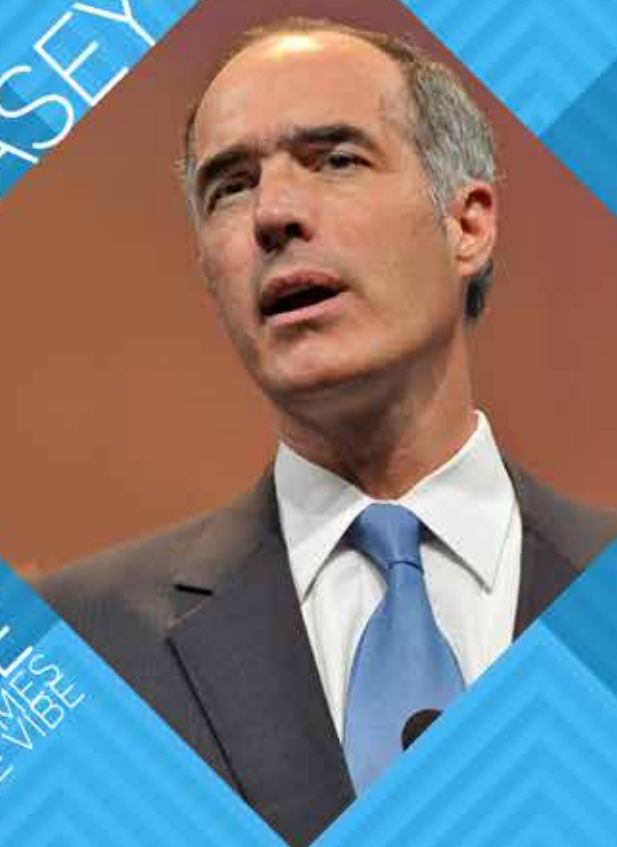


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Nov. 7 - Nov. 20 // Vol. 8, No. 23 // ErieReader.com

CONVERSATIONS WITH:
CHRIS MATTHEWS
DEB & JAMES FALLON
BOB CASEY JR.



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CONTENTS: November 7, 2018

From Africa to Erie – 5

This ‘invasion’ comes with a positive vibe

A Brief Chat with Senator Bob Casey Jr. – 9

On accomplishments, goals, and getting back to work

A Walk in the Park – 10



MARY BIRDSONG

McClelland Park reinvention a boon for eastside recreationists

Talking *Hardball* with Chris Matthews – 13

A conversation with the iconic television host

Our Towns, Revisited – 17

A chat with James and Deborah Fallows

Spotlight on Erie – 21

Take me back to November, Hawaiian shirts in the winter

Taste the Harmony – 29

Eight food and wine pairings that will make your tastebuds Grüner with envy

Album Reviews – 30

New records from boygenius, Mr Twin Sister, Saves the Day, and Miya Folick

Crossword Puzzle – 31

This week’s latest stumper from David Levinson Wilk

From the Editors

On timepiece accuracy, quality conversation, and setting things right

Timing is a tricky thing sometimes. Every year, we find ourselves adjusting to it — often reluctantly — despite the inevitability of the ever-lurching minute hands of life. We’ve adjusted to Daylight Savings Time, falling backward with the best of them, aided in no small part to our automatically-setting smart devices. Our less intelligent chronographs lag behind, only to be corrected through curse words and patient clicking. Night falls sooner, and we all feel the Christmas noose begin to tighten. But, as we turn the calendar past Halloween and gobble up our “unused” candy in secret, there’s another annual tradition that no one with a Facebook feed, a shred of civic duty, or a conscience should ignore: Election Day.

That finds us at the Erie Reader in a particularly tricky position once again. Our distribution schedule, with its biweekly Wednesday release pattern, has this current issue fall on the day immediately following Nov. 6. We go to print a full day before that, meaning that we can’t rely on any early polls or results whatsoever. We dutifully tweeted the results from the local and state races and provided some informed online analysis, as we do twice each year: once during the primaries, and once in November for the general.

What we were able to do however, is to talk to people who know a few things.

Jim Wertz, who happens to be the chair of the Erie County Democratic Party talked to none other than Chris Matthews. One can easily picture the rush of excitement in his eyes while Wertz got the chance to say “Let’s play Hardball” while introducing Matthews. The iconic MSNBC host, known for his candor and no-nonsense demeanor, framed the future for Democrats in particular, suggesting they’ve lost a bit of focus, and speculating about the strategies paving the way for 2020.

Ben Speggen had a healthy share of conversation as well, talking to Senator Bob Casey Jr. along with Deborah and James Fallows. Casey was able to detail some of the policies that served to highlight his second term in office as the senior Senator from Pennsylvania. Deb and James Fallows, the husband-and-wife writing team from The Atlantic, have a deep appreciation for Erie, and will even become honorary citizens during their visit to the Jefferson Educational Society for the think tank’s Global Summit X. The duo has been traversing the country for years, and this year penned *Our Towns: A 100,000-Mile Journey Into the Heart of America*, in which Erie plays a significant role.

Erie City Councilwoman and regular columnist Liz Allen talked to several New Americans, who have made their way to Erie from Africa. Speaking to Felix Eshesimua, Mlongeca Malango, Epizitone Kale “Dante” Nsanbeh and more to help inform her personal perspective while attending the recent Pan-African “Wakanda Invasion.”

The timing, and structure of it all might not work precisely how we pictured it. It rarely does in life, it seems like. But, through cursing and patience, we are learning how to set things how they ought to be.

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From Africa to Erie

This ‘invasion’ comes with a positive vibe



[left] Mlongeca Malango, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, works to remove stains from napkins at Grapevine Laundry & Linens. Malango, who worked as a lab technician in Congo, also uses his tailoring skills to do custom alterations at Grapevine, which has three locations in Erie. [bottom right] Felix Eshesimua, originally from Nigeria, has written one book, *Focus to Pass*, and finds inspiration from another, *The Go-Giver*, *A Little Story about a Powerful Business Idea*. He is working to start a business to serve international students, immigrants and minorities.

LIZ ALLEN

By: Liz Allen

As Donald Trump unleashed his hateful rhetoric about an “invasion” of poor, desperate Hondurans struggling on foot to reach our southern border, I witnessed a different kind of “invasion.” This one did not foment division; rather, it celebrated diversity.

The African Student Organization at Gannon University hosted “Wakanda Invasion, A Showcase of African Fashion, Music, Food and Culture,” for a packed house at Gannon’s Yehl Ballroom on Oct. 20. We feasted on professionally prepared ethnic food, applauded wildly as students walked the fashion runway, and enjoyed the musical entertainment.

Before attending, I asked Epizitone Kale “Dante” Nsanbeh, ASO president, if it would be appropriate to wear the outfit that my late sister-in-law, Henriette Ekanga Allen, sewed for me years ago, when she was designing and selling African fashions in Erie.

I didn’t want to claim Henriette’s Zairian heritage as my own, but Nsanbeh assured me that it would okay to wear African clothes to the celebration. After all, the Gannon event was inspired by Wakanda, the fictional African country from the blockbuster *Black Panther* movie that brought people around the world together. “Wakanda Invasion” aimed to do the same in Erie, he said.

Indeed, when I walked into the ballroom in my square-necked shirt and drawstring pants, made from a flashy pink-and-purple floral fabric, I was

greeted with thumbs-up and welcoming smiles.

The “Wakanda Invasion” made me reflect on Henriette’s drive to succeed as an immigrant in America and also prompted me to appreciate those of African descent who call Erie home, whether it’s for a short time, as students, or more permanently, when they resettle here as refugees.

For Erie’s international community, whether they are students, immigrants, or refugees, education and enterprise are intertwined. They are who we Americans once were — strivers and optimists.

Consider 11-year-old Melody Desuah, a fifth-grader at St. Luke Catholic School. We met at the Quality of Life Learning Center, 2046 E. 19th St., where youngsters from Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, South Sudan, Burundi, Rwanda, Cameroon and Eritrea are matched with tutors and mentors and invited to participate in fun and educational activities, including the annual Walking Through Black History tour of the South.

With poise beyond her years, Melody, the third of four children of Liberian parents, introduced herself. Africans are “very independent people who work hard,” she said. “I’m always on top of my grades. I’m a straight-A student.”

She likes graphic novels and chapter books, because when she tackles challenging reading, “my vocabulary expands.” This summer, she read 100 books. That’s not a boast; just a fact.

Her parents encourage her to be No. 1 in her class, but “they’re not control freaks,” she said with a smile. Her favorite subjects are math, science, English language arts, and spelling. Her goal is to become a scientist or crime scene investigator.

Education is also a top priority for Felix Eshesimua, 32. The son of a businessman and politician in Lagos, Nigeria, Eshesimua said his goal after his 2007 high school graduation was “to become an influencer.” To become a leader, he knew that he needed a university education, preferably in the U.S.

He started at Florida International University but even with scholarships, school was too expensive. When he discovered that Edinboro University of Pennsylvania would be cheaper, he packed his bags and decided to check it out. “I got on a Greyhound with \$50 in my pocket.”

At Edinboro, he confronted “a lot

of cultural change to me and a lot of shock,” he said. “The first time I saw snow, it blew my mind.”

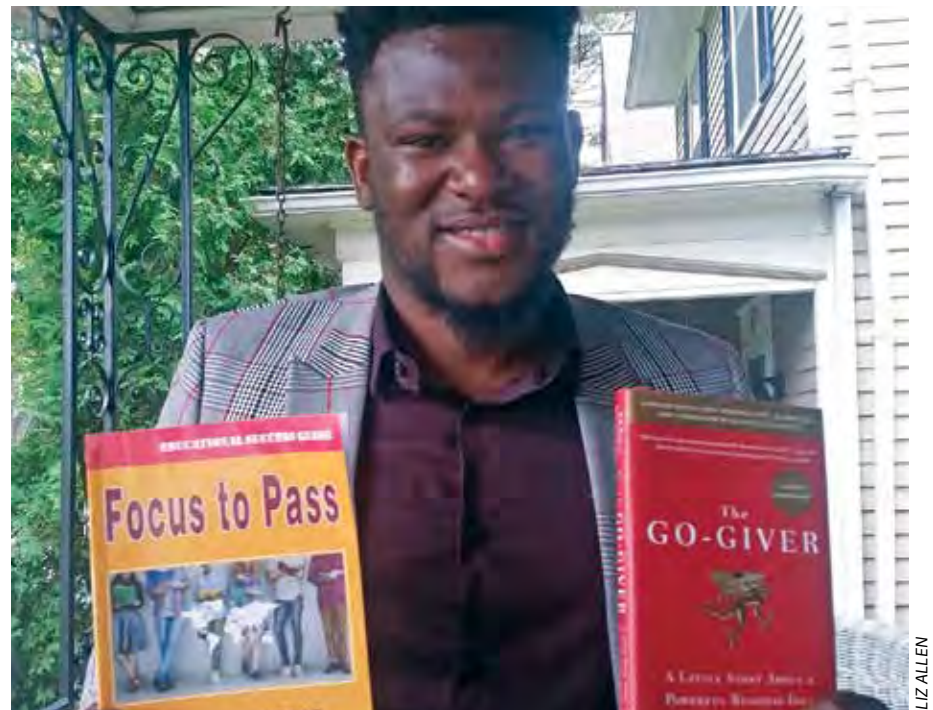
He spoke English, but his accent was “very bad,” making communication difficult, especially in a country where we rush through our words.

If he didn’t understand his professors, it wasn’t because he was dumb, he said. “I decided to start sitting in the front of the class, to pay attention to what they were writing, (and say to them), ‘Help me to understand this.’” He also implored his American friends to rephrase things, until he comprehended what they were saying.

At Edinboro, he studied accounting and economics, earned an associate degree, then went to Gannon, where he was vice president of the international student group. He spent his free time helping international students and pondering ideas about how to help newcomers to America.

Eshesimua was set to graduate from Gannon’s entrepreneurship program in May 2014, but in the first week of January, his dad passed away after suffering a heart attack.

In his grief, Eshesimua began “smoking weed and drinking heavily.” After graduating, he moved to Seattle, where he ended up sleeping in his car and being arrested for having an open bottle of alcohol in the vehicle. Sentenced to 30 days in jail, he lost his job.



LIZ ALLEN

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NEWS & VIEWS

While in jail, though, he decided he needed to make changes on his release. He landed a sales job with Microsoft, which enabled him "to pay off my lawyer, pay off my bills, send money to my mom. I was living the American dream, according to African opinion."

He published his first book, *Focus to Pass: Success Guide for International Students*, and works today as a management consultant, teaching businesses how they can benefit from diversity.

He is also developing a business plan to pitch to investors "to build a community similar to Facebook, to not only help international students but minorities and business owners." Immigrants and refugees also need access to such resources, he said. His personal story serves as a motivator. "Our mission is to engage them. After we engage them, we're going to educate them. While we educate them, we're going to encourage them. Our final goal is to empower them," he said.

Starla Speed Starocci introduced me to Eshesimua when he visited Erie in September. She thinks his message will resonate in Erie's African-American community, among those who don't even think about going to college or who assume that they don't have the money to go to school.

But having a college education and a professional resume doesn't help if you come to this country as a refugee, uprooted from your homeland by war, terrorism, and famine.

Mlongeca Malango, 46, is from Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire, the same country where my sister-in-law lived). Shot in the leg in Congo when his country was at war, he fled to Tanzania in 1996. "The people who shot me in Congo followed me to the camp," he said, and shot him in the other leg. He came to Erie on Nov. 17, 2009, after 13 years in a refugee camp, including more than a year in the hospital for his injuries. Fitted with prosthetics, he walks with the help of braces and also uses a wheelchair.

On Oct. 18, Malango was honored, along with 41 other adults, as the Barber National Institute celebrated Disability Employment Awareness Month. Marquis Wallace, employment specialist and transitional team leader for the Barber Institute, helped Malango to find work at Grapevine Laundry & Linens, owned and operated by Mary Beth Graml.

