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**ERIE READER**

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*How World of Music brings local players together*

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**Editors-in-Chief:**

Brian Graham & Adam Welsh

**Managing Editor:**

Nick Warren

**Copy Editor:**

Matt Swanseger

**Contributing Editors:**

Ben Speggen

Jim Wertz

**Contributors:**

Maitham Basha-Agha

Mary Birdsong

Charles Brown

Jonathan Burdick

Tracy Geibel

Lisa Gensheimer

Miriam Lamey

Tommy Link

Aaron Mook

Dan Schank

Tommy Shannon

Ryan Smith

Jen Sorenson

Cara Suppa

Forest Taylor

Bryan Toy

**Cover Design:**

Nick Warren

**Photographers:**

Maitham Basha-Agha

Jessica Hunter

**Intern:**

Hannah McDonald

1001 State St. Suite 1315  
Erie, Pa., 16501  
contact@eriereader.com

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## From the Editors

Thanks, giving, and a warm combining of the two

Every year, Thanksgiving grows more and more neglected commercially. We’re guilty of it ourselves. Though this current issue comes out the day before the fourth Thursday in November, we chose to jump a few days ahead and pull together our “Shop Local” issue.

Sure, the local economy is one of the key things on everybody’s mind, but why no turkey love?

There is — or at least there seems to be — a peculiarly private air to the holiday. The day is celebrated with family. It’s for our inner circle, spent around a table, on a couch, or in a car venturing toward one or the other.

Plenty of proponents exist in support of this holiday. It is one of the big ones. Rest assured that there will be a heaping helping of people on social media proudly declaring this as their personal favorite, and they won’t be wrong — they’ll certainly have the pictures to prove it. For those at the other end of the table, it’s at least a festive bridge, a gradient transitioning from Halloween’s orange and black to Christmas’ red and green, through a kaleidoscope of earth tones.

And then there’s the reflection on what we’re thankful for. It’s a forthright expression, almost prayer-like — yet fit for atheists and devotees alike. It’s that moment of the year where we can look at our lives from a slightly outside perspective, and examine just what it is that transpired this year that we don’t wish to curse, but truly appreciate.

As the food gets portioned out into smaller containers, be it turkey or tofu, we can settle in for a much-needed rest. And then, before we know it, it’s Christmastime.

And just in time for Small Business Saturday, we present our fourth annual “Made in Erie” gift guide, offering up ten new ideas for locally made things to put on your shopping list. Matt Swanseger runs down just few of the many great things to get if you want to put money back into the local economy.

If you have a musician in the family (including yourself), you might want to think of World of Music as well. Since 1954, they’ve been one of the best local spots for any aspiring instrumentalist. Nick Warren talks to a few people there that make it tick, and takes a look at just what makes it such a special place to go.

Returning to our fold, Rebecca Styn talks to Karen Rzepecki, looking at what it took to make her entrepreneurial ideas come to life. Tracing the initial phases of ReCAP and her MakerPlace in particular, we’re able to see what spark is needed to put a few more items on that locally made wishlist.

Through it all, and into December, we’ll remember what we’re thankful for. And we’ll try to hold onto that warmth well into the new year.

# SOMETHING WONDERFUL HAPPENS WHEN YOU SHOP LOCAL

From the local pizza shop and grocery store to barbershops and boutiques, when you buy local your dollar stays local. Businesses grow. More jobs are created. And more money is reinvested to help make our community a better place.

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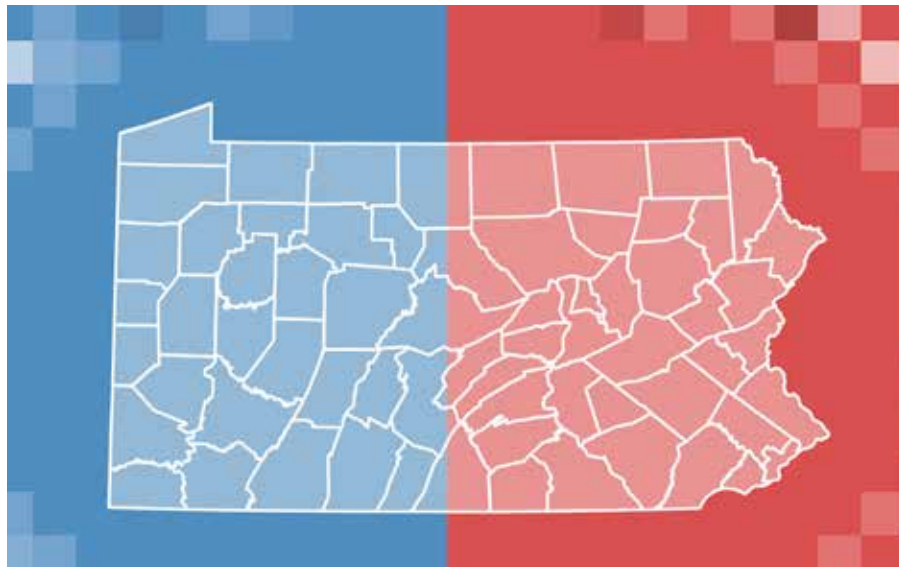


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# Erie at Large: A Look Back at 2018

The 2018 midterm elections and the work ahead



NICK WARREN

By: Jim Wertz

Many of us have spent the past two years trying to explain away Donald Trump's 1,957 vote win in Erie County in 2016. It was the electorate clamoring for change. It was the electorate seeking leadership from outside the beltway. It was an anomaly. It was something we hadn't experienced since 1984. Nevertheless, "Erie went red" and so went the national narrative about a political turn that illustrated a major change in Pennsylvania's great northwest.

The 2018 midterms were Erie's chance to challenge that narrative.

More than 53 percent of registered voters — 102,545 people — showed up to the polls in Erie County. That's the highest turnout in a midterm election in Erie County since 1994 when then-House Speaker Newt Gingrich led his Republican Revolution.

On one hand, 53 percent gives us reason, as a region, to celebrate. On the whole, there's still work to do.

As a recent study, "The United States of Apathy," which utilized census data and voter turnout in the 2016 elections illustrates, a plurality of eligible voters are not participating in the electoral process in counties all across the United States.

The same is true in Erie County. There were more than 212,000 voting age adults in Erie County in 2016. Registered voters numbered 191,860 at the time of the 2018 midterm election.

Voter registrations increased be-

tween 2016 and 2018, and so did voter turnout among traditionally underperforming segments of the population. The question now is how to maintain this momentum, which bodes well for Democrats.

"En route to landslide victories," observed Philadelphia Inquirer reporters Andrew Seidman and Jonathan Tamari, "Gov. Wolf and Sen. Bob Casey carried key Pennsylvania counties' rich with white working-class voters who flipped from Barack Obama to Trump in 2016."

Erie was one of those counties.

## The Races

Senator Casey's support was resolutely strong in Erie County, where he defeated Republican Congressman Lou Barletta by 18,558 votes, helping to anchor a statewide victory with a 637,401 vote margin of victory.

Governor Wolf was even stronger, winning Erie County by 21,403 votes and carrying the state with an 836,633 vote margin of victory. The incumbent's nearly 1 million vote win over former State Senator Scott Wagner is impressive. He's a popular governor who now holds a mandate to move Pennsylvania forward, even if the Republican-led legislature disagrees.

Erie had one competitive race for State Representative in the 2nd legislative district this year because of the vacancy created by the death of Rep. Flo Fabrizio. Representatives Ryan Bizzarro (PA-3) and Pat Harkins (PA-1) — along with their Republican coun-

terparts Curt Sonney (PA-4), Brad Roae (PA-6), and Parke Wentling (PA-17) — ran unopposed.

The 2nd District brought Democratic Erie City Councilman Bob Merski a challenge from Republican real estate agent Tim Kuzma. But in the heavily Democratic 2nd District — which includes much of Erie's west side, two voting districts in Millcreek's Belle Valley, and Summit Township — Merski won with 65 percent of the vote.

In the 50th Senatorial District, which covers southern Erie County from Edinboro and Washington Township east to Corry, a political newcomer, Democrat Sue Mulvey, made a strong effort to upset incumbent State Senator Michelle Brooks. However, Brooks is a conservative Republican and so is her district. She easily won re-election.

One race, perhaps more than any other, captured Erie's attention as a hometown candidate took on an increasingly absentee incumbent in the race for Pennsylvania's newly drawn 16th Congressional District. Attorney Ron DiNicola — who gained attention most recently for his work devoted to universal pre-kindergarten in Pennsylvania, re-igniting the Erie Police Athletic League, and establishing a community college in Erie County — took on Republican Congressman Mike Kelly, who has represented Northwestern Pennsylvania since he was first elected in the 2010 Republican takeover of the House of Representatives.

