized it on 12/17/1953
- 21. Walker who was "Dy-no-mite!" on "Good Times"
- 22. Sent Manx messages, say
- 25. Caddie's pocketful
- 26. With the grid's circled letters, a brainiac uses a lot of it
- 30. Only U.S. state whose state seal was designed by a woman
- 32. Oxygen's lack
- 33. Best of the best
- 34. Adversary
- 37. Its source is not depleted when used
- 41. Opposite of WSW
- 42. German neurologist ____ Alzheimer
- 43. "Bloody"
- 44. Coach with the most wins in NFL history
- 45. With the grid's circled letters, it's spent unproductively
- 47. Farm unit
- 50. Anteater, but not an ant
- 52. Donnybrook

- 54. "____ Greatest Hits" (1971 album that includes "Chain of Fools" and "I Say a Little Prayer")
- 59. With the grid's circled letters, exercise may increase this
- 60. With the grid's circled letters, like using LED lights instead of incandescent light bulbs
- 62. Private remark
- 63. It may be junk
- 64. Silver of fivethirtyeight. com
- 65. Shades
- 66. 2014 Sam Smith hit "____ with Me"
- 67. Snowballed

Down

- 1. Part of CD-ROM
- 2. Nondairy item in the dairy aisle
- 3. Table salt, to a chemist
- 4. Beginner
- 5. "Apples to Apples" toy-maker
- 6. "Well played!"
- 7. ____ guitar
- 8. Speak
- 9. "____ quote ..."
- 10. Begin liking
- 11. Japanese cartoon art
- 12. Navel type
- 13. They ride trikes and rhyme with trikes
- 18. "Never go to a doctor whose office plants have died" humorist Bombeck
- 21. Online singles service that allows users to browse its website in English and

- Hebrew
- 23. Hurt on camera
- 24. Brickell and Falco
- 26. Greedy cry
- 27. Opening setting of George Bernard Shaw's "Back to Methuselah"
- 28. What the fourth little piggy had
- 29. One less than quattro
- 31. Mother ____
- 33. Virus named for a river in the Congo Basin
- 34. Campus home for some com
- 35. Shrek, e.g.
- 36. Observed
- 38. Baby's cry in "The Wheels on the Bus"
- 39. Bill and Hillary, to Yale
- 40. Some TV drama settings, for short
- 44. Word on many bumper stickers in Texas after the 2012 U.S. presidential election
- 45. In a cautious way
- 46. Tina's costar on "30 Rock"
- 47. Half-step above A
- 48. Joe Cocker's "You ____ Beautiful"
- 49. "Alice" actress Linda
- 51. Word never spoken in "The Godfather"
- 53. Audrey Hepburn and Honey Boo Brew, for two
- 55. Sound of a fork on a wineglass
- 56. Catch wind of
- 57. Hold 'em opener
- 58. Dish that may be ladled
- 60. Mayhem on the far left and far right?
- 61. Corpulent



Answers to last puzzle





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PEOPLE AND PLACES

Maitham's Corner

Dr. Eric Schwartz, 58, Vice President of Clinical Services and Director of Psychology Internship Training, Sarah Reed Children's Center



MAITHAM BASHA-AGHA

Maitham Basha-Agha: Dr. Schwartz, please tell the readers about yourself.

Dr. Eric Schwartz: I've been with Sarah Reed Children's Center for 20 years. There are two teams that I work with: The clinical program directors and the faculty of doctoral internship training. My role is an administrative and supervisory role. I attend a lot of supervisory meetings and I'm part of the senior leadership team at the agency.

MB: How did you end up at the Sarah Reed Children's Center?

ES: I received my doctoral degree from the University of Denver. We lived in Denver for 12 years. At the time, I was working at Denver's Children Hospital as a staff psychologist. My wife and I agreed that it was time to move closer to our family in New York City. We wanted to be closer so our 6-year-old daughter could spend more time with her grandparents. I saw this job at Sarah Reed Children's Center and I applied. I had honestly never heard of Erie, Pa. before. I was interviewed twice and I can tell you it was the right fit, right position, and the right time.

MB: Tell us about your contribution to Sarah Reed.

ES: There are several keys contributions I've made, but the most important one is leading the agency to the implementation of the Sanctuary Model. It is a recognized model for trauma informed care. One phrase we must highlight is that "it's not what is wrong with the child, but what happened to the child."

MB: Why is Sarah Reed a good organization to be involved with?

ES: First of all, we have a very long history of providing excellent high quality services to children and adolescents in Erie County. It is also the longest established children's mental health agency in Erie. We have been providing mental and behavioral health services for 147 years. It's an agency that consistently acts in accordance with its mission.

MB: Can you please tell me a success story of a child that you've worked with?

ES: I've worked with a child who was 11 years old at the time. It was his second time in the residential facility. He was a kid whose parents' parental rights were terminated due to abuse and neglect. He had been through multiple foster homes and two previously failed adoptions. I took him on as a client and I worked with him for a good year-and-a-half. The primary success during this stay is that we built a strong therapeutic relationship. He started to open up and talk about the trauma he has gone through. He was discharged to a group home at the age of 12-and-a-half and about a year ago we heard that he was successfully adopted.

MB: Please provide the reader with a few childcare tips.

ES: I like to use the 4-point model whenever I'm meeting with parents.

1. Praise your child.
2. Accept who your child is.
3. Validate their feelings, thoughts, idea, and beliefs.
4. Encourage them to be the best they can be.

This also can be called the PAVE model.

Maitham Basha-Agha can be reached at maitham@eriereader.com

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