"I hired him to wrap towels and nap-

kins and tablecloths," said Graml. He also worked as a spotter -- removing stains from clothes brought in for dry cleaning and from the linens that Graml's business supplies to Presque Isle Downs & Casino, the Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel and other customers.

Malango had been referred to the Barber National Institute for job placement through the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. "I happen to be a man of color," said Wallace. When he heard Malango's name, he said, "I recognize this culture. I recognize this name. I want to know what his story is."

He learned that Malango had worked as a lab technician in Congo. "I reached out to all the labs here," said Wallace. But Malango didn't have U.S. credentials. "He had spent years in college being educated," said Wallace. "I tried to use all of this information to leverage opportunities for him," he said. "I'm trying to get him into his preferred field, but ... I'm striking out."

Wallace asked Malango what he did in his spare time. "That's when he took me into the room (at his house) and showed me that he makes clothes for his family," Wallace said. Women in the refugee camp had taught him to sew and he also took a class at the Benedict Education Center.

Wallace, who had placed other clients at Grapevine, noticed that Graml offered alteration services but didn't do them in-house.

Then Wallace told Graml that Malango is a talented tailor. "He can do anything ... men's pants, suit coats, pillowcases," said Graml.

Epizitone Kale Nsanbeh, the student who heads Gannon's African Student Organization, is also multitalented.

At age 33, he is working on his second master's degree, in public administration. He earned his first master's, in political science, in his home country of Cameroon.

A schoolmate back home recommended Gannon to him. After he graduates in May, he hopes to work for the World Bank Group or the International Monetary Fund.

Nsanbeh, who nicknamed himself "Dante," estimates that there are about 4,000 international students in Erie, counting the four universities and the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Most of those students will not settle in Erie permanently but they can serve

as goodwill ambassadors for our city, he said. "People move, move, move," he said. While he does not want to speak for all of the African continent, he knows that in his country, most information is spread by word-of-mouth. "Other Africans still ask about the educational system and the city itself," he said. If they return to Africa or settle elsewhere, these one-time Erie students will tell people to "come up and see Erie. This is how wonderful this town is," he said.

He cites the example of a LECOM student from Cameroon. "Because of the reputation of Erie and LECOM, he decided to come to Erie," he said.

Gannon has students from at least 14 African countries, he said, and the children of refugees, "people who have lost everything," are starting to enroll. An additional four African countries were represented at "Wakanda Invasion," he said. "My dream was always to get all the African student organizations (from the other local colleges) together in one place."

Nsanbeh is not a refugee but his family is dealing with heartache. After his father died last July, he grew a beard, which he will wear for one year to show that he is in mourning. Three months ago, he lost his youngest brother to violence back home. They were a family of eight children; now they are seven.

Beyond his immediate goals after graduation, Nsanbeh's "first dream" is to return home. He is earning his MBA so that he can study how systems and structures were built in the U.S., and to learn how African countries can build their own institutions, instead of relying on the ones put into place by colonial masters. And each African country is unique, he stressed. "Cameroon cannot be like Zaire."

Right now, it is not safe for him to return to Cameroon. As an activist there, he would be a target for violence, like his brother.

But when he returns, he has impressive political ambitions. Imagine our collective pride if we can say that a man who went to college in Erie becomes president — of Cameroon.

Liz Allen, a member of Erie City Council, is learning more about young Africans living in Erie as she takes part in a mentoring program at the Quality of Life Learning Center, sponsored by the bipartisan Elected Women of Erie County group.

Erie's melting pot

It is hard to find numbers on how many people from African countries now live in Erie but it's fair to say that there is diversity in the African community itself.

Epizitone Kale "Dante" Nsanbeh, president of the African Student Association at Gannon University, said his organization has members from at least 14 countries in Africa.

Gary Horton, executive director of the Quality of Life Learning Center, said his agency works with former refugees from 10 African countries.

Niken Astari Carpenter, Erie Mayor Joe Schember's liaison to immigrants and refugees, said that refugees make up between 16 and 18 percent of the city's population. That percentage does not count immigrants. However, in the past five years, more than 1,900 people took the oath of U.S. citizenship at the federal courthouse in Erie, she said. These new Americans represented more than 75 countries in Erie.

Rolling out the welcome mat



Epizitone Kale Nsanbeh, president of the African Student Organization at Gannon University, has another presidential office in his sights. Someday, his dream is to serve as president of his home country, Cameroon.

for black people in Erie to see people who look like them.

"No one wants to deal with the ugliness of what slavery did to this country," said Horton. As African immigrants make their homes in Erie, people here can see them "striving to do well," he said, and also can learn about the history and accomplishments of African people. "We are the descendants of kings and queens, with a great history and culture," as well as pride in learning, he said.

Lynn Johnson, who founded AmeriMasala, Erie's multicultural festival, attended the "Wakanda Invasion" celebration at Gannon University and said he was struck by the diversity in the crowd and in the student models who showed off African fashions. "They were short, tall, all skin colors ... different types of beauty standing right there," said Johnson. "In the movies, the way they present African people is very narrow in how you look and how you talk."

When he began to learn African drumming for AmeriMasala, Johnson studied one type of drumming. Now he has learned that there are "hundreds" of different styles of drumming. "I'm always learning new techniques," he says. "It's just mind-boggling how diverse the whole continent of Africa is."

Johnson's last comment is a good reminder about the geography of Africa. It's a continent, not a country. In fact, according to National Geographic, there are 54 countries and one non-self-governing territory in Africa. — Liz Allen

With between 16 and 18 percent of Erie's population now made up of refugees and a good number of immigrants, what can we do to make newcomers from other countries feel welcome?

Gary Horton, executive director of the Quality of Life Learning Center in Erie, has one quick suggestion: Learn to pronounce names correctly. Too often, people from Africa end up being called by their last names because we get tongue-tied trying to say their first names, Horton said.

I put his suggestion into practice when I interviewed Epizitone Kale Nsanbeh, president of Gannon University's African Student Organization. After I wrote out his name phonetically as E-pee-z-eh-tony, I came close to saying it right. But then I pronounced his middle name like the vegetable. Wrong. His middle name is pronounced Kay-lee. By the way, he gave himself the nickname "Dante."

The Quality of Life Learning Center works with young people from around the world, including Arabic and Asian countries, but Horton sees a special benefit to Erie in being receptive to newcomers from African nations — and



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A Brief Chat with Senator Bob Casey Jr.

On accomplishments, goals, and getting back to work



U.S. Senator Bob Casey, Jr. (D - Pennsylvania) speaks at a AFL-CIO labor convention during his first term in September 2009. If elected to a third term in office, Casey hopes to make progress on infrastructure, healthcare, and early learning initiatives.

BILL BURKE / PAGE ONE

By: Ben Speggen

It was a cold Friday night in Erie, Pennsylvania. The rain was flirting with a decision of whether to break loose on those gathered in the parking lot of Lavery Brewing Company, as Senator Bob Casey, Jr. stepped out of a tour bus to greet the huddled masses squeezing in both for warmth, and in excitement to get closer to the senator.

The two-term U.S. Senator, along with Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, had arrived in Erie on Friday, Oct. 26, to officially kick off the PA Votes Blue bus tour across the commonwealth. In addition to the tour's headlining duo, the opening acts included a cadre of local Democratic politicians — City of Erie Mayor Joe Schember and Erie County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper, along with state congressional representatives Ryan Bizzarro and Pat Harkins, assembled by Erie County Democratic Party Chairman Jim Wertz. Also on the ballot and there in person were Bob E. Merski and Ron DiNicola.

Merski is looking to extend the blue lineage of the state's second congressional district and follow in the footsteps of the late Flo Fabrizio by defeating Republican challenger Tim Kuzma. DiNicola, on the other hand, is vying to unseat five-term Republican Congressional Representative Mike Kelly for PA-16 with U.S. congressio-

nal districts having recently been redrawn by the State Supreme Court reuniting all of Erie County from its previous division into PA-3 and PA-5.

Both DiNicola and Merski have picked up key local endorsements — including that of the Erie Times-News — along the way, as have Casey and Wolf. But the race of Casey against four-term Republican U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta hasn't grabbed the headlines the same way other local elections and U.S. Senate races have.

Key polls, including Franklin and Marshall College, have consistently had Casey up on Barletta by an average of 14 points. Not much has shifted since early primary polls.

But still, the Senator, "one of the last of the old school New Deal Democrats in Congress," as *Real Clear Politics* observed, was in Erie to address voters, speak with union representatives, and get started on the lead-up message to Tuesday, Nov. 6, the mid-term elections.

Having challengers isn't new to Casey. Others have tried, yet after first defeating incumbent Rick Santorum in 2006, he won his 2012 re-election bid.

"Barletta, who represents a blue collar district in the northeastern portion of the state, probably starts out as the favorite," *Real Clear Politics* tempers that statement by suggesting that "in a better environment," (e.g., not Pennsylvania, where Casey's brand of New Deal Democrat suits the

state he serves politically favorably and not in a mid-term following a presidential election, as the opposition party can tend to hold or gain ground due in part of partisan backlash), Barletta "would probably pose a serious threat to him."

That is, not here, not now.

But one needn't look further back than 2016 to be reminded that pollsters, while right more often than wrong, do get it wrong.

Nevertheless, during his two terms as senator, Casey has had successes for his state and his country. Too, he's worked across the aisle on legislation and has plans on the road ahead.

After delivering his remarks to the crowd in the Lavery parking lot, Casey headed inside of the pub to greet and shake the hands of those who stuck around after the governor's concluding remarks. On his way out, I had the chance to ask the senator a couple of questions before he boarded the bus on the way to his next campaign stop.

Here is Senator Bob Casey, Jr. in his own words:

Ben Speggen: Fast forward to Wednesday, Nov. 7. You've won. That's the outcome you want, so what's the first thing you're telling Pennsylvanians? What's the first thing you're telling the country?

Senator Bob Casey, Jr.: Well, if it all works out for me and I win, the first thing I do is say thank you. It's a privilege to serve this state, it's a privilege to serve in the Senate, and to be reelected to the Senate is a great honor, so the first thing I'll say is "thank you."

And then, just go back to work [laughs], and try to figure out a way to bring the sides together. I think a big issue we can bring both parties together on is infrastructure. You've got plenty of bridges in Erie County that need to be repaired. You've got folks in Northwestern Pennsylvania — I was down in Warren the other day, and 40 percent of the people that live in Warren County have no high-speed Internet. How the hell can you learn in a school or build a small business, or grow an economy if 40 percent of the people living in your county don't have high-speed Internet? That should be part of a broad infrastructure agenda. So I think both parties can come together on that.

The president should use that as an opportunity, not just to build and to grow jobs — and to rebuild, really — he should use that as an issue to unify the country. He has a chance to do that. No matter what happens on election day, he has a chance to unify the country on infrastructure. Let's see if he does it.

BS: In your own words, the greatest three accomplishments you've had during your last term, and then three things you want to work on your next term if elected?

BC: Well probably in this term, it was the ABLE Act (Achieving A Better Life Experience Act), which was the most important new law for people with disabilities in a quarter-century. It allows for a family to save for a disability like you save for college, kind of like a 529 plan for disabilities. That will be transformative for people's lives over the next generation.

Also the Campus SaVE Act (the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act, not to be confused with the Safe Campus act), which made it possible to keep young women safer on college campuses. It requires

schools to do a lot more and have guidelines and prevention efforts to reduce the likelihood that sexual assault will occur. A lot of schools need to do a lot more, but now they're required to do a lot more because I passed a law.

I tried to do as much as I could on infrastructure. We've been successful with bringing lots of dollars to the waterways system in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Working with a Republican (Roy Blunt of Missouri) to repair so-called off-system bridges in a lot of small communities. When very few people were getting things done in infrastructure, I got that bill passed a couple of years ago. So I want to continue to work on that.

I think one of the biggest issues that's been a priority of mine, but it's been elusive is: when are we going to make a national commitment to early learning? So that kids can learn more now, and literally earn more — have bigger paychecks down the road. That's a big, big goal, but I think it's an important goal for me, and I think for people around the country who want to have a stronger, more skilled workforce that can out-compete anybody in the world.

I think there's still more work to do on healthcare: trying to bring the cost down on healthcare and trying to make sure that we cover more people. As great as an advance of 20 million people getting coverage was, we still have maybe 28 million who are not covered. So we still have a long way to go on healthcare, but at least we've advanced. We haven't retreated. Republicans — I hope — would abandon their idea to rip up protections.

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

A Walk in the Park

McClelland Park reinvention a boon for eastside recreationists



left] The revitalized McClelland Park offers 58 acres of recreational space on Erie's east side, perfect for hiking, birdwatching, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, or tossing a football around. **[bottom right]** Bailey, a border collie, takes a break from a rigorous Frisbee session with owner Ann Hatheway at the 2.5-acre Larry R. Fabrizi Dog Park, which was formerly a gravel pit.

there, and Custom Engineering — a neighbor located on McClelland Avenue — and Erie County both provided help. A sign near the parking area announces an additional 11 partners that joined in the effort.

Tom Fuhman, executive director for the Lake Erie Regional Conservancy, an organization that has been a part of the park development for more than a decade explains, "Sister Rita of the Sisters of Mercy has been the driving force behind this work and deserves much of the credit. She and the sisters brought neighbors together to form the association and she has worked tirelessly towards improving the park."

Tom Hiegel from Lake Erie Group of the Sierra Club, says the improvements "already have encouraged people to come to the park's trail system. It gets dozens of users daily during the week and many more on weekends."

This green space now has much to offer besides socializing at the dog park. According to Hiegel, visitors can explore the wetlands, bird watch, hike, ski or snowshoe, as well as picnic, search for geocaches, or just rest on the new

benches situated with good views. Hiegel added that the project "was way more successful than we ever thought it would be. The vandalism has been nearly zero since both the dog area and trail system were built."

A newly established Monarch Waystation, with plantings to specifically attract those butterflies adds to the diverse offerings for both humans and wildlife.

And while parks are typically thought of as places for people to find shade and sanctuary, wildlife benefits as well from the cover, food, and appropriate habitat they may not find elsewhere in an urban environment.