DiNicola won Erie County by 19,813 votes, a significant margin that rivaled the output of other popular Democrats such as Sen. Casey and Governor Wolf. Despite DiNicola's impressive showing in Erie County, that support wasn't enough to withstand the Republican turnout in the southern part of the district, which Kelly won with a margin of slightly more than 11,000 votes. It is worth noting that Republican voters in the other four counties of the 16th Dis-

trict — Crawford, Mercer, Lawrence, and Butler — also voted for both Scott Wagner and Lou Barletta by margins of 15 to 20 percent.

## The Takeaways

Democrats are alive and well in Erie County. I don't know what people said when Erie County voted for Ronald Reagan in 1984, but the national narrative of a dark day for Democrats following 2016 was misinformed. Since Nov. 7, many of the same journalists who talked about 1,957 votes as a factor in Pennsylvania's Republican moment have called back wanting to know how Erie could so strongly support Governor Wolf and Senator Casey after voting for Trump in 2016. "It was an anomaly," I tell them. "Erie is a Democratic stronghold."

That narrative isn't sensational or sexy. It's just the truth. Democrats outnumber Republicans by 28,548 and when they turn out to vote, Democrats win.

And there's the rub. We live in a county where nearly 20,000 people are eligible to vote, but not registered, and we celebrate when half of the registered voters go to the polls. Erie County residents understand that voting matters; they just don't always act that way. We are collective and habitual underperformers, but we can change that. For those of you who vote, talk to your friends and neighbors about politics and (from my perspective) about Democratic candidates. Keep it civil and keep it local. The message will resonate.

Don't let that conversation go by the wayside until presidential election years or contentious midterm elections. Midterms and off-year elections like the one we'll experience in 2019 are where political power is made. This is when we elect legislators and policy-makers that impact our day-to-day lives. Show up. Be heard. Hold those accountable who are lucky enough to have earned your vote before.

There is no greater currency than political capital traded at the polls.

*Jim Wertz is a Contributing Editor and the Chairman of the Erie County Democratic Party. He can be reached at [jWertz@ErieReader.com](mailto:jWertz@ErieReader.com) or you can follow him on Twitter @jim\_wertz.*



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## NEWS & VIEWS

# The Flight of the Concords

How grape juice saved North East, Pa.



JESSICA HUNTER

By: Francesca Tronetti

The North East/Harborcreek region is known as Pa. Wine Country. Vineyards and wineries are to be found all along Route 5 and Route 20, and the area is home to one of the oldest wineries in Pennsylvania. But what you might not know is that this area owes a large part of its survival to grape juice. Not wines or jellies, but simple grape juice. And the story behind this is intriguing.

### Early Grape Growing in America

Until the American Revolution, most people grew just what they needed to survive, with a little left over for sale at the market or to towns. Fruit growing was an important part of the colonial garden because fruits could be made into “comfort drinks,” i.e., wine, mead, and brandy. Early settlers were amazed at the variety of wild berries and wild grapes. However, winemaking with these grapes was not what they expected. For almost 200 years colonists’ efforts in winemaking focused on trying to grow European grapes in America, and these varieties failed to thrive.

Peter Legeaux opened a vineyard in the Schuylkill Valley around 1784 which only grew grapes from France. In 1800, he wrote that it was the “Patriotic Duty” of Americans to ignore local grape varieties and continue to try growing European grapes. The only vines that grew well for Legeaux were Cape grapes, which were, in fact, native to the Western Hemisphere — they are believed to come from a hybrid

plant crossed with a variety from the Schuylkill Valley.

Eventually, the winery went out of business. But even though Legeaux’s winery failed, news of the Cape grape spread. Pennsylvania became the first state to plant Cape grapes on a commercial scale and became the birthplace of American wineries. Eventually, cultivation of the Alexander grape was replaced by the native Catawba grape, introduced by Pennsylvanian John Adlum, who also wrote the first book on grape growing.

### Grape Growing in North East

Despite North East being Pa. Wine Country, it was actually a latecomer to planting grapes. The first places in Erie County known for grapes were Girard and Springfield. The first commercial vineyard was in Mooreheadville in 1843. Credit for North East’s grape growing is given to William Griffith. Griffith was from Chautauqua County, where grapes had been grown for some time.

Griffith moved to North East in 1840, and he recognized that the soil and climate in North East were perfect for growing grapes. Aside from planting grapes, Griffith also helped build up North East as a town. He was one of the founders of the First National Bank of North East, part of the group which started the Erie & North East Railroad, opened in 1852, and a member of the board which established the Methodist Seminary in 1867. Griffith also encouraged other farmers to

Grape growing did not take off in North East until William Griffith and Samuel Hammond planted the first commercial vineyard there, specializing in the Catawba varietal. Their first winery failed, but the second, South Shore Winery, has been in operation since 1864.

grow the Catawba grapes. He even convinced the United States Secretary of Agriculture to attend a meeting of local grape growers in October of 1865.

In 1850, Griffith and Samuel Hammond planted the first commercial vineyard in North East. They planted Catawba grapes as they were thought to be good not only for winemaking but also as table grapes. This first winery failed but after receiving outside funding they built a new winery in 1864 at the same location. The winery Griffith and Hammond started is the South Shore Wine Company, still in operation today. The winery sold its first batch of wine on November 21, 1867. The winery continued to grow, and more wineries opened in the following decades.

The owners of these wineries were aware of the growing temperance movement which began in the latter half of the 19th century. Most wineries had closed before the passing of Prohibition owing to the growing temperance movement in Pennsylvania. After Prohibition, the grape industry changed dramatically, and farmers needed to change or lose their farms. The Concord grape saved these family farms and the grape industry in North East.

### The Concord comes to North East

Before the wineries, most grapes grown were table grapes, and even after wineries opened, many grapes were still grown to be sold locally. The most successful table grape variety was the Concord grape. In 1849 Ephraim Bull developed the “perfect” grape in Concord, Mass. This variety was not only sweet, but it was also hardier and matured much faster than existing varieties. Lincoln Fey, of Portland N.Y., is believed to be responsible for bringing Concord grapes to North East.

The Concord owes its national popularity to Horace Greely, editor of the New York Tribune and printer of the local Erie Herald. Greely offered a \$1,000 premium for the best grapes in the county and proclaimed the Con-

cord as the "grape for the millions." In the 1880s, the demand for grapes skyrocketed. Table grapes were the most commonly grown and by 1897, North East had become the largest producer and shipper of grapes in the world. Part of this is due to the farmers' associations which came to be known as "grape unions." The unions had specific rules about the growing, harvesting, and handling of grapes which ensured that retailers could be guaranteed a good product.

#### Grape Juice, Walker, and Welch's

The advent of grape juice was to be the saving grace of grape growers in the area, and much of the credit is owed to Welch's. For a long time, it was impossible to make grape juice because the yeasts which covered the grapes led to fermentation. In 1869 Dr. Thomas Welch, a physician and dentist in New Jersey used Louis Pasteur's sterilization process on grape juice to be used for communion at his church. Dr. Welch was not interested in marketing his product. But his son, Dr. Charles Welch, thought that this could be big

business. Charles devoted himself to grape juice, and in 1893 his juice was a hit at the Chicago World's Fair.

In North East, the Concord grapes grown as table grapes were perfect to use in making grape juice. There were a few men in North East who made grape juice, and Welch's first built their plant in Westfield, N.Y. in 1897.

Francis Walker Sr. owned 60 acres of vineyards in Harborcreek and his father-in-law, Chauncey Walker, owned a farm in North East. Francis Walker decided that what North East needed was a grape juice plant. He thought there was money to be made producing grape juice in Erie County, especially since the growers were right there. Walker bought 10 acres on the edge of North East along the Nickel Plate Railroad tracks in 1905 and in 1909 Walker built the largest and most modern grape processing plant in the world, far outstripping anything Welch's had. The plant was designed to receive one ton of grapes every 90 seconds. The equipment was so unique that Walker patented it. The company was called

Walker's Grape Juice, and the plant was called by the locals simply Walker's.

While Francis Walker had experience in marketing and advertising, and his sons were passionate about the grape business, Walker did not have the large-scale sales network that Welch's had established and the company went bankrupt around 1911. Welch's purchased the North East Plant, but the plant was too modern for Welch's and so all of Walker's modern innovations were removed. It would be 1930 before Welch's started using bulk storage tanks, and in 1952, all the processing plants converted to bulk storage.