"The east side has always been underserved as far as parks and recreation go. The west side has Frontier, which is only 33 acres. McClelland is much bigger," says Fuhman. "Now it has this beautiful space in which to play, learn and recreate."

Mark and Robin Curtis, who live nearby, agree. They are pleased to see their former family's property come to life after so many years of neglect. "When we went to our grandparents' house, we always played here. As I got older, I always walked and picked up trash."

With the park's transformation in progress, they come here often with their dog and to walk the trails. And they no longer have to pick up trash.

Mary Birdsong can be reached at mbirdsong@eriereader.com

By: Mary Birdsong

"This is where my father was born," says Mark Curtis. He, his wife Robin, and I are standing on one of the newer trails at McClelland Park, looking over a large depression in the ground. In it are the some of the concrete blocks that once served as the foundation of what Curtis calls "the cottage."

Curtis's ancestors owned this parcel of land since the Civil War. And even though his grandparents owned the larger white house on the property (still standing on McClelland Avenue), they moved into the cottage in the woods to rent out the bigger house for income during the Depression. We are in the northwest corner of the 58-acre park and unless one looks carefully or knows a little history, it would be difficult to tell that a home once stood there.

There are a lot of places in McClelland Park just like that cottage site, looking very different than in times past. Although owned by the city of Erie since the 1970s — when Curtis's grandmother, Helen Beck Cooper Curtis, sold it to the municipality — it was not always this picturesque or inviting. Until the early 2000s, the property stood unused and unloved. One part had been a commercial gravel pit and the property was mostly a dumping ground for leftover concrete and asphalt from municipal street work.

Now, the gravel pit area is a large

grassy hollow just west of the two-and-a-half acre Larry R. Fabrizi Dog Park and ready for a pick-up football game or some Frisbee tossing. And McDannell's Run, which flows on the eastern side of the park, sees less trash and erosion.

One of the earliest improvements at the property was the creation of the dog park in 2015, which came about as a result of a master plan created in 2013 at the request of a partnership formed between representatives of the city, the Burton-Diehl Neighborhood Association (then called Friends of McClelland Park), the Lake Erie Region Conservancy, Mercyhurst University, and neighborhood schools.

Since then, numerous groups have collaborated to further execute the master plan. Most recently, in 2016, the Lake Erie Group of the Sierra Club garnered a \$10,000 "Trails Connecting People with Nature" grant from the Sierra Club Foundation. This was utilized for establishing or improving trails, widening them, and securing the ground with crushed gravel to make them ADA accessible.

Again, the Burton-Diehl Neighborhood Association, the city and a plentitude of other organizations rolled up their collective sleeves. Erie City provided work crews and other in-kind services. Presque Isle Audubon funded the creation of nature education signage that gives visitors a glimpse into the flora and fauna they may find



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CONTINUES



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2018 AT 7:30 P.M.

Understanding President Trump:
An Insider's View of the 45th President
Sebastian Gorka

Location: Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2018 AT 1 P.M.

The Assault on Intelligence: American National Security in an Age of Lies
Gen. Michael Hayden, Ret.

Location: Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St.

Event in partnership with **PennState Behrend**

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2018 AT 7:30 P.M.

What Truth Sounds Like: Robert F. Kennedy, James Baldwin, and Our
Unfinished Conversation About Race in America
Michael Eric Dyson

Location: Collegiate Academy 2825 State St.

Erie Insurance



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2018 AT 7:30 P.M.

Presidential Leadership in Turbulent Times
Doris Kearns Goodwin

Location: Gannon University's Hammermill Center, Peach Street and South Park Row

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2018 AT 7:30 P.M.

A Debate Featuring Howard Dean and Elise Jordan
Howard Dean and Elise Jordan

Moderated by **Steve Scully**

Location: Junker Center at Penn State Behrend, 5103 Station Road

PennState Behrend



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2018 AT 7:30 P.M.

Front Row Seat to History: From President Ford
to President Trump
Bill Plante and Ann Compton will join **Steve Scully** for
a White House Media Panel.

Location: Gannon University's Yehl Ballroom, 124 W. Seventh St.

Yehl Ballroom



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2018 AT 11:30 A.M.

A Conversation with **Chris Matthews**

Location: Gannon University's Hammermill Center,
Peach Street and South Park Row

THE NEW NOW

GANNON



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2018 AT 7:30 p.m.

Our Towns: Erie and America
James Fallows and Deborah Fallows are the winners of the
2018 Hagen Dignitas Award.

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

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Talking Hardball with Chris Matthews

A conversation with the iconic television host



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Jim Wertz

Chris Matthews arrived on the TV scene after years of working as a close aide to former Speaker of the House, Tip O'Neill, during the years of the Reagan presidency, and 15 years as a Washington-based print journalist with the San Francisco Examiner and a columnist with the San Francisco Chronicle. He's a Pennsylvania boy, a veteran of the Peace Corps, and an unabashed liberal Catholic, but don't pigeonhole him as liberal. He routinely offers lengthy critiques on the Democratic Party and the state of the Left in America. But, hey. That's Hardball.

We spoke by phone just days before the midterm elections, so I couldn't pass up the chance to talk Pennsylvania politics and the state of the union. His first book, *Hardball*, changed the way mainstream America talked politics around the dinner table and it became the impetus for his MSNBC show of the same name, which has been on the air since 1997. In the book, Matthews wrote about politicians who have "the light," a sense of presence that dominates a room and transcends the airwaves. Reagan had it. Clinton had it. Obama had it. I couldn't help but ask him who in the current political consciousness might have "the light" in 2020.

On Thursday, November 15th, Matthews will take the stage at the Gannon University Hammermill Center as part of the Jefferson Educational Society's Global Summit X. He'll talk national politics and the legacy of political dynasties like the Kennedys, whom he's

written about in several biographical and comparative histories. His most recent book, *Bobby Kennedy: A Raging Spirit*, was released in 2017 to critical acclaim.

Let's play Hardball.

Chris Matthews: I just wrote down my notes, thinking about the election next Tuesday night. I like to do it the Thursday before. I used to do these predictions in the Washington Post, a crystal ball where you had to have your predictions in by Thursday. I used to be really, really good at it! [laughs]

Jim Wertz: I try to be good at it as well [laughs]. I'll tell you what, Chris. Nobody's talking about PA 16, and this is the one that, this could be the big one.

CM: Well I've been looking at polls that show DiNicola ahead.

JW: Two weeks ago, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee had a poll that had him 2 points behind and now ABC in Harrisburg has a poll that has him four points ahead. So he's moving in the right direction in a really heavily Republican district.

CM: Well my first note about this election is to think of the song from *A Chorus Line*. The song called, "One." Because I think when people vote, they're going to vote on one issue: What they feel about Trump. And I think that you only get one vote, and you're going to vote that way and you're going to try and use your vote to make a statement one way or another on Trump, and out West, and South, I think it's gonna be a Trump vote. But once you get to the Northeast, especially — but also

Renowned author, television host, and political commentator Chris Matthews will appear in Erie on Thursday, Nov. 15 at Gannon's Hammermill Center as part of The Jefferson Educational Society's Global Summit X.

in the 'burbs, all across the country — and then in the Midwest, I don't think it's going to be the leadership. It's not going to be Trump on the ballot. Who only won by less than a point in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Michigan ... all three states, in each case, less than one.

JW: He still has the 47 percent approval rating out here in Western Pennsylvania.

CM: Well 47's alright. We'll see in the different cities where it's going to go. I think there's two waves, but I think the bigger wave's gonna be blue for the East. I think the West, I think it's tough to North Dakota, and Missouri, Tennessee, and Indiana...but then again, Hillary's not on the ballot. You could vote for Trump and against Hillary. This time, it's only the pull to Trump which isn't as strong.

JW: I could do this with you all day, but I have a couple of questions that I want to get to for our audience. We're right on point here. We're in the middle of a pretty amazing, American political moment. Or a unique one, anyway. What do you make of the last couple of weeks here in the United States with what seems like increased violence, we've got this caravan moving towards the southern border and we still have five days until the election, therefore we're talking about this being ... a vote for or against Trump, then there's still room for a lot of things to change.

CM: I think Trump figured out, when he ran for president, that people have a lot of resentment toward the political big shots, the elite, in both parties. The first thing he did was to defeat all the Republican establishment types, especially Jeb Bush. He just blew them away, because no one wanted to say "yeah" to that. Nobody wanted to say "yes" to the way two major parties were running the country. And again, with Hillary, she was sort of the face of the establishment, too. And I think he was able to just get people in the industrial states to give a modest endorsement to him. It was a very close call in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. Very

close, less than a point in each state, but he won! And to paraphrase Thomas Jefferson, democracy is the readiness to accept the majority, even if it's just one vote.

JW: Did that give him a mandate to be able to carry on the rhetoric and keep the tone at an eleven?

CM: No, I think he has to keep hyping up the temperature to keep the supporters that he has. In other words, he has to keep it hotter and hotter to keep them. He got them, but he can't keep them by just being the guy who got them. He has to be hotter all the time. To the point where this time he's talking about cop-killing immigrants. It's a constant process of getting used to the new America, ethnically. And I think that someone could always exploit that discomfort. And he did. And the Democrats, sadly — and I think this is very disappointing — they don't have a really clear immigration policy. They never talk enforcement. They did some deportation of course, a lot of it with Obama, but they never said, "here's our policy and we're happy with it. We believe the country should regulate it's immigration." They leave themselves open, and I think that's really given Trump a complete opportunity to exploit this thing.

JW: In terms of the Democratic messaging, what do Democrats need to say to open this party back up and be all inclusive?

CM: I mean they have to get the working class, white vote back again. I've been saying this all year — because of my book on Bobby Kennedy — that if you keep splitting the white working class in half on social issues, you're not going to win. You're not going to be a governing party in this country. It's clear that the Democrats are no longer the governing party. They're not. And they're not even close to the opposition party yet. They may be that by next week if they win the House, but they've gotta get control of something in the government and they should have the House next week. But, they can't just be a protest party. And that's what they're doing.

JW: Who has that "Bobby Kennedy message?" Who has that spirit?

CM: You have to sort of pull it out of them. The Democrats passed a very

good comprehensive immigration bill in the Senate in 2013. It was only 5 years ago. It had provisions for the long-term road to citizenship but it also had provisions of toughening up the “verify,” the requirement that employers have to know who they’re hiring. And they got 12 Republican supporters. It just went over to the House, and it never got a vote over there because Boehner wouldn’t bring it up because he was afraid it would pass. They got very close to getting something done, which would have calmed things down and given people confidence that their government does have a border and it is enforcing it. But right now they don’t have that confidence and Trump’s exploited it. You know, he just has.

JW: Who, in your opinion, has “the light” going into 2020?

CM: I’m watching Joe Biden. I know everybody says the age thing, but I don’t know. There were other people in history who’ve had a hard time and all of a sudden they zoom right up there. Reagan ran for president three times and it clicked, and he was almost 70 when he went into office. People are getting older, and voters are older, the concerns of voters are for older issues like Medicare — Social Security especially. I wish the Democrats were smarter in jumping this year on what Mitch McConnell said, going after those programs. In the old days, when I was working for Tip O’Neill, I jumped on those things. We hit those hard before an election. We never let the Republicans get up once they made that mistake, going up against Social Security. Today these guys are so sophisticated, why didn’t they jump on

it? I don’t get it. McConnell came out and said “let’s cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid,” and the Democrats didn’t even react.

By the way, exactly what I said, is why Trump wins in Pennsylvania. Because he doesn’t touch Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid, and he’s for jobs. In so many ways, his policies parallel those of Bobby Casey, and of [Ohio Senator] Sherrod Brown. And on trade too. It’s so interesting because trade is jobs. I’m telling you, he is just as smart as those regular Democrats. It’s the other people, the elite, that don’t get it. And that’s the way it should be, because the elite shouldn’t know what’s going on [laughs]. Why should they know what’s going on? They’ve got no connection, no experience.

JW: The realities are different from the perceptions. The country is increasingly divided. What do we look like as a nation in say 2028 after we get through another couple of tough presidential cycles?

CM: Well, the country is ... I don’t know. Bob Casey Sr. once said that Pennsylvania was a John Wayne state not a Jane Fonda state [laughs]. And that’s true, but that lets it lie too much in the past. That’s too easy to do something like that, to say something like that. You’ve got to be open to the future for minorities and kids, and you’ve got to be open to the fact that there are challenges out there that weren’t around before these kids. The cost of college now — these are Promethean amounts of money that people have to look at. It’s debt. So they don’t like the word “capitalism.” I understand, because capitalism means “I owe mon-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Assessing both sides of the political aisle through a discerning lens, Chris Matthews is not afraid to play hardball when discussing the state of our government.

ey.” So Bernie [Sanders] comes along and says “we’re gonna get everything free” and “Medicare for life” and all that stuff, and I think the appeal is yeah, I get it, because I don’t get any other way of figuring it out. The only thing about minorities that I’ve come to understand — I learned this in North Philadelphia one morning — with Barack Obama. He says, “we’ve got to unite this country. We’ve got to bring people together,” and they went crazy. Because, I’ve got to tell you this, for all the talk about welfare and all this stuff, the one thing that minorities want are the things I mentioned before — Social Security and a job for their kid — and real American acceptance. 100 percent.

JW: I hear that all the time. The city of Erie is 20 percent New American and 17 percent African American. There’s no greater mantra in this community than they just want opportunity, and to participate.

CM: 100 percent American. They want to be equal and accepted, as Americans. After all these centuries of hell, it still

comes down to that — just let us in.

JW: When I tell the story of Erie, I tell everyone that it’s no different today than it was back in 1890 when their Russian grandparents, and their German grandparents, and Irish came here to do the same thing.

CM: It’s inspiring. And it’s consoling to know that the bitterness ... that it’s still deal-able. There’s no bitterness that can’t be dealt with. There are some radicals out there, but I’m not going to worry about them.