In the 1920s, California table grapes began to take control of the market. California growers could produce multiple varieties of grapes, not just Concord. The market for grape juice, and the fact that most growers already sold their grapes to fruit processors saved the North East area. Family farms had a market to sell their grapes and continue to make a profit, allowing them to stay in business.

Welch's is the only grape processor

left in North East. The company is no longer owned by the Welch family and hasn't been since 1929 when it was sold to a group in Nashville, Tenn. In 1933 Jack Kaplan made the largest change in Welch's history. Kaplan started the National Grape Corporation in Brockton, N.Y. and soon had a large group of growers working with him. Kaplan sold his company to the growers with the stipulation that they form a cooperative to run it.

In 1946, they formed and named their group the National Grape Cooperative. In 1956 the cooperative finalized the purchase of Welch's and renamed it Welch Foods, Inc. This was the first time that a farmer's cooperative, run by the growers themselves, had purchased a multi-billion-dollar food industry. North East is still the largest supplier of grapes in both North East and Westfield, N.Y. And the North East plant is still the largest of its kind in the world.

Francesca Tronetti can be contacted at [ftronetti@gmail.com](mailto:ftronetti@gmail.com)

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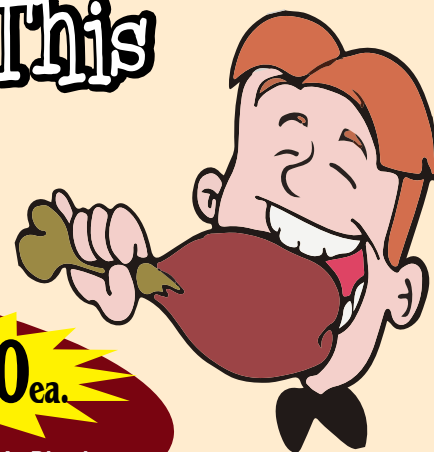
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## Starting From Scratch

An entrepreneurial case study with MakerPlace's Karen Rzepecki



**Karen Rzepecki, founder of ReCAP Mason Jars and the idea incubator MakerPlace, stands before a selection of products she's helped local entrepreneurs get off the ground.**

NICK WARREN

By: Rebecca Styn

**D**oes entrepreneurship beget entrepreneurship?

Well, there's about a 50/50 chance.

Statistics show that 48 percent of entrepreneurs grew up seeing their family run a business of their own. For Karen Rzepecki, founder and CEO of MakerPlace Mason Jars Company — this was no different. Rzepecki's grandfather owned a five-and-dime store, her father was a farmer, and her mother was an artist who owned a small gallery in Somerset County. And yet, even with it in her blood, her entrepreneurial career didn't start right out of college. Instead, she went the corporate path and served nearly 30 years at GE Transportation.

When asked if transitioning from corporate life to entrepreneurial life was scary, Rzepecki stated, "it didn't scare me in any way. My family was very entrepreneurial. It wasn't unique to see someone running a business."

Rzepecki's first idea, as many of us now know, was for an attachable lid for Mason jars that would be easy to pour from and reuse. "I use Mason jars to make salad dressings with herbs from my garden. At the time, there was only the metal lid with the ring, and it frequently made messes. And as such, I wanted to create a better solution."

And the idea was born.

Rzepecki would go on to create and patent a BPA-free, FDA-approved "no break" plastic multi-purpose cap; however, she did not have a background in plastics. But what she did have was all the other necessary tools, including the perseverance and the connections.

"Creating the right team is so crucial. I knew many individuals in the tool & die industry; I continued to create connections throughout and I put together the right team to manage the resources."

Once she had her prototype and design, she tested the market on the now prevalent crowd-funding platform Kickstarter. "At the time, Kickstart-

er had only been around two years and required an application process. I did everything that was required — and they initially sent back a rejection letter."

But that didn't stop her.

As luck would have it, her son just happened to know the founder of Kickstarter. "I could have done it on my own, but he made the introduction, and ultimately they got back to me. Originally, they thought the product was already being sold in stores. Once they realized it wasn't, they were very excited." The response was overwhelmingly positive. Her 2011 launch saw \$16,325 pledged (well above her \$10,000 goal) and 824 backers.

It is said that luck is a matter of preparation meeting opportunity. And the timing for Rzepecki's launch was impeccable. "Today, the crowd-funding game is much more challenging. Now, it's almost impossible to get seen on Kickstarter. Back then you could get influencers excited merely by giving them a product. Now, they are much more savvy and looking for ways to monetize

their business." Rzepecki also entered in the Innovation Erie competition and won. "I received the grand prize and between that and the Kickstarter funds, that was enough for me to tool up."

However, she still had a bit of a learning curve ahead. "In the process of bringing the product to market — I never had a position dealing directly with consumers. All of my experience at GE was business-to-business — so this was foreign to me." She reached out of her comfort zone and started networking. "I started going to trade shows. There was a major one in Chicago and there was an area for small companies like us, an investors corner. The folks in that corner, around 35 or so of us, were all so excited for each other. They were engaging and shared stories and we were all rooting for each other. When you walked outside of that area, the bigger brands didn't share the same feelings. They didn't want to talk, and we were not welcome in their space."

Today, Rzepecki continues to expand upon her products and the recently developed masonjars.com — an online makerspace. "With changes in the marketplace, outlets like Amazon and Etsy have become increasingly competitive." She wanted to have a marketplace to aid in this experience — however, not for product launches, but rather a product accelerator. "I am looking to work with original makers that have a product and brand and processes in order — they know how to fulfill orders."

Rzepecki's focus is to continue to tap into the collective

nature of entrepreneurs. "The collaborative spirit is contagious. I look at other makers on our site and think about how I can use their products with mine and make a better solution." And she is thrilled with the results to date. "We launched in June and it is performing exactly as we anticipated. The more we can build broader solutions, well, everybody wins. This is not a zero-sum game."

Currently, Rzepecki has 35 sellers in various stages of onboarding. And she's already looking at her next venture. "We are looking to bring this entire ecosystem full circle. The next step for us is to build out the American version of Ali Baba." Because Asian manufacturing has exploded, it's easier for the U.S. to engage in Asian manufacturing than it is in the U.S.A. "The needs in the U.S. are so fragmented and regionalized — if we can help create the view that American manufacturing is still very much alive, I think we can change that perception."

As for her best advice for those looking to get into the entrepreneurial arena? "Do your research. If you want to be taken seriously, don't just have an idea and start asking people without looking into it. Everybody is busy. Do your homework before you start approaching others. When you get some of the legwork done ahead of time, you'll find you'll get a ton of help."

*Rebecca Styn is the Executive Director of the Idea Fund Erie, a nonprofit organization that supports entrepreneurial development and is the proprietor of Room 33 Speakeasy. She is also completing her PhD in Leadership and Organizational Learning from Gannon University. Follow her on twitter at @rstyn*

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# Erie's History of Brand Awareness

How the “Shop Local” spirit has been thriving since the 1870s



Local businesses have been building brand awareness for centuries — take for instance this 1837 advertisement from Peach St. Grocery (left) and 1966 print spot for (the recently closed) Meadow Brook Dairy.

will be exposed to a near-endless amount of old Erie brands: Griswold cast-iron pans, aged wrenches made by Erie Tool Works, classic toys from Louis Marx and Company, and Koehler beer bottles and memorabilia, to name a few.

A quick eBay search demonstrates that many of these Erie-made antiques have quite a following among collectors, particularly Griswold Manufacturing, where people pay big bucks for their pots, pans, kettles, and other cast-iron items, which were produced in Erie between 1865 through 1957.

The branding power of “Made in Erie” still resonates in the region today. It’s satisfying to glance at a label or flip over cookware and see one’s own hometown. Like Pittsburgh with Heinz Ketchup (my Pittsburgh-raised wife would never look at me the same if I came home from the grocery store with a bottle of Hunt’s), Erie residents are just as passionate about their locally-made prod-

ucts.

Growing up, this local-brand loyalty was embedded in my psyche at a young age. My holy trifecta of local consumables when I was a kid were Smith Hot Dogs, Troyer Farms Potato Chips, and Meadow Brook milk — and while only one of those remain, my local brand loyalty remains strong.

There has certainly been a resurgence in caring about where our products are made. For those who can afford the few extra bucks, for instance, the regional craft brewery renaissance has reminded us of the benefits of drinking local. Many others are more interested than ever about where their food comes from, inspiring new city ventures such as French Street Farms, Cake Zen, and the growing fame of the locally-made D’Lish Chicken Wing Dip.

Brand loyalty on the national level often relies on clever marketing strategies, but when it comes to goods manufactured in one’s own region, the loyalty offered has less to do with marketing and more to do with pride. Who hasn’t argued over our region’s best wine or chocolate (spoiler: they’re all delicious)? Who doesn’t have their

go-to local bakery for cookies and cake and pepperoni balls? When you slip on a t-shirt from Erie Apparel, KRU, or Iron Empire and go out in public, you feel more connected, more part of the community. These days, the spirit of Child’s directories live on in things like Erie’s Shopping Guide, a locally-focused aggregator assembled by David Steele and Emily George, available for free all over Independence Hill and throughout the city.

There are the economic reasons to support local brands, but there are also the cultural: local brands are part of what makes each city, each town, each community unique. For those local products you love: share your love of them with others. Skip the \$5 Hallmark card and gift someone with something locally-made instead.

For those products you have yet to experience yourself, give them a try when you get the chance. You might find yourself a new favorite brand.

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

By: Jonathan Burdick

In the 1870s, Hamilton Child compiled a directory of prominent businesses throughout Erie County, Pennsylvania. He made a career out of this: deploying canvassers into counties and regions to compile these directories, painstakingly collecting details on products, owners, output, and employment.

Today, these directories provide an interesting glimpse into these 19th century communities and the goods that were produced there. During the time of publication though, the directories served as the ultimate 19th century “Shop Local” book.

Erie County residents could utilize Child’s directory to find products of all kinds being

produced around the county. There was the Presque Isle Spice Mills, which roasted and grinded over a ton of coffee and 200 pounds of spices each day. The Erie Paper Mill produced daily over two tons of manila paper. Numerous breweries — Baker’s Ale Brewery, Downer & Howard’s Ale Brewery, The Eagle Brewery, Koehler’s Brewery, and others — made thousands upon thousands of barrels of beer annually. There were businesses manufacturing candles, soap, nursery beds, pipe organs, chairs, carriages, cheese, flannels, tools — and frankly, just about anything else one might have needed in the 1870s.

If one searches online for “antiques” and “made in Erie, PA” or visits one of the area’s many vintage shops nowadays, one

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Just Toyin’ Witcha - By B. Toy



# The 2018 Made in Erie Gift Guide

Bringing a local presence to all your presents

By: Matt Swanseger

Consumers are more empowered now than in any other period in human history. Sure, the likes of Alexander the Great, Caesar Augustus, Charlemagne, and Napoleon may have lorded over millions (of subjects and square miles) at the heights of their empires — but did they have Wi-fi access or an Amazon Prime account? What's the shipping estimate on cardamom from the East Indies via draft elephant? Great, let's pencil "garam masala" in our meal planners six months from now (insert eye roll).

Fast-forward to 2018. The average person can order exotic goods from the furthest reaches of the globe without ever leaving the house. Not to undersell the perks of divine rights and heavenly mandates, but the god-emperors of yesteryear could not fathom the choices modern-day consumers have at their fingertips. Cat turntables? Motion-activated toilet nightlights? Yodeling pickles? C'mon, now — this isn't even fair (and yes, those are all real products available through amazon.com).

Indeed, any niche that can be filled by an online retailer has been, or soon will be. But what about those in the market for products that they can see, smell, taste, and/or touch beforehand? Or those who would like to talk about their options, in the flesh, with a live human being? Many still seek a genuine shopping experience — the pre-knowledge of exactly what they're getting and where and from whom it originated. And for that, nothing beats shopping local.

In that spirit, we bring you our annual "Made in Erie" Holiday Gift Guide, rife with great local products from great local businesses that you can visit *in person*, staffed by *real* people with *real* faces to whom you can address real questions and concerns (although you can purchase many of these items online as well). You'll soon know who they are (and maybe even where they live), so they'll hold themselves accountable. Eventually, they'll know who you are, too (and thus have a vested interest), so your input as an individual customer will have more sway. Reciprocity is a beautiful thing.

## UNCLE NICK'S POMADE



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

You can only control what you can control, and that might as well include your hair. Give a man free will, though, and he's destined to make terrible decisions. Sticky gels that crust over for an off-puttingly plasticine

pate. Highly flammable hairsprays, heavily hampering your ability to high-kick and "hee-hee!" onstage without incident (RIP Michael Jackson). And mousse? Get out of here with that poison whipped cream.

Luckily, local barber Nicholas Robert Senita is here to save you from yourself with **Uncle Nick's Pomade**. Comprised of just five all-natural and organic ingredients (none which are bear fat, per pomade's earliest formulations), it lends a firm hold to just about any hairstyle without drying it out, leaving your locks soft and supple to the touch. Uncle Nick believes he was fated to own his barbershop, and cares about what's going through his customers' heads (in fact, he wrote a book about it, entitled *The Meaning of Life*) as much as what's on top of them. Look good and feel better this holiday season and beyond.

**Available at:** Uncle Nick's Barbershop, 2932 Peach St. and unclenickspomade.com, \$14.99 (4 oz. container)

## POPLUCK POPCORN



JESSICA HUNTER

Those of a certain age will remember the agonizing slog of childhood fundraisers, canvassing door-to-door with catalogs of overpriced comestibles. One of the mainstays of these? The commemorative popcorn tin, lithographed with some charming scene on the outside and trisected into butter, cheese, and caramel compartments within. Without fail, the flavored varieties depleted in a heartbeat while the unadorned kernels grew stale from neglect.

Anything but stale is Erie's **PopLuck Popcorn**, with more delicious diversity than you can shake a toothpick at. Sure, the classic trilogy (salted butter, orange or white cheddar, and caramel) is represented in full effect, but that's just the top of the popper. Stop in to sample from their rotating lineup of gourmet flavors and prepare to have your mind flossed of any preconceptions of what you thought popcorn could be. In the spirit of Christmas (and nostalgia), PopLuck will be offering their own spin on tins this holiday season — the standard version (\$20) will include the caramel corn and the both white and orange cheddar; the deluxe version (\$30) will add two premium holiday flavors to the trifecta, Cherry Christmas (cherry-vanilla) and Oh Deer (toffee with red cinnamon, pecans, and a white choco-

late drizzle).

**Available at:** 1535 W. 8th St., Unit A-3; prices vary; visit the PopLuck Facebook page or popluckpopcorn.com

## THE THREE CHOCOLATIERS



JESSICA HUNTER

Whether you're buying for a complete stranger or your unquestioned soulmate, chocolate is one of the surest ways to cajole them into loving you a little more — or, at the very least — hating you a little less. Make friends and influence people this holiday season with **Romolo, Stefanelli's, or Pulakos** candies. Whether you do that with solid chocolate or their staggering assortments of enrobed nuts, truffles, cremes, caramels, fruits, and fondants is up to you. For a uniquely Erie touch, sneak in some sponge candy (AKA honeycomb toffee, cinder toffee, or hokey pokey), a simple-but-effective blend of sugar, corn syrup (and sometimes honey or molasses) heated and infused with baking soda. This creates thousands of air bubbles and a satisfyingly light, crisp crunch.

Collectively, the three area chocolatiers have over a century's experience of seducing palates with their handcrafted confections. It doesn't matter how it happens (from a bag, bar, box, or basket), it only matters that it happens. And that it melts in their mouths, not their stockings.

**Available at:** Romolos (1525 W. 8th St.), Stefanelli's (2054 W. 8th St.), Pulakos (2530 Parade St.). For a full list of products, prices, and outlet locations, visit romolochocolates.com, stefanelliscandies.com, or pulakos-chocolates.com

## HO, HO, PO(TATIONS)



JESSICA HUNTER

Celebrating with family and friends? *Tolerating* family and friends? Either way, the occasion probably calls for a drink. Pour yourself a glass of the good stuff from the

# Musculoskeletal Health Research Study Seeking Patients

The LECOM Musculoskeletal Institute is seeking patients with impaired shoulder function and mobility related to arthritis, trauma, and sports injuries willing to participate in a research study starting in January 2019.

To enroll in the study, call the LECOM Orthopedic Office at **(814) 868-7840** or the LECOM Medical Fitness and Wellness Center at **(814) 868-7800**.

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## Magee-Womens

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region's impressive array of libation-makers.