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

For a full transcript of this interview, head to eriereader.com

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Our Towns, Revisited

A chat with James and Deborah Fallows



Husband-and-wife duo Deborah and James Fallows toured primarily smaller and mid-sized cities across the country in a Cirrus SR22 single-engine plane in the attempt to unearth a fuller, more nuanced narrative about America. That 100,000-mile journey formed the basis of their best-selling book, *Our Towns*.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By: Ben Speggen

More than five decades after John Steinbeck set out to answer the question “What are Americans like today?” in *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*, James Fallows, in the beginning of 2018’s *Our Towns*, writes: “We began this project with one purpose in mind: we wanted to take a fresh look at the country, its disappointments and its possibilities.”

James adds: “By the end of our journey, we felt sure of something we had suspected at the beginning: an important part of the face of modern America has slipped from people’s view, in a way that makes a big and destructive difference in the country’s public and economic life.”

This project by co-authors and husband-and-wife duo James and Deborah Fallows, a 100,000-mile trek across the country in their Cirrus SR22 single-engine plane over the span of four years, birthed numerous contributions to “City Makers: American Futures Project” for The Atlantic, where they’re both national correspondents, and begot the now best-selling book, *Our*

Towns. James’ 12th book and Deborah’s third, *Our Towns* sees the Fallows visit and observe more than 20 small to mid-size cities and a few larger ones to find the song of America at the local level in light of the discordant national chorus of divisiveness and disruption.

Because of the differences between the national and local narratives being born out in national media, social media, and sometimes even on street corners, it’s easy to want to turn a read of *Our Towns* into a “this-versus-that, us-against-them” experience. While the 2016 Presidential Election amplified America’s differing national narratives, it neither encapsulated or resolved them. They were there before and remain with us after, and the differences — along with the challenges and opportunities — remain both locally and nationally.

However, what the Fallows find is that beyond squabbling across fractured political lines, at the local level people are working together and getting creative in their quests to make their places better for the people who populate them. These aren’t the tales of foreign

tribes in far-off lands we’ll never know of personally; rather, these are the stories of us, our narratives, that sing more in euphony than cacophony.

The Fallows will tell this story — and offer observations they’ve gathered since they’ve been on the book tour, re-circling the country — at the concluding event of the Jefferson Educational Society’s Global Summit X. No strangers to Erie since Deborah first presented on the modernization of libraries at the Jefferson in July 2016, the Fallows returned shortly after to begin observing the region, with Erie marking the final city amongst their travels and notes in *Our Towns*.

Before their Friday, Nov. 16 appearance to a sold-out crowd at Gannon University’s Yehl Ballroom, I had the chance to catch up with the Fallows. We discussed how the road has treated them since the book came out earlier this year, what a tweet from Tom Hanks praising the book meant, and what lies ahead for the American couple ever on the move, and much more.

Ben Speggen: So, how is New York treating you?

James Fallows: It’s actually

treating us well. We’re here for a couple of reasons, one of which was to close the deal with HBO to do an actual documentary, to which they have given the “green light” to, as we say, down from development to production. That’s the main reason we came here, which is fine, but our heart is always in Erie [laughs].

BS: Well that is great to hear, and congratulations on the HBO news, that’s fantastic. Do you have a timeline for HBO, when they’re going to begin filming?

JF: I think the idea is to film this true to film and produce and everything through next year and have it come out in the early summer of 2020.

BS: So, in July, the “great American, or greatest American,” as you put it on Twitter, Jim, Tom Hanks tweeted a picture of a copy of *Our Towns* calling the book “the most optimistic stories about America” and suggested he may visit Sioux Falls and Rapid City amongst others. Did you experience a Hanks-bump in book sales in July? Have you had the chance to talk to him about the book?

JF: There were two consequences of that. One was a Hanks-bump in book sales for which we are grateful. The other was this newspaper war between Sioux Falls and Rapid City in South Dakota. So there was a full-on war about where Tom Hanks should really go [laughs]. So even TV stations in the Dakotas were feuding over who should have bragging rights to Tom Hanks. We have actually corresponded with

him — we have not met him before, except for the silver screen. So it had those effects, and it provides local journalism attention in the Dakotas.

BS: Deb, in your opening segment, you wrestle somewhat with how you’re supposed to feel having just concluded your 100,000-mile trek. You reference a young Mark Twain’s similar grappling following a trip, quoting: “so the idea of coming to a stand-still in a village was not agreeable, but on the contrary depressing.” You expound that your ending “didn’t feel as sad as Twain’s,” as he was young and didn’t yet then, as you do now, understand that you can craft many more adventures, and that “this ending was, again, another beginning.” What has that beginning been like since finishing and publishing the book? What is the new beginning, what does it feel like being on the road in a different sense.

DF: When I wrote those particular few lines, I hoped it was true. I hoped that we would have a chance for a new beginning, and since we have been around this block a few times, we have had many new beginnings. After being on the road with this book for the last six months or so, we feel like there has been so much resonance with this message of how important life is and communities, and how much people are doing locally, but it’s actually true. It’s a really compelling idea for us, and we want to continue amplifying this message as much as we can. Having other people tell similar kinds of stories, and move on to a place where we can have the most impact with this positive message of the country, and help other people feel like they have agency and power and every opportunity to actually make their towns better by connecting with each other.

BS: Early in the book, Jim, you note: “We began this project with one purpose in mind: we wanted to take a fresh look at the country, its disappointments and its possibilities.” And, you continually draw parallels between today and the times in which Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner wrote *The Gilded Age*. We’re not all that far removed from when *Our Towns* was published, but as you round the country yet again — this time to talk about the book rather than record for it — are you getting a sense that we as a country are farther along in finding ways to match our countries resources to its challenges? In other words, are things any better now than they were when you first set out on the trail? How have your perspectives changed?

JF: Well, one is how the two of us — our perspectives have changed — and I think, as Deb

said, when we set on this trail five years ago, we were sort of surprised to see these little wisps of people in various places doing what looked like innovative or renewal-oriented efforts and we feel that now there is a genuine phenome-

places have ambitious renewal projects underway. In the larger national landscape, I think there are starker contrasts than a year or two ago, between the real bitterness and — in my view — the mistaken course of national politics. Of

of local efforts in lots of places we’ve seen.

My basic view on divisions within society is the potential for them is always there in every society, and the task of leadership is to try to bring people to a better view of

fort to keep the tone and rhetoric of national politics out of the conversations you have with the folks you talked to during your time working on *Our Towns*. As you’re headed back to these places and are speaking on the book tour, is it hard to avoid the topic of national politics, especially in light of the upcoming Nov. 6 midterm elections? Do people want to talk politics more now than then?

JF: There are a couple of ways in which the landscape has shifted. One is — we’ve gone back to check with a lot of people on how their circumstances are different now from what they were two years ago or before the elections. For example, the polling place dispute in Dodge City, Kan. We heard about Dodge City as a place that had a [largely] white, older leadership that was being accommodating to its new Latino majority now.

“I feel like we’re in a period of bringing out the worse side of human potential, and we are impressed by how many local people are pushing the other way.”

non across the country where our main challenge is trying to keep up with all the people, all the places.

As a side note, I was in Pensacola, Fla., Eau Claire, Wis., and Bentonville, Ark. and in different ways, all of those

whipping up what I consider really ill-founded and dangerous sentiment against the inclusive version of America that I’ve always believed in. Fanning divisions, rather than trying to reduce them. A contrast between that and the intensity

things, rather than to a worse view of things. I feel like we’re in a period of bringing out the worse side of human potential, and we are impressed by how many local people are pushing the other way.

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And so we were struck by two weeks ago in the national press that Dodge City had moved its one polling place out of town, presumptively to make it harder for the Latino community to have a place to vote. So we called people there and asked: "What's this about?" And they said this is a county and State of Kansas move involving Kris Kobach, the Secretary of State, and the city's response was what we hoped it would be. The city announced that they would provide door-to-door transportation for any voter who wanted it to the polling place and would do that for early voting too. They put out a statement, from the older, white, business-person mayor, saying "we are proud of what Dodge City is becoming, and we want to recognize that a fundamental right of all of our citizens is a right to vote, etc." So we've seen communities reacting to changes in refugee policy and immigration policy, especially. Some of the other things we wrote about, the public arts, and libraries and things seem not to have changed by the changing policies of national politics. In a few places, and I don't know if this applies in Erie, these "opportunity zones" seem to actually be a plus for some downtown redevelopments. We don't find people saying "well here's what I like or don't like about Donald Trump" because there's essentially nothing new to say on that front, but we see lots and lots of people in "get out the vote" and "make sure we are engaged" operations.

BS: As far as "opportunity zones," on Erie's front, we're actually being championed by some as being ahead of the curve in terms of our planning for that — the designating of many sites throughout the downtown region — and our local leadership more or less has worked in a collaborative spirit to continue to push that conversation. It's a really interesting remark on local and state politics, and your friend, David Ignatius, who was just here Monday, Oct. 29, told Erie Times-News' Ron Leonardi

in an interview that "local and state government is still in pretty good shape, but the national political system is dead in the water." Do you agree with him?

JE: It seems that the extent to which states are being infected by this national mood, my impression is that it varies a lot. There are some states that are in the news for the polarization of their state legislatures and for the voting efforts in particular, and I think Kansas would be probably at the top of that list. It does seem that one structural change that should come out of this election cycle is that secretaries of state should have to recuse themselves from elections in which they are running, with [Brian P.] Kemp of Georgia, and Kobach in Kansas. In a number of other places, what we've heard is that state and local authorities are still able to work together in relatively practical-minded ways. So I think the variety of state experiences is something we have seen, but certainly, there is a trend worth watching of states becoming mini-arenas of the national gladiator fight. That's happening some places and not others and it's part of the variety of circumstances, so we're hoping to learn, once we're back in Erie, about the current state of Pennsylvania state politics, and we guess that redistricting is a very important thing there. So, on our good friend David's metaphor, there are lots of ways you can describe the state of national politics. I find that my images are a little more actively alarming than David's. It's not so much that they're stalled, I think of it more as World War I trench warfare, where it's extremely costly on both sides, and the progress on both sides is measured in inches, and by definition, any inch I gain is an inch you lose. This is not the only time it's happened in US history as you all know, but it's a significant time. So my hope is that the new crop of leaders and the new crop of ideas and experiments that we've been arguing has been happening around the

county, that this will, through force of time and the conveyor belt of history, be the ascendant force in American national politics. We don't know that, but that's what we hope will be the case.

BS: Have you found as you re-circle the country and visit these new people, are you running into people who say "you got it wrong, and here's the right way, and our interpretation on the town?" Or do you find people just trying to fold into the narrative the things that they're getting right?

DE: I think we were really relieved and gratified that we got extremely minimal pushback from people about the way we talked about their towns. There were really just one or two points that were really just points of fact where people were disputing the size of the town, basically around its borders — whether it was the metropolitan area or whether it was the actual city itself. We were very aware that we were visitors in these towns. We really stayed around long enough until we heard the same kind of messages multiple times, and heard the objections to the messages multiple times, that we felt like we were as close to the true story as we could possibly be, in a limited time. It wasn't a first impression, a glance. I think one of the things that helped us was our starting point was that we also grew up in small towns, so there was a lot of the sociology and the sense of belonging to a place that was really familiar to us, so it was terrain that was kind of instinctive to us about how towns operate.

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

Disclosure: The author is under the employ of the Jefferson Educational Society as its Director of Operations. He is also mentioned in the Acknowledgments of Our Towns.

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Hir at Dramashop: We're Here for It

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9

A Marine named Isaac returns home after dishonorable discharge for drug abuse to find things in his family are ... not quite as he left them.

There's his mom, Paige, long abused by her controlling husband, and taking her vengeance against him — and the patriarchy in general — by dressing him in his incapacitated, post-stroke state in nightgowns and horrifying make-up looks, while feeding him estrogen pills. She gleefully upends everything that her husband, Arnold, once oppressed her over.

There's Max, formerly Maxine, who is transitioning from female to male with the support of testosterone injections, and who prefers gender-fluid pronouns like "ze" — rather than he or she — and the titular "hir" (pronounced "here") instead of her or him. This Paige fully supports, as Max navigates the process, but with an incredibly on-point touch of "mom realism."

This highly contemporary black comedy was penned by MacArthur "Genius Grant" recipient Taylor Mac, a writer, singer-songwriter and drag performer of visionary gifts. It opened in San Fran-

cisco in 2014, before a production was staged in New York City in 2015. Is it surprising to see it being staged here in Erie by Dramashop in 2018? It shouldn't be.

"We live in a diverse community and a diverse country. We need to celebrate that now more than ever," said Zach Flock, the artistic director at Dramashop.

Hir uses comedy to effectively examine and explore current pressing social issues — toxic masculinity, gender fluidity, PTSD, trans people and more — in a way that makes it approachable, opens up the conversation, and lets us "explore these issues with a laugh, but without disrespecting them," Flock stated.

Under the direction of Megan Hamm, *Hir* is presented by the Dramashop in the form of a staged reading, and it features just the four aforementioned characters; each one imbued with the weighty task of highlighting a significant attitude or awakening happening every day, all across the country — even right here. — Cara Suppa

8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, Nov. 9, 10, 16, and 17 // 1001 State Street, Suite 210 // Free (or pay what you can) // dramashop.org

From Screen to Stage: The Joe Policastro Trio



SATURDAY, NOV. 10

The Joe Policastro Trio will bring its alternative jazz sound to Erie on Saturday, Nov. 10.

The Chicago-based band will stop at the Room 33 Speakeasy as part of a two-week tour promoting the band's most recent album, *Screen Sounds*.

Released in Aug. 2017, *Screen Sounds* features music from film and TV that's re-imagined by the band, culled from sources such as *Blade Runner*, *Twin*

Peaks, *Midnight Cowboy*, and *Yojimbo*.

The new album "applies a diversity of approaches to all kinds of source material, consistently retaining the essence of the original works while boldly imprinting the trio's personality," said Peter Margasak of The Chicago Reader.

Joining Policastro (the trio's bassist and bandleader) is Dave Miller on guitar and Mikel Avery on drums. The three have toured extensively through the United States and Canada and often pass through the Erie region.