- The constituent breweries of the **Lake Erie Ale Trail** boast a bevy of options for your resident beer enthusiast. Thus far, only Lavery, Erie Brewing, Five & 20, Timbercreek, and Voodoo distribute, but if you stop into Millcreek Brewing Co. or Arundel Cellars & Brewing during their operating hours (Thursday through Saturday), you can apply to become an **Ale Trail Enthusiast** member for \$75. You will receive a membership passport (valid for one year) and an official LEAT 64 oz. growler that can be filled at any of the 14 participating breweries (one fill per month, no repeats). For addresses and more info, visit [lakeeriealetrail.com](http://lakeeriealetrail.com)

- Need to get your holiday spirit a little stronger? No worries, **Luminary Distilling** (8270 Peach St., Summit Township), **Cart/Horse Distillery** (12030 Edinboro Rd., Edinboro, PA 16428), and **Five & 20 Spirits & Brewing** (8398 W. Main St., Westfield, N.Y. 14787) will have you caroling (in tune?) in no time.

- "Airing of Grievances" monopolizing your holiday get-togethers? Give them something to "wine" about with a bottle from any of the 23 wineries situated in **Lake Erie Wine Country**. Should they have a gripe with grapes, you might honey them up with some mead from **IronStone Meadery** (9333 Tate Rd., Greene Township) or **Cambridge Cellars** (22716 US-19, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403).

## EFFORTLESS ART CRAYONS



JESSICA HUNTER

Get a grip on your child's artistic development with **Effortless Art Crayons**. These crayons feature a patent-pending middle grip that is more accommodating to the natural tendencies of developing children. This innovation was devised by local husband-and-wife duo of Jason and Nancy Morris of Two Sparrows Learning Systems. Nancy, a former special education teacher and current instructor at Gannon University, was fed up with watching students struggle with conventional crayons. Jason, with his background in mechanical engineering and product development, had just the tools to help.

The crayons are designed such that the youngster can "graduate" to the static tripod grasp typical of older children. Every Effortless Art Crayon is triangular in shape, but the "Level 2" crayons are narrower with a beveled tip, acting as the perfect transition to the brand name Crayolas, et al. Color yourself impressed as your budding Rembrandt's artistic abilities take off, while also coloring yourself relieved that Two Sparrows

uses only eco-friendly materials and packaging in every product.

**Available at:** [effortlessartproducts.com](http://effortlessartproducts.com)

## WILLOW CREEK BARN WOOD FURNITURE



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Not since the Nativity has "being born in barn" carried such noble connotations. Willow Creek Barn Wood Furniture, a small, family-owned venture operating out of Edinboro, aims to preserve the history, beauty, and rustic charm of old barn wood by refashioning it into fixtures of every ilk for your home or office. Sick and tired of the same ol' wick? Let that wax wane in style with a barn beam candle holder. Blasé about the state of modern wall hangings? Spruce things up with a Willow Creek bottleboard — you'll be the most "poplar" guy or gal in town. That's just a sliver of what's available — check out the sturdy coat and wine racks, farm tables, and more.

The ingenuity and craftsmanship of father-and-son co-founders Chris and Casey Brown is evident in every Willow Creek creation. Together, the duo has helped dismantle two historic barns, The Kane Barn (Kane, Pa.) and Goodell Barn (from Edinboro's own Goodell Gardens), salvaging every bit of lumber they could muster. If they don't use it, they'll lose it, so they're more than willing to take on your custom projects — just ask for a free quote.

**Available at:** 111 Erie St., Edinboro, PA 16428 or [willow-creekbarnwood.com](http://willow-creekbarnwood.com)

## GOOD SCENTS



JESSICA HUNTER

Always fragrant but never foul is the **Colony Plaza's Scent**, a boutique merging local businesswomen Leah Show's **Candle Box Company** and Janice Fatica's **Pink Cottage Soaps**. Together, they seek to make a positive

impact on your home, your health, your hygiene, and the environment — which we could all agree needs some cleaning up.

How so? Well, consider that many scented candles are composed of paraffin wax, a petroleum by-product that may release carcinogenic compounds into the air when burned. Candle Box candles are handmade from soy wax, which burns slower, cleaner, and carries the additional benefit of supporting U.S. agriculture.

The soaps and shampoos you use every day contain a host of potentially harmful chemicals, including parabens, sulfates, and/or triclosan (banned by the FDA in 2017). Pink Cottage Soaps offers a full line of beautifully crafted, all-natural, and non-irritating soaps, bath bombs, lotions, and scrubs. Smell better, smell smarter with Scent products.

**Available at:** 2564 W. 8th St.; available online at [scent-gift-shop.business.site](http://scent-gift-shop.business.site) or [candleboxcompany.com](http://candleboxcompany.com)

## JUST BOOK IT



JESSICA HUNTER

It may be 2018, but print matter is far from passé at **Pressed Bookstore** in the Greengarden Plaza. The 4,000 square foot space began with owner Tracey Bowes' passion for discovering "quality through the five senses," and she has followed through by providing "an old-fashioned tactile experience with a fresh style." Yes, you can pick up, touch, and leaf through bound, printed volumes of all kinds within the store's cozy confines, including those sourced from right here in Erie.

The "Love Your Local Authors" section, nestled in the back corner of the store's central area, allows readers to immerse themselves in Erie histories, legends, lore, and even field guides of the region's flora and fauna. Proponents of prose might be treated to fiction from the likes of Tom Noyes, Rebecca Kightlinger, CJ Zahner, Laura Weber, or James DeHaven. The more lyrically inclined may lend their eyes to the work of "40 Under 40" alumna Anna Rose Welch or 2017-18 Erie County Poet Laureate Marisa Moks-Unger. There's talent all around us; finding it may be as easy as looking between the pages.

**Available at:** 1535 W. 8th St., Unit A-2; visit [pressed-books.com](http://pressed-books.com)

TREAT YOURSELF



There are 650 skeletal muscles within the human body that have a name; when was the last time you took roll call? Well, if there's ever an occasion to acknowledge the underappreciated or long-forgotten, it's the holidays — even if those descriptors apply to you. Whether you're after a simple rejuvenation or a total reinvention (head-to-toe wax, anyone?), a day at the spa or salon could be just the solution. Give yourself and/or a loved one permission to be pampered by the licensed experts

at **Panache Salon and Spa, Monacella Massage & Kinesiology, or Massage Envy.**

The physiological and psychological benefits of massage are very real; it's been shown to lower stress, promote healing, and improve posture. These businesses are certainly no slouches in other areas as well — for instance, Panache offers a variety of world-class hair and skin care products, jewelry, and even custom gift baskets. Monacella's mini-retreat packages represent escapism at its aromatherapy-enhanced best. If there are athletes in your family, it might behoove them to employ Massage Envy's professionally-assisted full-body stretching service, the Streto Method. Limber up your mind and body and your mood's sure to loosen up as well.

**Available at:** Panache (2501 W. 12th St.), Monacella (1001 State St., Ste. 1322), and Massage Envy (2070 Interchange Rd., Unit 220)

SHAMELESS PLUG

We couldn't leave you without pushing the company swag. The folks at **Erie Apparel** have fashioned us three awesome t-shirt designs available for sale now at [shop.eriereader.com](http://shop.eriereader.com). The first displays a stylized Renaissance Building (our office's current headquarters) encircled by our company name and slogan in white on a black background. The second tee comes in an assertive olive green with the company logo on the chest in



JESSICA HUNTER

black. Last but not least, we have our "Read Local" shirt, featuring a flowing script upon a lovely blue backdrop.

We thank you and encourage you to continue reading local, and supporting Erie-owned businesses by buying local as well.

*The name "Matthew" is derived from the Hebrew word for "gift of God." Matt Swanseger hardly feels worthy of such a conceit — or your emails — but feel free to forward them to [mswanseger@eriereader.com](mailto:mswanseger@eriereader.com) anyway.*

A large advertisement featuring a close-up of Santa Claus on the left. He has a white beard, wears glasses, and is smiling. The background is a festive collage of white snowflakes and bokeh light effects. Text on the right side of the image reads:

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# At the Center of the World

How World of Music continues to pull the Erie music community together



By: Nick Warren

There have been a few places claiming to be the “center of the world”: a roadside pyramid in Felicity, Calif.; a spot in the southwest Atlantic Ocean (per some map projections); Çorum, Turkey (according to Google Maps); the inside of the Earth’s core (if you insist on being literal about things); or an unincorporated township near Warren, Ohio. For the music community in Erie, the answer to that is clear: the showroom floor of World of Music.

Like any center, there’s a force of gravity at work here.

For decades, musicians have been flocking to this store. One step inside World of Music (or WOM, as it’s known), and it’s pretty obvious why it’s such a hub — especially if you fancy yourself as a guitarist. With its walls lined

with scores of guitars from electric guitar-makers like Fender, Gibson, Ibanez, and ESP, and acoustic manufacturers like Taylor or Martin, it’s almost overwhelming. It’s not limited to guitars of course, with PAs and percussion to the north, and keyboards, strings, brass, and woodwinds to the south.

Founded by local jazz saxophonist Dick Bulling in 1954, it was passed on to his daughters Laura Jacoboski and Linda McLaughlin, who later brought on her husband Mike as a partner. Mike and Linda’s daughter, Amanda has worked at the store for years, too. In addition to being a true family business, it’s been a part of nearly every local musician’s journey as well. There are countless people who bought their first instrument here, or honed their early skills in one of the store’s many downstairs lesson rooms. Via staff alone, the store has pulled in some of

**Zack Orr hosts an in-store ukulele workshop at World of Music on Saturday, Nov. 17. The store, a community fixture, has been fostering musical education for decades.**

the best musicians that this region has ever seen, and almost unanimously, they’re happy there. “We’ve had a great crew for years” explains store manager Rome Caccamo. “What sets us apart is the fact that we know our longtime customers by name, and they know us. The vibe and culture in our store is one of familiarity, and you know you’ll see many of the same salespeople here because our employee turnover is so low.”

As everyone knows, there’s a fine line when you’re shopping. Sometimes you are looking for something directly, and sometimes you just want to browse. For gear junkies, it’s usually the latter. Sure, for most stops, one can find a reasonable excuse: a pack of strings, a pair of drumsticks, or a replacement cable. But while you’re checking in, you simply must check to see if they have any other items you might be interested in. Oftentimes, music store employees are drawn as condescending elitists or self-involved basket cases (check out Karen Kilgariff’s “Chelsea Guitars” and the opening scene in Mike Judge’s *Extract* for respective examples). As someone who often meanderingly browses, I’m always eased by the staff’s easygoing approach, whether I know them or not.

At this time, it’s probably helpful if things get a little personal. I suffer from a mild-to-moderate gear addiction, known to message board frequenters as Gear Acquisition Syndrome (or GAS). I currently own about

a dozen instruments, half of which are electric guitars (in the Fender Jazzmaster or Jaguar “offset” style), with more than a dozen effects pedals, a few amplifiers and cabinets — one of which is so prized (and cumbersome) that I’ve never played it out live. I’ve bought and sold more than double that over the past couple of years, and despite what it does to my bank account, I love it. As mentioned earlier, many people got their first guitar at WOM, and I’m one of them. It was a red Yamaha RGX 120 D. A few years later I bought my first effects pedal there, which — at the behest of one of the associates who urged me to get the much-better and equally-priced Boss OD-3 — was a DOD Supra Distortion. Some of my friends had the “Grunge” pedal, and I wanted to follow suit.

Oh, what lessons we grow to learn throughout the years.

“In terms of teaching, I’d say that we have one of the best teaching staffs of any store that I’ve ever worked at,” confessed Zack Orr. Starting at the store in the late 1990s, Orr went on to the Berklee College of Music, and later returned to teach at WOM in addition to his many freelance audio and visual ventures. “There are people who are graduates from all the local music schools, and self-taught people who are amazing in any genre you want,” he elaborated. More than 500 students come to WOM for lessons each week between the staff of more than 15 accredited instructors. “Performance and technique are important aspects of their lessons,” clarifies Katie Jones, the music school’s coordinator. “But the

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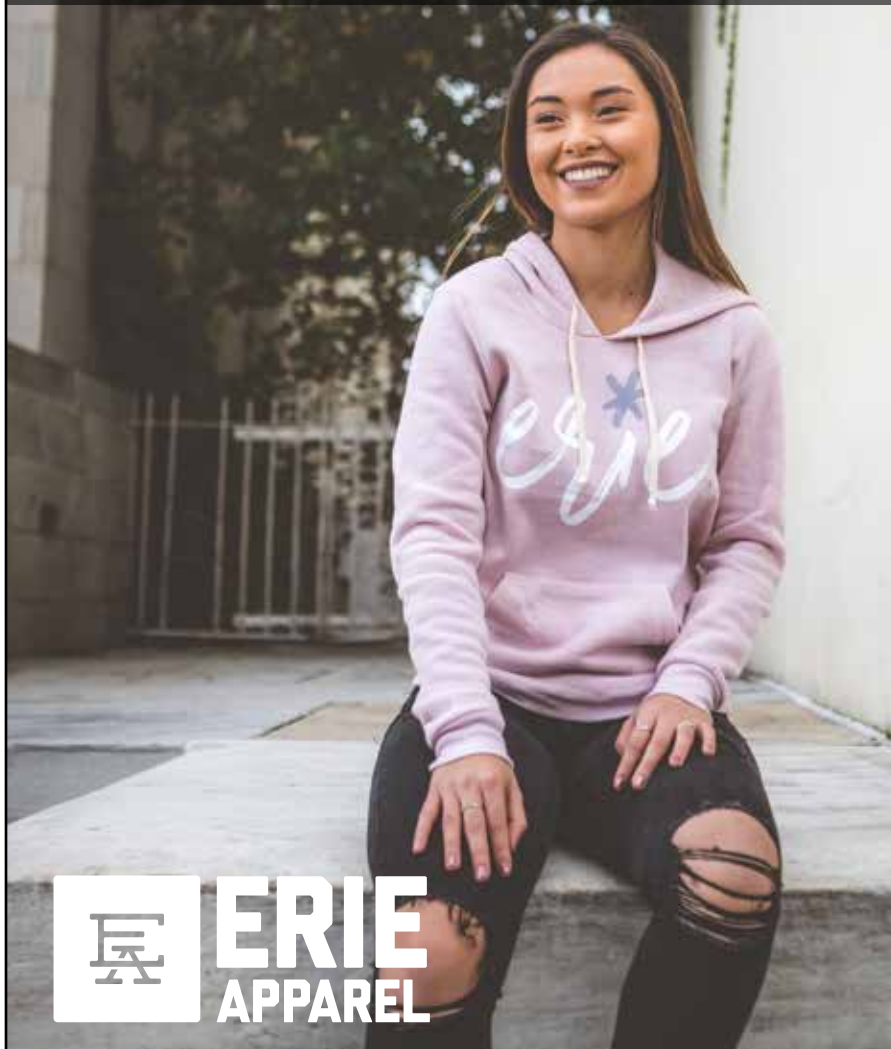


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## FEATURE



NICK WARREN

**World of Music sales associate (and singer and guitarist for pop-punk band Daytona 2000) Trevor Vogt grabs a Fender Stratocaster off the wall for a customer.**

teaching staff believes that kids and adults who have fun learning will develop a lifelong appreciation for music."

Over the decades, the store has continued to thrive, being one of the relatively few large-scale, independent music stores in the nation. "There actually are not many 'mom and pop' music stores left in the country, as a result of the chains," Orr explained. Barely any of those run at the scope of WOM, with exceptions being metropolitan-centered wonderlands like the Chicago Music Exchange, Orr notes. "To have one this big in Erie is pretty amazing." That means that they can have personal agency over what they stock, and not be forced to push new and often ill-advised products (Gibson's Henry Juszkievicz-era guitars, we're looking at you). However, co-owner Linda McLaughlin explained they "keep up to date on the current trends and popular products." Noting the store's staff, competitive pricing, and large inventory, she is also quick to highlight that "the fact that you can come in and try out our instruments and choose between several to find the right sound and fit is the main thing that sets us apart from our online competitors."

Percussionist Steve Barone started teaching at WOM in 2003, and now works on the sales floor as well. "Since I've been here," he said, "I've watched us tear down walls, build new walls, remodel the store, open new displays, take on new brands, and ditch old

brands. It's been very cool to be a part of those everyday changes and see how it's evolved over just the time I've been here." He recounted that in the '60s the guitar area used to be reserved for pianos and organs, and marveled at the shift over the years. Barone was also aware of the current ongoing shift from traditional instruments to a more digital platform. "We are seeing a lot more of the electronic, digital music production things going on, with Ableton Live and the instruments that are controlling that," he admitted. With that he underscored the importance of music fundamentals, "to know why the button you're pushing is doing that," he laughed.

Making music can be a deeply personal experience. It's also something that's inherently collaborative — no matter how solo you want to go — at some level of the musical process. Working together, musicians are able to learn, grow, and thrive. To World of Music, that's a pretty catchy tune.