"We're particularly excited to make it to Erie to play Room 33," said Policastro. "We're looking to deepen our connection to audiences in the region especially given how regularly we come through the area."

The band typically performs a mix of original music, jazz compositions and re-workings of non-jazz music — everything from rock and pop to soul and R&B. — Tracy Geibel

8 p.m. to 11 p.m. // 1033 State St. // No cover // room33.bar

Chestnut Grove Displays Shades of Zeppelin at King's Rook



SATURDAY, NOV. 10

Out of the vast, overgrown thicket of bands that have that certain, particularly popular rootsy/earthy/backcountry-tinged sound, we've seen Chestnut Grove stand as tall as a tree — and stand out — amid a lot of sonic shrubbery.

The Pennsylvania-grown quintet has continued seeing its efforts bear fruit since it formed in Perkiomenville, Pa. in 2011, growing a dedicated fan-base and a songbook filled with truly heartfelt, groove-worthy original work. And when

it comes to their abilities to groove with in the canon of classic rock greats, well, they ain't slouches there, either.

Awesome, then, that Chestnut Grove's next trip into the Gem City — a return to the King's Rook Club on Saturday, Nov. 10 — will be a showcase of one set of their original tunes, followed by a full set in tribute to the almighty Led Zeppelin.

Anyone who's seen the Grove on any of their other stops through the area over the past few years should be able to attest to their goodness, and the Zeppelin set added in — along with just being sure-fire awesome — is some fine zest that should entice a lot of the "kids" who haven't tried them before to see what's on their plate.

We all know good music is great food, so we'd encourage you to head on into the Rook to get some dished right into your head. — Ryan Smith

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. // 1921 Peach St. // \$7 for members, \$12 for non-current members (includes 2019 membership) // facebook.com/KingsRookClub

Curtains Rise for Dafmark's Fall Show



Dafmark performer Melissa J. Dixon will return for the dance theater's annual fall fundraiser, settling back into her groove after a career change in 2017.

cast of dancers, two freshly graduated talents from Dafmark Dance Academy, and local actresses Jessica Annunziata and Alaina Manchester, both from Gannon University's theater department.

Area hoop dance extraordinaire Jennifer Dennehy will also perform during the annual event, before leaving Erie for New Delhi, India early next year to share her gifts with students on the other side of the globe. As Dennehy prepares to leave the Dafmark Dance family, performer Melissa J. Dixon will return after a change in careers in 2017 led her from dance to communications and strategic public relations.

Along with the recital, Dafmark will host a reception with wine, entertainment, and hors d'oeuvres. — Hannah McDonald

SATURDAY, NOV. 10

The curtain will be raised at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 10, showcasing a preview of the contemporary ballet piece "Mirror, Mirror on the Wall," as part of Dafmark Dance Theater's annual fall fundraiser.

The performance will feature a new

7:30 p.m. // 1033 State St. // \$35 // For more details, call 814.454.3993 or email dafmark@gmail.com

Pop-Punk, Indie Benefit at PACA



SUNDAY, NOV. 11

A benefit show will be held at PACA to assist with the funeral costs of Springboro resident Skylar Snyder after his tragic passing on October 2.

The benefit show, presented by The Andromeda Agency, is headlined by Erie pop-punk band Real Fake Doors. With them will be opening out-of-town acts Bristletongue, Mess, and Plaza, from Chicago, Kansas City, and Buffalo, respectively.

"I gotta go Mom, love you, bye," were that last words Kim Snyder-Lesher heard from her son, just hours before he took his own life. According to the CDC, suicide rates in Pennsylvania have risen 34 percent from 1999-2016, but Skylar was more than just a statistic.

Skylar was an upstanding member of the community, and a great friend to

those who knew him, and always did whatever he could to make them smile.

"He had been a firefighter for five years," Snyder-Lesher said about her son. "He loved his friends and family with a passion. He would do anything for anyone, but he just couldn't shake depression."

"He was an amazing person he did everything he could to make people laugh ... even if you didn't want to," said Sara Murkens, a friend of Skylar's. "He would do anything for a friend in need. He loved being around his friends and family and music. In this small community to most he wasn't just a friend, he was family and we went through everything together."

Another friend, Nicole Layton recalled her memories of their friendship: "I was going through a rough patch in life and he always found a way to make me smile and make me feel alive. People need to be aware that no matter what you look like on the outside, they truly don't know what's going on in someone's mind"

If you believe that you or a loved one may be at risk, do not hesitate to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273 -TALK (8255) — Tommy Shannon

7:30 p.m. // 1505 State St. // \$8 pre-sale, \$9 doors // 18+ BYOB with ID // facebook.com/theandromedaagency

An Impractically Perfect Evening



TUESDAY, NOV. 13

A night of levity is almost definitely what we all could use right now, given the current state of our, well, everything. And, that's just what audiences will get at the Erie Insurance Arena on Tuesday, Nov. 13, when The Tenderloins bring "The Cranjis McBasketball World Comedy Tour" show to town.

The Tenderloins consist of Joe Gatto, James Murray, Brian Quinn, and Sal Vulcano, and are more commonly known for their TruTV show, *Impractical Jokers*. The Staten Island quartet have been on the road touring between filming for the past four years. After a lifetime of friendship — the troupe met when they were in high school — and a career of sketch and improv comedy together, attendees are virtually assured a hysterical evening.

Fans of the TruTV show should note that this will not be an evening of their

pranks and challenges — an arena full of fans wouldn't exactly be the best target audience for the hidden camera games they carry out as the Jokers. But, what they will bring promises to be hilarious, according to reviews from their previous tours. The night should include previously unseen footage from the show, as well as a mix of stand-up comedy and improvisation.

Twenty-five years of friendship and creating comedy together means that the Tenderloins have the sort of chemistry that other performers strive for. The way they play off each other on their TV show is often better than the pranks themselves, and their stage show should lean into that in a way that makes the evening full of laughter for everyone who attends. — Meredith Wilcox

7:30 p.m. // Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. // \$49.50 // recommended for ages 16 + // thetenderloins.com

MUSIC

Dave VanAmburg and Friends
Nov. 7, 9, 14, 16, 21 — 5 to 8 p.m.
Bel-Aire Clarion, 2800 W. 8th St. belaireclarion.com.

Brown-Urioste-Cannelakis Trio
Nov. 8 — 12:30 p.m.
All individual winners of the BBC New Generation Artist Scheme, the Avery Fisher Career Grant, and more, pianist, violinist and cellist will perform as a trio in this installment of PSB's Music at Noon series.
Reed Union Building, 4701 College Dr. behrend.psu.edu.

MVP
Nov. 8, 15 — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Dickey's BBQ Pit, 3716 Liberty St. facebook.com.

Dan Baney Country Unplugged
Nov. 9 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Money Shot 2.0
Nov. 9 — 6 to 10 p.m.

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

Paoello & Gone
Nov. 9 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Lavery Brewing Co., 128 W. 12th St. Unit 101 facebook.com.

Mark Morris
Nov. 9 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Sam Hyman
Nov. 10 — 5 to 9 p.m.
Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

The Breeze Band
Nov. 10 — 6 to 10 p.m.
BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. facebook.com.

Joe Policastro Trio
Nov. 10 — 8 to 11 p.m.
Room 33, 1033 State St. room33.bar.

Chestnut Grove: Led Zeppelin Tribute
Nov. 10 — 9 p.m.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Riverside Odds, Maniacal Device, Duane Albert

Nov. 10 — 10 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

Acoustic Ear Candy
Nov. 11 — 1 to 4 p.m.
Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co., 11727 E. Main Rd. North East, PA 16428 arundelcellars.com.

Tamburitans
Nov. 11 — 3 to 5 p.m.
The Academy Theatre, 275 Chestnut St., Meadville, PA 16335 thetamburitans.org.

TobyMac and Diverse City
Nov. 11 — 7 p.m.
Christian hip-hop artist, producer, and songwriter takes the stage with special guest Ryan Stevenston.
Warner Theatre, 811 State St. tobymac.com.

Real Fake Doors, Bristletongue, Mess, Plaza
Nov. 11 — 7:30 to 11 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St. facebook.com.

Open Mic Night
Nov. 13 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Taikoza

Nov. 14 — noon
Reed Union Building, 4701 College Dr. behrend.psu.edu.

Optimistic Apocalypse
Nov. 14 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Local musicians Mckenzie Sprague and Brent Knight team up as Optimistic Apocalypse at the venue's second singer/songwriter showcase.
698 Roadhouse, 7495 Rte. 6, Edinboro, PA 16412 facebook.com.

Conneaut Creek String Band
Nov. 14 — 7:15 p.m.
Sturgeon House, 4302 Avonia Rd., Fairview, PA 16415 fairviewhistory.org.

Allen Zurcher
Nov. 14 — 8 p.m.
A current instructor of jazz history at Mercyhurst University, Zurcher has spent more than 35 years as a professional musician.
Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Open Mic w Brit Soule
Nov. 14 — 10 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

Fire-Toolz, stclvr, The Indeterminates, Sean Holt
Nov. 15 — 7 to 11 p.m.
Chicago, Jamestown (N.Y.), Erie, and Cleveland electronic acts come together for an experimental set.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

J. Eric Johnson
Nov. 15 — 7:15 p.m.
Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church, 5414 E. Lake Rd. 814-899-9653

Beethoven's Septet
Nov. 15 — 7:30 p.m.
Including a jazz bass piece, works by Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, Erie Philharmonic's seven-piece chamber ensemble will host a free show.
Walker Recital Hall at Mercyhurst University, 501 E. 38th St. eriephil.org.

SASS Acoustics
Nov. 16 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

First to Eleven
Nov. 16 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co.,

11727 E. Main Rd. North East, PA 16428 arundelcellars.com.

Geek Army
Nov. 16 — 6 to 10 p.m.
BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. facebook.com.

Doug Phillips Acoustic
Nov. 16 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. presqueisledowns.com.

Cecil Rucker Jr.
Nov. 16 — 8 p.m.
Artlore Studio, 3406 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

We Hit the Fan, The Trotts, Diesel Houdini
Nov. 16 — 9:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

Hultman Trio
Nov. 17 — 2 to 4 p.m.
This installment of Saturday Afternoon Art & Music will feature jazz performances, local arts, and more.
Artlore Studio, 3406 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

It Lives It Breathes, Awake At Last
Nov. 17 — 5 p.m.

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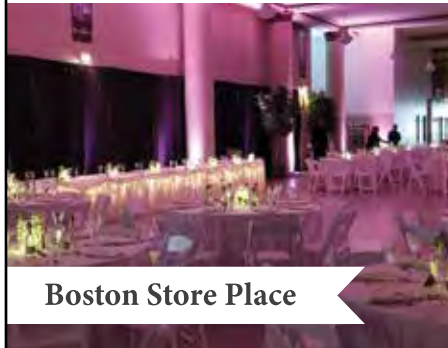
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CALENDAR

Feel the FLUX with Fire-Toolz, STCLVR, and More at the Erie Movie House



citing," the producer is noted to take influence from jazz fusion, electro-industrial, new age, black metal, vaporwave, and noise improv ... a bit like scanning a radio dial 20 years in the future.

Joining her will be STCLVR, a veteran of the electroFLUX series; dark ambient and industrial artist Sean Holt; and The Indeterminates, Holquist's outlet, who return following some much-needed time away.

"We were initially Johnny James and the Indeterminates," explains Holquist. "When [Jon Miller] passed away, we put the project aside for a while, and honestly, we weren't sure if we would do it again. But we've regrouped with Pat Bolla from This American Song on drums, and it feels really good, and fresh, and different, to be playing together again." — Aaron Mook

7 p.m. to 11 p.m. // 3424 W. Lake Rd. // \$8
// facebook.com/ErieMovieHouse

THURSDAY, NOV. 15TH

Series creator Adam Holquist has been hosting experimental electro-FLUX shows at the Erie Movie House for some time now, but miraculously, he continues to find ways to improve and one-up his own lineups. This month, prolific Chicago-based producer Fire-Toolz will be delivering a headlining performance, fresh off the release of her (Pitchfork-approved, no less) 2018 release, *Skinless X-1*. Describable only as "strange and ex-

Two New England hard rock bands make tour stops in Erie with special guests Of Shadows, Human Delusion and Shattered Utopia.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com.

Flight

Nov. 17 — 6 to 10 p.m.
BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St.
facebook.com.

TK Blues Co.

Nov. 17 — 8 p.m.
Room 33, 1033 State St.
facebook.com.

CareyOn

Nov. 17 — 5 to 7 p.m.
Brew Brothers at Pl Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy.
presqueisledowns.com.

Jeremy Jaeger Unplugged

Nov. 17 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Brew Brothers at Pl Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy.
presqueisledowns.com.

Space Junk

Nov. 17 — 10 p.m.
Not your typical jam band, Buffalo-based group incorporates multiple genres into their work for a mix of electronic-rock-jazz-dance music.
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. facebook.com.

Big City Hangover, Ice Cream Socialists

Nov. 17 — 10 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

Uncharted Course

Nov. 18 — 1 to 4 p.m.
Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co.,

11727 E. Main Rd. North East, PA 16428 arundelcellars.com.

Concert Band of NWPA

Nov. 18 — 3 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Erie Jr. Phil Winter Concert

Nov. 18 — 3 p.m.
As the snowy season sets in over Erie, Strong Vincent Middle School will host a classical winter concert.
Strong Vincent Middle School, 1330 W. 8th St. eriephil.org.

Mercyhurst Wind Ensemble

Nov. 18 — 4 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Backwoods Payback, Fog Giant, Frayle

Nov. 19 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com.

Showtune Singers Night

Nov. 20 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Dickey's BBQ Pit, 3716 Liberty St. facebook.com.

Trans-Siberian Orchestra

Nov. 21 — 8 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. erieinsurancearena.com.

Cat's A Bear

Nov. 21 — 8 p.m.
The nearly 40-year-old jazz ensemble will bring in the holiday a day early with a two-hour show.
Artlore Studio, 3406 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

Jesse Michael & The Pilgrims, Cult Classics, Aria & The Voiceless

Nov. 21 — 10 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. facebook.com.

DANCE

Body in Motion with Angela DiFiore

Nov. 9, 16 — 10 to 11 a.m.
Soma Erie, 2601 Peach St. 2nd Fl. somaerie.com.

Symphony in Motion

Nov. 9 — 7 p.m. & Nov. 10 — 2 or 7 p.m. & Nov. 11 — 2 p.m.
75 Mercyhurst dancers will display a variety of contemporary and classical movements during four performances throughout the weekend.
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

USA Dance Ballroom and Rhythm

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

Behind the Curtain

Nov. 10 — 7:30 p.m.
Dafmark Dance Theatre, 1033 State St. dafmark.org.

Erie Swings

Nov. 15 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. bourbonbarrelerie.com.

Community Ballet Class with Jay Kim

Nov. 18 — 2:30 to 4 p.m.

CALENDAR

'Oh, Whistle and We'll Come' to Mercyhurst Theatre's Ghostly Production



RUDY/ADOBE STOCK

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16 - 18

Erie is positively rife with ghost stories, and even on the hottest day of the year it's not difficult to feel the chill of the past if you're standing in the right place. So it seems fitting that playwright Mary Barile — who was commissioned by Mercyhurst Institute for Arts and Culture director Brett Johnson, Ph.D., to adapt "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad" for the Mercyhurst Theatre Program — found our lakeshore to be fertile ground for the imagination.

Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad: An Erie Ghost Story is based on a short ghost story by Victorian writer M. R. James, "a Medievalist, scholar, teacher, head of Eton College and King's College and the creator of the modern ghost story," Barile explained. "...I think [James] would have enjoyed Erie, PA, which was a summer seaside resort, much like Felixstowe, in Suffolk, England where the original story was set."

Oh, Whistle still takes place at the start of the 20th century, though its plot now follows a trio of resort-goers who find their skeptical attitudes toward the supernatural challenged after finding a whistle on the shore. Barile retains James's humor and irony, tricky devices to employ in a tale of the supernatural, but effective at convincing the audience to let their guards down.

Even more impressive, those clichéd, grotesque trappings of horror that we often see portrayed in movies is brushed aside here. "James used the mundane, like a book, or a piece of wallpaper, and made it terrifying by proving that some people do not believe in ghosts — until they do," Barile said.

The seven-person cast of *Oh, Whistle*, featuring Monica Tinsley, Owen Hitt and Grace Sloop, is under the direction of MU '17 graduate Bethany Sulecki.

Whether you're a firm skeptic or a convinced believer, *Oh, Whistle* takes the supernatural and makes it personal for all of us here in the summer lakeside resort of Erie, PA. — Cara Suppa

7:30 p.m. and 11:55 p.m. Friday, 7:30 p.m. Saturday, 2:00 p.m. Sunday // Taylor Little Theater, 501 E 38th St // Adults \$10, Seniors \$7, Students/Youth \$5 // miac.mercyhurst.edu

Mercyhurst Univ. Dance Space, 501 E. 38th St. erie-danceconsortium.org.

FOOD & DRINK

Harvest Celebration Weekend II

Nov. 9 — noon to 5 p.m. & Nov. 10, 11 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Enjoy wine and sample pairings at wineries in the area over three-day event.

Various locations, lakeeriewinecountry.org.

Beers & Crepes

Nov. 9 — 5 to 8 p.m.

Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St. eriealeworks.com.

Sunday Soul Brunch

Nov. 11 — 11 a.m.

Room 33, 1033 State St. facebook.com.

A Taste of Chocolate

Nov. 15 — 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Iroquois Ave. Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. erielibrary.org.

Beers, Crepes, & Ice Cream

Nov. 15 — 5 to 8 p.m.

Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St. eriealeworks.com.

Ales & Aces

Nov. 17 — 4 to 7 p.m.

Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. lakeeriealetrail.com.

Farm Kitchen Workshop: Small-Batch Sauerkraut

Nov. 19 — 6 to 8 p.m.

Following a first event sell-out, a second workshop on small-batch sauerkraut will be hosted at Jekyll & Hyde's, where drafts will be half-off during the class.

Jekyll & Hyde's, 8 E. 10th St. facebook.com.

MOVIES

First Reformed (2018)

Nov. 7 — 5:30 p.m.

Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. filmsocietytnwpa.org.

The Secret Adventures of Tom Thumb (1993)

Nov. 9 — 8 to 10 p.m.

Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

The Tree of Life: Extended Cut (2011/2018)

Nov. 14 — 5:30 p.m.

Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. filmsocietytnwpa.org.

The Horror at Gallery Kay (2018)

Nov. 16 — 8 p.m.

Abe Goldfarb's 2018 film — starring Maine Anders, Rosebud and Brian Silliman — merges horror, drama and fantasy.

Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

Backyard Wilderness

Ongoing — 10 a.m., 1 p.m., & 4 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Amazon Adventure

Ongoing — 11 a.m. & 2 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.

VISUAL ARTS

Mosaic Thursdays

Nov. 8, 15 — 5 to 8 p.m.

Artlore Studio, 3406 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

HIR

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FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS
NOV. 9, 10, 16 & 17 @ 8PM

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Good Vibes: Cecil Rucker Jr. at Artlore Studio



FRIDAY, NOV. 16TH

One of the most unique performances gracing Erie this month will be taking place at Artlore Studios. The reason this performance is so unique is that it showcases the abilities of the incredibly talented vibraphonist Cecil Rucker Jr. For those unfamiliar with this

particular instrument, it is a member of the percussion family that utilizes tuned metal bars — not entirely unlike a xylophone, in some aspects. Rucker’s talents fall in line with a specific vision of the studio’s owner and operator, Stephen Trohoske, who spoke about his desire to bring more culture to Erie.

“The reason I think this, and every other [Artlore Studio] show is important, is that we are bringing a high level of art and culture [to Erie],” says Trohoske. “These folks have performed all over the world with some of the most diverse and creative spirits, and that is the kind of message Artlore hopes to bring to our corner of the world.” — Aaron Mook

8 p.m. to 10 p.m. // 3406 W. Lake Rd. // \$10 Suggested Donation // facebook.com/Artlorestudio

Ales & Aces coming to Presque Isle Downs Casino



SATURDAY, NOV. 17

Looking for an excuse to drink beer? To try locally-brewed craft beers? Look no further.

The Brew Brothers, located at Presque Isle Downs Casino, along with more than a dozen other craft brewers in the area have you covered for Erie Craft Brew Week.

Ales and Aces, the capstone event to this year’s Erie Craft Beer Week features beer tastings from 14 local breweries, including winter beer releases from the Lake Ale Trail’s breweries.

The annual event also includes a live auction and live music. Those who attend receive a complimentary pint glass and \$10 in slot play. Custom food pairings will be provided with the beer tastings.

To celebrate Erie Craft Brew Week, people are encouraged to visit their favorite Erie breweries throughout the week in addition to attending Friday and Saturday night events.

Loosen up before Ales & Aces at Five & 20 Spirits & Brewing (8398 W Main St. in Westfield, NY), where Barrel Room Jam and Gem City Revival will perform on Friday night. — Tracy Geibel

4 to 7 p.m. // The Brew Brothers at Presque Isle Downs Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. // \$40 pre-sale, \$50 at the door // lakeeriealetrail.com/tickets

Art After Hours
Nov. 8, 9, 15, 16 — 5 to 8 p.m.

When the sun goes down, games pick up, music goes on, and drinks are served as part of Erie Art Museum’s Art After Hours events.

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Second Sundays
Nov. 11 — 2 to 4 p.m.

Local artist Roman Glass helps introduce creatives of all ages into the world of printmaking under the theme, “blue is not always for boys, nor pink always for girls.”

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Third Thursday
Nov. 15 — 1 to 3 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Holiday Arts Fair
Nov. 17 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

General McLane High School, 11761 Edinboro Rd., Edinboro, PA 16412 [generalmclane.net](#).

Clarity Opening Reception
Nov. 17 — 1 to 3 p.m.

Featuring work by watercolor artist Brian Payne and Jody Neugebauer – who works in a variety of mediums – Campbell Pottery will host a reception for their nearly month-long gallery.

Campbell Pottery, 25579 Plank Rd., Cambridge Springs, PA 16403 [erieartsandculture.org](#).

Hiromi Katayama: Paintings
Ongoing through Nov. 20

Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. 5th St. [glassgrowersgallery.com](#).

Strategic Planning
Ongoing through Nov. 20

Allegheny College, 520 N.

Main St., Meadville, PA 16335 [sites.allegheyny.edu](#).

Ceramics by Tom Hubert
Ongoing through Dec. 11

Cummings Art Gallery, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](#).

Gary Spinosa: Divine Instinct
Ongoing through Jan. 6, 2019

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Donna Nicholas: The Space Between
Ongoing through March 10, 2019

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

Tyanna Buie: Recollections
Ongoing through Apr. 2019

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

James McMurray: Faces and Paces
Ongoing through June 10, 2019

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. [erieartmuseum.org](#).

THEATER

Menopause The Musical
Nov. 7 — 7:30 p.m.

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [nacentertainment.com](#).

Significant Other
Nov. 8, 9, 10 — 7:30 p.m.

Studio Theatre at Penn State Behrend, 4701 College Dr. [behrend.psu.edu](#).

Terms of Endearment
Nov. 8, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17 — 7:30 p.m. & Nov. 11, 18 — 2 p.m.

Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. [erieplayhouse.org](#).

You Can’t Take It With You
Nov. 9, 10, 16, 17 — 7:30 p.m. & Nov. 11, 18 — 3 p.m.

All An Act, 652 W. 17th

St. [allanact.net](#).

Medieval Feast
Nov. 9, 10, 16, 17 — 7:30 p.m. & Nov. 11 — 2:30 p.m.

Peek’n Peak Resort, 1405 Olde Rd., Clymer, NY 14724 [kpnkp.com](#).

Hir
Nov. 9, 10, 16, 17 — 8 to 11 p.m.

Dramashop, 1001 State St. [210dramashop.org](#).

The Canterbury Feast
Nov. 10, 17 — 5:30 p.m. & Nov. 11 — 2:30 p.m. & Nov. 9, 16 — 7 p.m.

Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. [canterburyfeast.com](#).

Cat On A Hot Tin Roof
Nov. 11 — 12:55 p.m.

Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](#).

Oh, Whistle, and I’ll Come to You, My Lad
Nov. 16 — 7:30 or 11:55 p.m. & Nov. 17 — 7:30 p.m. & Nov. 18 — 2 p.m.

Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](#).

Marnie
Nov. 17 — 12:55 p.m.

Mary D’Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](#).

COMEDY

ISMO
Nov. 8 — 7 p.m. & Nov. 9, 10 — 6:45 or 9:30 p.m.

Finnish comedian and star of his own sitcom by the same name, ISMO, will bring laughs to Jr.’s.

Jr’s Last Laugh, 1402 State St. [jrslastlaugh.com](#).

Hahas and Hand Grenades
Nov. 11 — 6 p.m.

The aptly-named comedy event features both Erie and Pitts-

burgh comedians, The Lil Wagon Food Truck, and benefits the 2nd annual Host-A-Hero Duck Hunt.

Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. [facebook.com](#).

The Cranjis McBasketball World Comedy Tour
Nov. 13 — 7:30 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieinsurancearena.com](#).

Nemr
Nov. 15 — 7 p.m. & Nov. 16, 17 — 6:45 or 9:30 p.m.

Jr’s Last Laugh, 1402 State St. [jrslastlaugh.com](#).

SPORTS

Monster Jam
Nov. 9, 10 — 7 p.m. & Nov. 10 — 1 p.m.

Family-friendly monster truck rally rumbles into town for three shows.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieinsurancearena.com](#).

Erie Otters vs. Kitchener Rangers
Nov. 14 — 11 a.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [ottershockey.com](#).

Erie BayHawks vs. Westchester Knicks
Nov. 16 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [league.nba.com](#).

NFCA Playoffs: North Atlantic vs. Great Lakes
Nov. 17 — 3 p.m.

Dollinger Field, 501 W. 12th St. [ncfafootball.org](#).

Erie Otters vs. Niagara Ice Dogs
Nov. 17 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809

French St. [ottershockey.com](#).

Erie Otters vs. London Knights
Nov. 18 — 4 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [ottershockey.com](#).

Bayfront Brawl VI
Nov. 21 — 7 p.m.

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafraes Pier [erieevents.com](#).

COMMUNITY

Wellness Wednesdays: Qi Gong
Nov. 7 — 1 to 2 p.m.

Lincoln Community Center Library, 1255 Manchester Rd. [erielibrary.org](#).

2018 Fall for Arts & Culture Appreciation Awards
Nov. 7 — 6:30 p.m..

Keeping a more than 30-year-old tradition alive, Erie Arts and Culture will award businesses and individuals for their work in promoting arts in the community with a ceremony and reception.

Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. [erieartsandculture.org](#).

Fiber Arts Meetup
Nov. 7 — 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](#).

Adult Art Classes
Nov. 7, 14 — 7 to 9 p.m.

Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. [leaferie.org](#).

Understanding President Trump
Nov. 7 — 7:30 p.m.

Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](#).

Downsizing Tips
Nov. 8 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [LifeWorksErie.org](#).

The Assault on Intelligence
Nov. 8 — 1 p.m.

Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. [jeserie.org](#).

New Horizons Music Project: Strings & Folk
Nov. 8, 15 — 2 to 5 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [LifeWorksErie.org](#).

Year of the Woman?
Nov. 8 — 5 to 6:30 p.m.

Democratic political strategist Megan Winters and Melanie Brewer, a Republican political strategist, will discuss this year’s election.

Metzgar Admissions and Alumni Center, 4701 College Dr. [behrend.psu.edu](#).

Jr. Achievement Celebrating Success
Nov. 8 — 5 to 7:30 p.m.

Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. [juniorachievement.org](#).

Startup Grind Erie: Karen Rzepecki
Nov. 8 — 5:30 to 8 p.m.