*Nick Warren got his first real six string at the age of 13. You can hear some TV themes and improvisational loops at [soundcloud.com/newwavecrashing/tracks](https://soundcloud.com/newwavecrashing/tracks) or email him at [nick@eriereader.com](mailto:nick@eriereader.com)*

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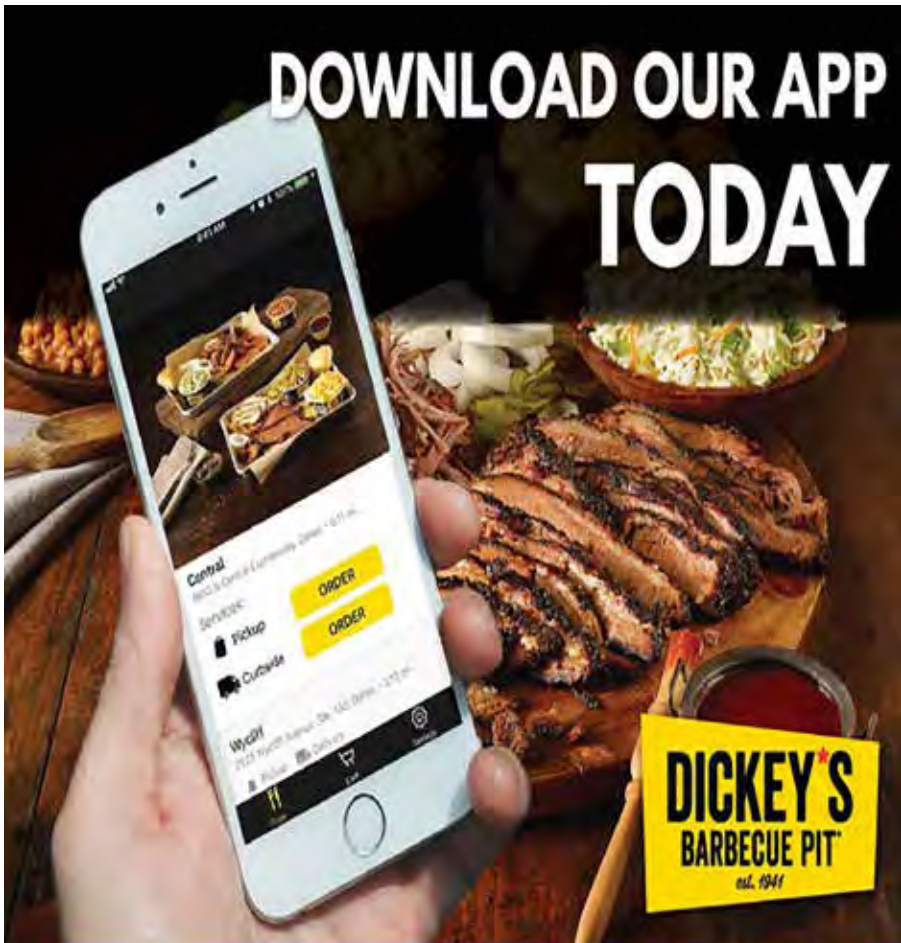
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# Celebrate Lights and Letters' Debut EP with Josh Travis at Basement Transmissions



The members of Lights & Letters (left to right: Sam Krahe, Grammy-winning producer Jonathan Crone, Dave Perkins, and Bradley Perrine) invite you to Basement Transmissions to celebrate the release of their debut EP, *Tell Me*.

## FRIDAY, NOV. 23RD

On Black Friday, local indie-pop players Lights and Letters will be releasing their debut EP, *Tell Me*, and they want you to be a part of that release. Performing alongside singer-songwriter Josh Travis at Basement Transmissions, the band is offering a special admission package to the show that includes your choice of a digital or hard-copy of *Tell Me*, a limited edition t-shirt, and treats during the show courtesy of the recently-opened downtown bakery Cake Zen. A "Just Supporting" ticket is also available to those who cannot attend, but would still like a copy of the EP and a tee.

Vocalist David Perkins explained to me what listeners can expect from the band's first official release, citing the record's "straightforward indie-rock with upbeat and synth-driven moments throughout." Says Perkins, "we're not trying to reinvent the wheel with our sound. We want people to enjoy the music, but we also want them to feel

something ... blame, doubt, [and] regret are common threads throughout the EP, with the goal of challenging and pointing the listener towards the hope that can be found in life."

Perkins is the first to admit that Josh Travis is a left-field choice to open the show, stylistically speaking, but finds a connection in the way he writes.

"Josh is an incredible songwriter," says Perkins. "The imagery and honesty in Josh's music has always resonated with us, and it's those same feelings we hope to evoke through our songs."

All in all, Perkins feels grateful to be entering Erie's music scene, and hopes the band's future will see them becoming a fixture of the community.

"We've been playing music for a long time, but are relatively new to the arts community in Erie. We have a lot of friends who are very active in the local music scene and have been for a long time. We're looking forward to learning and collaborating with those friends, and hopefully making some new ones along the way." — Aaron Mook

7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. // 145 W. 11th St. // \$20 // [facebook.com/lightsandletters](https://facebook.com/lightsandletters)

# Erie Contemporary Ballet Theater presents 'Erie's Own' *Nutcracker*



## SATURDAY, NOV. 24 - 25

After the success of last year, the Erie Contemporary Ballet Theater sweetens up the east side as they return to Mercyhurst's Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center for their fourth annual performance of *The Nutcracker*.

Though the venue and well-known tale of the Christmas season's favorite ballet remain the same, audience members can still expect surprises. "Each year we change some of the choreography, we are constantly upgrading costumes, and we can use bigger backdrops and more props," Sarah Purvis, artistic director of ECBT, said.

The holiday season provides a plethora of *Nutcracker* productions, but ECBT brings a family-oriented freshness with theirs. The original ballet, which tells the story of a Christmas Eve dream, sits at two-and-a-half hours. Potentially deterring children (and parents of small children), the creators of "Erie's

Own" *Nutcracker* removed repetitive measures, cutting down the runtime of the show while maintaining the suite's beautiful scenes, beloved melodies and memorable characters.

"This allows children, and children at heart, to enjoy a family-oriented tradition together," Purvis said of the change.

Families are a focus of the show on stage as well. "Every cast member involved has a family member that volunteers....This allows everyone to have a 'stake' and a responsibility to the production." Purvis continued, "It truly is a 'family' production!"

The classic Russian ballet, most recognized by its Tchaikovsky musical score, becomes complete on the stage with breathtaking, handmade backdrops and costumes, sure to transport audience members into the magical world of Sugarplum Fairies.

With showtimes a month before Christmas day and eve, organizers expressed excitement for kicking off the holiday season soon after the Thanksgiving tables have been cleared. "It has always been a holiday tradition for family and friends to attend," Purvis said. "[And] if I may be so bold, I think *The Nutcracker* is as much of a holiday tradition as watching *A Christmas Story*." — Hannah McDonald

Saturday 7 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m. // 501 E. 38th St. // \$17 to \$40 // [eriecbt.org/nutcracker](https://eriecbt.org/nutcracker)

## MUSIC

### Dave VanAmburg and Friends

Nov. 21, 23, 28, 30, Dec. 5 — 5 to 8 p.m.  
Bel-Aire Clarion, 2800 W. 8th St. [belaireclarion.com](https://belaireclarion.com).

### Trans-Siberian Orchestra

Nov. 21 — 8 p.m.  
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [erieinsurancearena.com](https://erieinsurancearena.com).

### Cat's A Bear

Nov. 21 — 8 p.m.  
Give yourself a break from the pre-Thanksgiving prep work and swing over to Artlore to catch contemporary jazz 5-piece.  
Artlore Studio, 3406 W. Lake Rd. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### Jive Turkey Jam

Nov. 21 — 10 p.m.  
A turkey-themed holiday pre-game featuring hip-hop

and funk fusion, followed by a DJ set by The LEC vocalist.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

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

Nov. 21 — 10 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.  
Jesse Michael & The Pilgrims set sail for Scotty's (but in a van, not the Mayflower). Accompanying them are Erie acts Cult Classics and Aria & The Voiceless.  
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### Claire Stuczynski

Nov. 23 — 5 to 7 p.m.  
Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](https://presqueisledowns.com).

### Key West Express

Nov. 23 — 6 to 10 p.m.  
BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### GURU

Nov. 23 — 7 to 9 p.m.  
Brew Brothers at PI Downs

& Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](https://presqueisledowns.com).

### Offstage at Lola's: Grateful

Nov. 23 — 8 p.m.  
Lola's Rat Pack Lounge, 16 W. 10th St. [erieplayhouse.org](https://erieplayhouse.org).