Founder of San Diego’s first “do-it-yourself workspace” and Mason Jars Company will discuss the founding of her business and the work that went into it.

Calamari’s Squid Row, 1317 State St. [startupgrind.com](#).

Tyler Titus
Nov. 8 — 7 to 8 p.m.

Working to break the stigma and help others overcome mental health challenges, traveling mental health advocate Tyler Titus will visit Gannon University.

Knight Club, 109 Univer-



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Erie Ale Works Brings the Bands at Basement Transmissions



BACKWOODS - PHOTO BY DANTE TORRIERI

MONDAY, NOV. 19TH

Erie Ale Works will be presenting a cacophony of riffage at Basement Transmissions courtesy of sludge and doom-sayers Backwoods Payback, Frayle, and the Erie-based Fog Giant. In addition to this killer lineup, two different beers will be available on tap for those 21 and older with ID at \$5 per pint.

“We picked these bands because it was something that we wanted to see,” said

Erie Ale Works owner Steve Anthony. “The state of music in Erie right now is pretty gnarly, and it’s an effort to provide a good selection of heavy bands for people to check out. I own Erie Ale Works, so beer is always a no-brainer for me. It just made sense to bring my two interests together for the benefit of the greater good. Heavy riffs and good beer — it’s a simple formula, and we hope that other people agree.”

Backwoods Payback appears fresh off the release of their 2018 LP *Future Slum*, available for stream and purchase on Bandcamp now. — Aaron Mook

7 p.m. to 10 p.m. // 145 W. 11th St. // \$10 // facebook.com/basement.transmissions

Trans-Siberian Orchestra Departing for Holiday Hits



WEDNESDAY, NOV. 21

Squealing guitars, pyrotechnics, and luxurious hair — everything you’ve come to love about ... Christmas? If you happen to be a fan of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, then yes, absolutely. The holiday-centric metal/prog band is making a stop in Erie for two performances on Thanksgiving Eve. The group is made up of a cast of more than 30 musicians, with the majority of them rotating in for

singing duties throughout the evening. Formed in 1993, the band rose to prominence during the late ‘90s as they conceived their opulent stage show, ready-built for arenas. This tour focuses on what they’re known best for, renditions of Christmas classics — most notably “The Ghost of Christmas Eve,” their famous adaptation of “Carol of the Bells.” With plenty of onstage fireworks and specially-made video graphics synced to musical dynamics, the Erie Insurance Arena is sure to be well-lit. — Nick Warren

3:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. // [Erie Insurance Arena](https://erieinsurancearena.com), 809 French St. // tickets: \$31 - \$66.50 // trans-siberian.com

[sity Sq. gannon.edu](https://www.gannon.edu).

Live2Lead: 2018

Nov. 9 — 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier facebook.com.

Veterans’ Day Celebration

Nov. 9 — 10:30 a.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.

WQLN Holiday Craft Show

Nov. 9 — 1 to 6 p.m. & Nov. 10 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Nov. 11 — 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Hosting over 100 craft vendors and Mr. and Mrs. Claus on Saturday and Sunday, the annual Holiday Craft Show will take place on Waldameer grounds. *Rainbow Gardens, 220 Waldameer Park Rd.* wqln.org.

Art Talk: More Than Meets the Eye

Nov. 9 — 6 to 7 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. erieartmuseum.org.

Wellness Night

Nov. 9 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Various locations eriewellnessnetwork.com.

What Truth Sounds Like: Our Unfinished Conversation About Race

Nov. 9 — 7:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Princesses at the Park

Nov. 10
Splash Lagoon, 8091 Peach St. splashlagoon.com.

Dungeons & Dragons

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

Veterans Day Parade & Ceremony

Nov. 10 — 9:30 a.m.
Erie VA Medical Center, 135 E. 38th St. erie.va.gov.

Little Leaves

Nov. 10, 12 — 10 to 10:45 a.m., 11:15 a.m. to noon
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Coloring for Grown-Ups

Nov. 10 — 10 a.m. to noon
Iroquois Ave. Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. erielibrary.org.

Santa’s Arrival

Nov. 10 — 10 a.m. to noon
Millcreek Mall Complex, 5800 Peach St. millcreekmall.net.

11th Annual Multicultural Asia Day

Nov. 10 — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Featuring hands-on displays, Asian culture displays and cultural performances, the 11th annual event will be held at expERIEnce Children’s Museum. *expERIEnce Children’s Museum, 420 French St.* erieapaa.org.

Meet A Sloth And More!

Nov. 10, 11 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
One of nature’s most elusive mammals, the sloth will be swinging into Erie with more than 30 other animals as part of Zem Zem Shrine Club’s first annual Natural History Exhibition. *Zem Zem Shrine Club, 2525 W. 38th St.* facebook.com.

Holiday Tour of Homes

Nov. 10 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. & Nov. 11 — noon to 4 p.m.
Erie Philharmonic will host tours across the city of homes already decked for the holidays with an optional lunch by Cali’s West Catering at an additional cost. *Various locations* eriephil.org.

Single Mom Empowerment

Nov. 10 — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
The Juice Jar, 2620 W. 8th St. facebook.com.

Pokemon League

Nov. 10 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Gobbler Raffle

Nov. 10 — 6 to 10 p.m.
Sacred Heart Auditorium, 816 W. 26th St. sacredhearterie.org.

Campfire Hikes with Zack Orr

Nov. 10 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. registrationdesk.asburywoods.org.

2018 Veterans Appreciation Day

Nov. 11 — 8 a.m. to noon
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trecpi.org.

Rummage Sale

Nov. 11 — 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
W. Ridge Fire Station, 3142 W. 26th St.

Presidential Leadership in Turbulent Times

Nov. 12 — 7:30 p.m.
Gannon University, 109 University Square jeserie.org.

Creating Family Memories with PowerPoint

Nov. 13, 20 — 10:30 a.m. to noon
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.

Lawrence Park Garden Club Meeting

Nov. 13 — 1 to 3 p.m.
Lawrence Park Twp. Bldg., 4230 Iroquois Ave. 814-873-7912

Art Exploration Studio

Nov. 13 — 1 to 3 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.

Read to a Therapy Dog

Nov. 13 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. & Nov. 14, 15 — 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Multiple library locations erielibrary.org.

Room 33 Charity Challenge

Nov. 13 — 5 to 8 p.m.
Room 33, 1033 State St. facebook.com.

Beginner Improv

Nov. 13, 20 — 6 to 7 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.

Gentle Yoga & Meditation: Level 2

Nov. 13 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.
Edinboro Branch Library, 413 W. Plum St., Edinboro, PA 16412 erielibrary.org.

A Debate with Howard Dean and Elise Jordan

Nov. 13 — 7:30 p.m.
Penn State Behrend, 4701 College Dr. jeserie.org.

DiscoverE

Nov. 14 — 10:30 a.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trecpi.org.

Active Apples

Nov. 14 — 10:30 to 11:15 a.m.
Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Arundel Trivia Night

Nov. 14 — 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co., 11727 E. Main Rd. North East, PA 16428 arundelcellars.com.

Front Row Seat to History: From Pres. Ford to Pres. Trump

Nov. 14 — 7:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Be a YouTuber

Nov. 15 — 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

A Conversation with Chris Matthews

Nov. 15 — 11:30 a.m.
Gannon University, 109 University Square jeserie.org.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

Nov. 15 — 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.

Photography for Beginners: The Basics

Nov. 15 — 6 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160

E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

FamilySTEM Night

Nov. 15 — 6 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trecpi.org.

Wine Bottle Craft Night

Nov. 15 — 6 to 8 p.m.
Presque Isle Wine Cellars, 9440 W. Main St., North East, PA 16428 piwine.com.

Night Hikes

Nov. 15 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Brown’s Farm Barn, 5774 Sterret-tania Rd., Fairview, PA 16415 registrationdesk.asburywoods.org.

Our Towns: Erie and America

Nov. 16 — 7:30 p.m.
Gannon University, 109 University Square jeserie.org.

Batmania

Nov. 17
Splash Lagoon, 8091 Peach St. splashlagoon.com.

Special Olympics Polar Plunge

Nov. 17 — 9 a.m.
Presque Isle State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. classy.org.

Blizzard of Blankets

Nov. 17 — 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
The 26th annual event will get cozy in Perry Square where Erie’s daytime homeless shelter will be collecting blankets, boots, and winter clothing. *Perry Square, 601 State St.* facebook.com.

Noni’s Boutique Holiday Pop-Up Shop

Nov. 17 — noon to 5 p.m.
Cobblestone Inn & Suites, 700 W. Bayfront Pkwy. noniboutique.com.

Lakeside Tavern Fundraiser

Nov. 17 — 1 p.m.
The fundraiser will feature food, a chinese auction, singer-song-writer Lori Burke, Erie hard

rock band DeKaN, and more. *French Quarters, 8657 Perry Hwy.* facebook.com.

Mystery Science

Nov. 17 — 1 to 3 p.m.
Asbury Woods Nature Center, 4105 Asbury Rd. registrationdesk.asburywoods.org.

Erie ClaySpace Family Workshop

Nov. 17 — 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Erie ClaySpace, 1505 State St. erieclayspace.com.

Scary or Merry?

Nov. 17 — 2 to 4 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Hoedown Drag Roulette

Nov. 18 — 11 p.m.
All that’s known about this mysterious drag show is that it will feature country music with a splash of ‘80s rock. *The Zone, 133 W. 18th St.* facebook.com.

How Spirituality Improves Quality of Life

Nov. 19 — 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.

PI History: An Engineering Playground

Nov. 19 — 6 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. trecpi.org.

Master Builders

Nov. 19 — 6 to 7 p.m.
Millcreek Branch Library, 2088 Interchange Rd. Ste. 280 erielibrary.org.

November Book Club

Nov. 20 — noon to 1 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.

Presque Isle After Dark

Nov. 20 — 6:30 p.m.
PI Lighthouse Parking Lot, 1 Peninsula Dr. trecpi.org.

Taste the Harmony

Eight food and wine pairings that will make your tastebuds Grüner with envy



The Skunk & Goat Tavern's lobster mac-and-cheese is just one of eight tantalizing dishes available as part of the Erie Philharmonic and Mazza Wines' Taste the Harmony promotion. All eight restaurants' courses pair wonderfully with the headlining beverage, the Beethoven Commemorative Grüner Veltliner, a drier white wine native to Austria.

MATT SWANSEGER

By: Matt Swanseger

Shortly after Ludwig van Beethoven's death in 1827, an autopsy revealed post-hepatic cirrhosis of the liver. Genius can be just as much of a burden as it is a gift, and the brilliant composer often turned to the bottle to manage depression and anxiety stemming from an abusive childhood and to relieve the strain of the creative process. Word is that he especially favored red wine.

Musical historians to this day are astounded by his body of work, which includes a whopping 722 compositions. However, most agree he could have exercised better discretion within his personal life — namely, drinking responsibly. One of the golden rules of sensible imbibing, of course, is to never overindulge on an empty stomach. Doing so leads to nothing but treble, a hangover approaching a fever pitch.

With both this and your cultural edification in mind, the Erie Philharmonic, Mazza Vineyards, and eight area restaurants have teamed up for the "Taste the Harmony" promotion, which pairs a carefully considered culinary creation at each locale with Mazza's Grüner Veltliner (pronounced "GROOH-ner Felt-LEE-ner"). Depending on how exaggerated your German accent was, that might sound like something you'd be scared to ingest. But have no fear, it is actually a dry white wine pressed from a deep green grape native to Austria, wherein Beethoven spent most of his career.

The style has existed for centuries, but its popularity has crescendoed in recent years, especially after knocking off several Grand Cru ("great growth") whites from the much-ballyhooed Burgundy region

in France in a 2002 competition. Leading chefs such as Austria's own Wolfgang Puck have espoused Grüner's food-friendliness and versatility, owing to its fine balance of citrus, herbal, and vegetal notes and a high acidity sharp enough to cut through the flavor of richer, heavier fare.

Mario Mazza, general manager and enologist at Mazza, echoes the same sentiments. "It's got a lot of things going for it, and it's fitting for the growing conditions that we have ... It melds well with a range of things. Grüner can work equally as well in the summer cafe with a spicy Asian dish or with a lobster mac-and-cheese on a cold winter day."

Mazza's Grüner Veltliner is described as "crisp ... with notes of fresh stone fruit and a fine mineralogy." Its seventh vintage was recently harvested and its sixth vintage is currently in bottles bearing the Beethoven Commemorative label. On October 20, it was dedicated as the official beverage of Year 3 of the Beethoven 4/4 Festival, an ongoing initiative between the Erie Philharmonic and Mazza leading up to the composer's 250th birthday in 2020. It is available for purchase at both South Shore Winery and the Mazza Wine Shop at Fuhrman's Cider Mill and General Store.

Pick up a bottle and weave it into your own home-cooked compositions or sit back, relax, and "Taste The Harmony" with the flavor opuses orchestrated by the following restaurants through Nov. 18 (or while supplies last):

1201 Kitchen, 1201 State St.

The dish: Pan-seared scallops with choro, fire roasted eggplant, and grilled corn.

Chef notes: "The sweetness of the scallops is a nice contrast to a big wine, giving the wine an almost buttery flavor of a Chardonnay."

Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St.

The dish: Cheese and charcuterie board — goat cheese, pecorino, French aged cheddar, prosciutto di parma, genoa salami, and accompaniments.

Chef notes: "One of our favorite ways to get the party started is with a wonderful cheese and charcuterie board, then pop open a bottle of Grüner Veltliner. There are no specific rules when it comes down to it — the various delights on the board match uniquely with the Grüner Veltliner. We wanted to have a good variety to keep everyone happy, even those with picky palates. Cheers!"

Cloud 9 Wine Bar, 25 E. 10th St.

The dish: Blackened ahi tuna filet served with pickled ginger, wasabi aioli, house-made sesame wontons, a citrus ponzu sauce, and chiffonade scallions.

Chef notes: "The crisp citrus tones of the Grüner Veltliner pair very well with Asian spices and seafood. We chose the blackened ahi tuna because it matches all of these flavor components. The acidity of the wine complements the buttery mouthfeel of the tuna and results in a delicious early evening bite."

Molly Brannigan's, 506 State St.

The dish: Fish 'n chips — Beer battered Atlantic cod, housemade coleslaw, tartar, Yukon potato, and feta cheese.

Chef notes: "The mild and delicate flavor of our beer-battered fish 'n chips really brings out the floral bouquet of the Grüner. It's the perfect pairing of fresh fish and mineral-forward white wine ... as you are enjoying the fish, you can taste the Guin-

ness in our beer batter and catch hints of stone fruit in the wine."

The Plymouth Tavern, 1109 State St.

The dish: Crab cake appetizer — three freshly-prepared lump meat crab cakes.

Chef notes: "The stone ground mustard and subtle spices of our homemade crab cakes are accentuated by the crisp, refreshing acidity of the Grüner Veltliner."

Room 33 Speakeasy, 1033 State St.

The dish: Lobster ravioli —three large lobster stuffed ravioli, with sage and pumpkin spiced sauce, topped with sun-dried and roasted tomatoes and garnished with Chef's micro-greens blend.

Chef notes: "We chose to pair the wine with our lobster ravioli dish because the Grüner really brings out the flavors of the spices used in our sauce and highlights the seafood while balancing the richness of the sauce."

The Skunk & Goat Tavern, 17 W. Main St., North East, PA 16428

The dish: Lobster mac & cheese — Langoustine lobster, fusilli pasta, white cheddar sauce, and cheddar crust.

Chef notes: "The wine's acidity is a good foil for the rich creaminess of the pasta."

Sneaky Pete's Speakeasy, 6116 Swanville Rd.

The dish: Crabby portabella — house-made crab cakes stuffed into a perfectly seasoned portabella mushroom.

Chef notes: "It's seafood; it's white wine. Pretty simple."

Matt Swanseger can be reached at mswanseger@eriereader.com

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MUSIC REVIEWS

boygenius

boygenius EP
Matador Records

★★★★★

boygenius is the super-group we desperately need, and perhaps do not deserve, and their debut EP is every bit as good as its' members' solo work. Comprised of Phoebe Bridgers, Julien Baker, and Lucy Dacus, boygenius navigates a number of sonic territories, from reverb-drenched indie-rock to acoustic folk numbers and beyond, allowing the band to transcend to something greater than the sum of its parts. Perhaps most impressively, the *boygenius EP* is less sad than fans of its individual members might expect, and a hell of a lot more fleshed out to boot. Throughout the release, each member seems to get a song or two to showcase their lyrical and vocal abilities. But boygenius really pulls it all together in the EP's final act, culminating in the lush standout, "Salt in the Wound." The track overshadows the rest of the EP's small-scale production with grandiose, near-psychedelic swells of instrumentation and a bluesy, foot-stomping tempo. Of course, this explosive energy is only temporary, as the band delivers a flawless Fleet Foxes impression on closing track "Ketchum, ID." — Aaron Mook



Mr Twin Sister

Salt
Twin Label

★★★★★

Don't let the energetic dance beats of the opening track, the lusciously radiant "Keep on Mixing" fool you, this album is a dark, captivating downtempo journey. The opening saxophone notes of the "Alien FM" clue in the listener perfectly to the undeniable sensuality of the album, practically oozing out of every measure. A modern-day successor to the brilliance exemplified by bands like Massive Attack, Cocteau Twins, and Portishead, Mr Twin Sister have raised the bar for themselves, and it's absolutely worth a listen. This is the kind of album that cannot be fully appreciated in the light of day. Some things are made for the night, and this is one of them. *Salt* is the third studio album from the Long Island quintet in eight years, and seems to have been well worth the wait. The evocative vocals of frontwoman Andrea Estrella are an essential part of the band's appeal, full of idiosyncratic tonal quirks that never feel forced (on full display in the final cut, "Set Me Free"). Perhaps one of the top moments is the hypnotic, almost afrobeat enticement of "Jaipur," as Estrella performs a call-and-response with herself against string arrangements and a never-ending pulse. — Nick Warren



Saves the Day

9
Epitaph Records

★★★★

Legendary pop-punkers Saves the Day return with their ninth LP, the aptly-titled 9, but the band may finally be running out of gas. 9 plays the nostalgia card with a heavy hand, revisiting moments from their entire career — from the riffs and energy of their early albums, to the hooks and production of their *Daybreak* trilogy — and writing songs about, well, being in Saves the Day. The first of which, opener "Saves the Day," contains the actual lyrics, "Turn it up, we're Saves the Day!" Unfortunately, the album's subject matter never really deviates from that. 9 presents track after track of earnest, meta-lyrical cheese, and still, the emo veterans manage to get by on contagious energy and experimental sonic flourishes. Early highlight "Suzuki" features an entire steel guitar section, calling back to beloved peers Hot Rod Circuit, while single "Kerouac & Cassidy" channels The Smashing Pumpkins in its straightforward (and slightly baffling) chorus. 9 concludes with "29," a 22-minute experiment that doubles the length of career highlight *Daybreak's* opening track. 9 is a lot of things, but even at its worst, it's still easily digested. — Aaron Mook



Miya Folick

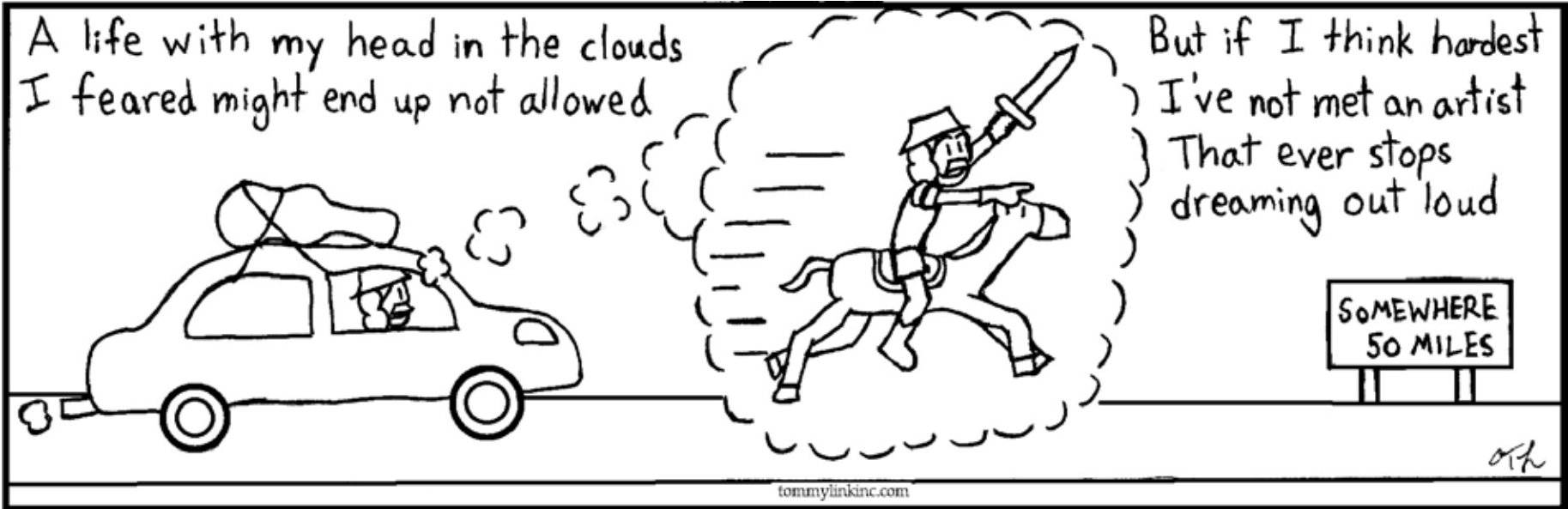
Premonitions
Terrible Records PS

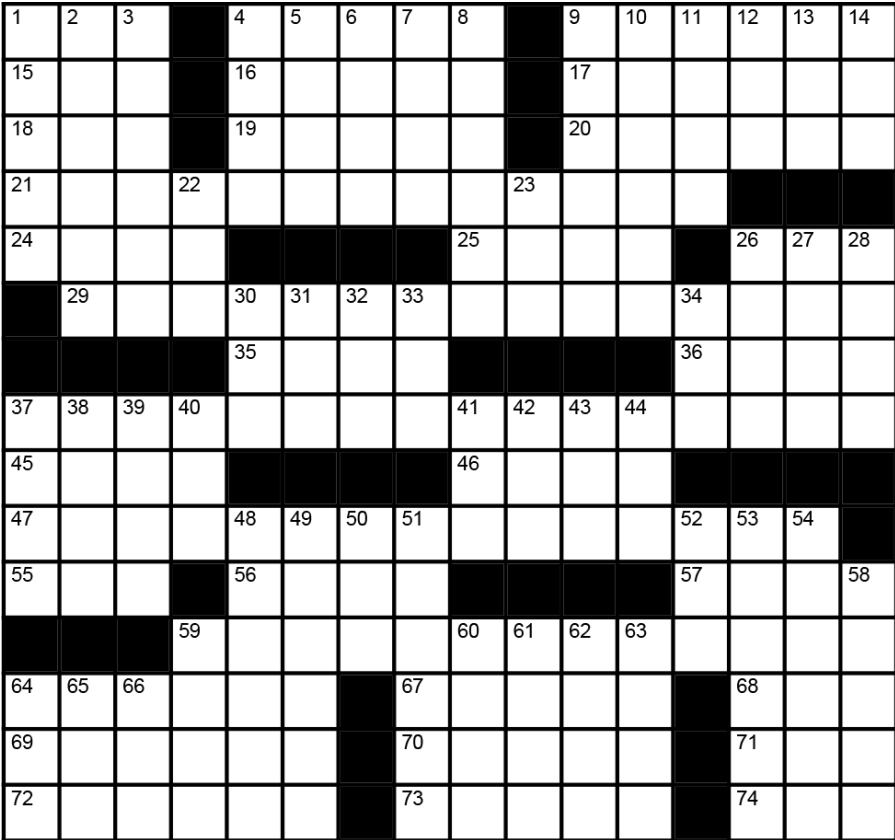
★★★★★

Sometimes it's just so exciting when a debut hits, showing an artist so perfectly presented and self-realized. *Premonitions* is one of those albums. It's also one that builds so beautifully from an emotive bedroom-album whisper to a fully-formed pop celebration. Miya Folick is able to bridge two important stations, the former can be personified by the trio that make up the just-reviewed group boygenius, and latter channeling the pop personification of acts like Grimes ("Stock Image"), Chvrches ("Cost Your Love"), or Florence and the Machine ("Deadbody"). It's that ideal marriage of ideals. Like a tentpole movie for music fans, it hits the mark on originality, creativity, empathy, and craft. Folick, a Southern California native, released two EPs leading up to this full-length, both of which are remarkable as well, with the indie-folk of 2015's *Strange Darling*, and the post-punk aggression of *Give It To Me*. At her poppiest ever, this album's only arguable fault is that it tends to dip its toe — or foot — into the genre's more cheesy elements, most notably showcased in the Lily Allen-esque "Stop Talking." Even so, it's one of the best albums you'll hear in 2018. — Nick Warren



TOMMY IN TOON — BY TOMMY LINK





Across
1. Start of four TV drama titles of the 2000s
4. Northern terminus of U.S. 1
9. Public record?
15. "Facilities," informally
16. Email holder
17. Words that often follow "Eek!"
18. Pie ____ mode
19. Town at the N.J. end of the George Washington Bridge
20. iRobot vacuum
21. Title estate of an 1814 novel
24. Noted pseudonym in short story writing
25. Court star Nadal, informally
26. Drag away
29. Where Romeo and Juliet meet
35. One-named supermodel with a palindromic name
36. Iowa's largest export
37. Small business ... or a way of describing 21-, 29-, 47- and 59-Across
45. Symphony, e.g.
46. "Hmm, how shall ____ this?"
47. George W. Bush's Texas Rangers position, until 1994
55. Without this, Earth is just "eh"
56. Biblical twin
57. Fashion's ____ Saint Laurent
59. Filipino box-

er-turned-congressman
64. Improper attire at a fancy restaurant
67. Parting word that's 80% vowels
68. Three after K
69. Like
70. Silents star Nita
71. Part of a KFC order
72. Wild Bill of Western lore
73. Positive quality
74. The ten in "first and ten": Abbr.

Down
1. Shuts (up)
2. Peace in the Middle East
3. One of the Trumps
4. Upset
5. ____-Defamation League
6. Suffix with convert or corrupt
7. London's ____ Coward Theater
8. Curved high-back bench
9. Container for serving wine
10. Hybrid music genre of the 2010s
11. ____ and cranny
12. Math calculation
13. Kind of port for a flash drive
14. Swell locale?
22. Kim, to Kourtney or Khloé
23. Digs
26. "Star Trek: T.N.G." role
27. Spanish "other"
28. Vegas casino developer Steve

30. Mathematician's "Done!"
31. Call balls and strikes, informally
32. ____ Savahl (couture label)
33. Rock's ____ Speedwagon
34. Play a role
37. Midtown Manhattan cultural attraction, for short
38. On ____ with (comparable to)
39. Em, to Dorothy
40. Cryptanalysis org.
41. Die spot
42. Clean Air Act org.
43. 1921 play that introduced the word "robot"
44. Lawyer: Abbr.
48. Customize for
49. Violates the rules
50. Photographer Goldin
51. English-speaking neighbor of Venezuela
52. Greenwich Village sch.
53. In a wicked way
54. Really chewed out
58. Spotify selections
59. Relative of a ferret
60. Forerunners of smartphones, for short
61. Is under the weather
62. Give up
63. Give up
64. 1995 Eazy-E hit "Just ____ Let U Know"
65. Hit the slopes
66. Fruit drink brand with a hyphenated name



Answers to last puzzle



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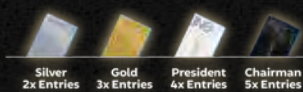


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