### The Vultures, Elektra Kings, Mala Sangre, Ish

Nov. 23 — 10 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.  
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### Jazzgiving Jam

Nov. 23 — 11 p.m.  
Cranberry jelly and jam sessions fill the week courtesy of your holiday festivities and this Western Pa. jazz band.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### The Monks Brew

Nov. 24 — 2 p.m.  
Pour a drink, shop the gallery, and dance to the official beginning of winter holidays with jazz by The Monks Brew and ST3.  
Artlore Studio, 3406 W.

Lake Rd. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### Geeks Unplugged

Nov. 24 — 5 to 7 p.m.  
Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](https://presqueisledowns.com).

### Taylor Maid

Nov. 24 — 6 to 10 p.m.  
BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### Miracle Music Fest

Nov. 24 — 6 to 11 p.m.  
Erie pop-rock, country, and Dave Matthews tribute bands team up for a "a concert that heals." The show benefits Saint Vincent Hospital and the Children's Miracle Network.  
Zem Zem Shrine Club, 2525 W. 38th St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### Saxsation

Nov. 24 — 7 to 9 p.m.  
Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](https://presqueisledowns.com).

### Cee Brown Experience

### w Brittany Morton

Nov. 24 — 10 p.m.  
Prolific Erie acts Eric Brewer, Ralph Reiting III and Ken Stix Thompson Sr. accompany local hip-hop musician on musical journey all night.  
Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### The Highlife

Nov. 25 — 1 to 4 p.m.  
Arundel Cellars & Brewing Co., 11727 E. Main Rd. North East, PA 16428 [arundelcellars.com](https://arundelcellars.com).

### Bach Cantata Vespers

Nov. 25 — 4 p.m.  
Luther Memorial Church, 225 St. 10th St. [lm-concerts.com](https://lm-concerts.com).

### Small Ensembles

Nov. 28 — 7 p.m.  
Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](https://miac.mercyhurst.edu).

### Open Mic + John, Claudia & Aria, Queen Tribute

Nov. 28 — 10 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
Scotty's Martini Lounge, 301 German St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### MVP

Nov. 29 — 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
Dickey's BBQ Pit, 3716 Liberty St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### Matt Gavula

Nov. 30 — 5 to 7 p.m.  
Brew Brothers at PI Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](https://presqueisledowns.com).

### Punchline, Archway, Colour Show, It Kicks

Nov. 30 — 5 to 10 p.m.  
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### The Groove

Nov. 30 — 6 to 10 p.m.  
BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. [facebook.com](https://facebook.com).

### Four Golden Strings...and an Oboe in a Pear Tree

Nov. 30 — 7 p.m.  
First Alliance Church, 2939 Zimmerly Rd. [erieartsandculture.org](https://erieartsandculture.org).

### Brown Dog

Nov. 30 — 7 to 9 p.m.

Belles Gonna Slay with Rebecca Mae for Latest Drag Brunch



SARA PEACH

**Tom Widdowson, alias Rebecca Mae, has enjoyed tremendous success with his bimonthly drag brunches. This time, he will be joined by Vegas entertainer London Adour at the Bourbon Barrel.**

Sunday mornings are suddenly worth waking up for.

But while your brunch buddies might have some stimulating conversation to share over that plate of waffles, we guarantee they will not entertain you like Rebecca Mae and her coterie of be-se-quired friends, coming at you every other month for almost a year now.

Tom Widdowson, the talent and driving force behind Rebecca Mae and her first-in-Erie drag brunches, remarked, “September’s brunch was fantastic. Everyone was so happy, and the vibe was great.”

Widdowson sighed as he recalled how a few “weird things” occurred at his last event, stating, “I’m a perfectionist. No one else noticed these things ... but I did.”

His perfectionism and self-learned business acumen are not only earning him ticket sales from curious guests who are checking out something new to do in Erie, but — perhaps even more important — repeat guests and loyal fans.

These brunches are, after all, selling out, and a quick glance at Rebecca Mae’s Drag Brunch Facebook page shows glowing review after glowing review, many of which express an excitement to return for the next.

And speaking of the next, “[We’re] going to have a special guests all the way from Las Vegas.”

That special guest is one London Adour, a self-proclaimed “selfie enthusiast” and show host/performer at the Piranha Nightclub. With over 44,000 Instagram followers, London also nabbed a feature with *Cosmopolitan* magazine’s “Cosmo Queens” video series, which highlights — pun definitely intended — the rigorous, jaw-dropping and expertly applied makeup process top professional drag queens employ to get their fierce, bolder-than-life looks.

Joining London, of course, Rebecca Mae will take the stage at the Bourbon Barrel downtown, along with her house cast, which includes Siren Kelly, Evon Michelle, and Erie’s own Michelle Michaels, all three of whom have performed at every single show since the drag brunch’s inception.

“We have sponsors again for this

brunch,” Widdowson was quick to point out. He cited Lucky Louie’s, A Cut Above by Nina Ferrare, Reeves Plumbing & Heating, and Presque Isle Printing as contributors to the November show.

“Sponsors are more important than ever,” he emphasized. This is because, as the brunches continue on their upward arc of success, Widdowson is looking to bring in even more famous (and expensive) talent — like, say, a drag queen contestant from RuPaul’s Drag Race.

“Expect to see her at the January 27 show,” was Widdowson’s only teaser. He won’t be revealing her name until the November event, so those who attend will be the first to know.

It’s hard to believe it has been less than a year since Rebecca Mae’s first drag brunch, but it is something to see the community embrace, in such short order, the joyful celebration of color, glamour and inclusivity that Widdowson is working hard, every day, to champion in the Gem City. — Cara Suppa

*Doors at 11 a.m., show at 12:00 noon // 1213 State St. // Advance: \$35; Door: \$45 // [buytickets.at/rebeccamaesdragbrunch](#)*

*Brew Brothers at Pl Downs & Casino, 8199 Perry Hwy. [presqueisledowns.com](#).*

**DP Trio feat. Elly Vahey & Eric Brewer**  
Nov. 30 — 7 to 10 p.m.  
*Room 33, 1033 State St. [facebook.com](#).*

**The Tradesmen, Coffin Bangers, Steve Trent**  
Nov. 30 — 10 p.m. to 1 a.m.  
*Scotty’s Martini Lounge, 301 German St. [facebook.com](#).*

**Come Home for the Holidays**  
Dec. 1 — 2:30 & 8 p.m.  
*Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [eriephil.org](#).*

**Eva Under Fire**  
Dec. 1 — 6 p.m.  
Evanesence-esque Detroit-based band joining local favorites First to Eleven, Jack’s Mom, and Rosegun Vibe.  
*Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. [facebook.com](#).*

**Country Redford**  
Dec. 1 — 6 to 10 p.m.  
*BIGBAR, 14 E. 10th St. [facebook.com](#).*

**Jazz Ensemble Christmas Concert**  
Dec. 1 — 7 p.m.  
*Taylor Little Theatre, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](#).*

**Ekoostik hookah**  
Dec. 1 — 9 p.m.  
*Kings Rook Club, 1921 Peach*

*St. [facebook.com](#).*

**Transference, Lordran, Slaughter in the Meridian**  
Dec. 1 — 10 p.m. to 1:30 a.m.  
*Scotty’s Martini Lounge, 301 German St. [facebook.com](#).*

**A Motown Christmas**  
Dec. 2 — 7 p.m.  
*Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [eriewarnertheatre.com](#).*

**Blues Jam & Open Mic**  
Dec. 4 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
*Dickey’s BBQ Pit, 3716 Liberty St. [facebook.com](#).*

**Gem City Concert Band**  
Dec. 4 — 7 to 8 p.m.  
*St. John’s Lutheran Church, 2216 Peach St. [gemcitybands.org](#).*

**Jane Lynch: A Swingin’ Little Christmas**  
Dec. 4 — 7:30 p.m.  
*Mary D’Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. [miac.mercyhurst.edu](#).*

**The Beach Boys: Reason for the Season Christmas Tour**  
Dec. 5 — 7:30 p.m.  
*Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [eriewarnertheatre.com](#).*

**Open Mic w Don Caplea and Alan Chaffee**  
Dec. 5 — 10 p.m.  
*Scotty’s Martini Lounge, 301 German St. [facebook.com](#).*

**DANCE**

**The Nutcracker**  
Nov. 24 — 7 p.m. & Nov. 25 — 2 p.m.  
*Mary D’Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. [erieartsandculture.org](#).*

**Let’s Groove Tonight: Thanksgiving Old Skool Jam**  
Nov. 24 — 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.  
*Metroplex Entertainment Complex, 1837 Buffalo Rd. [eventbrite.com](#).*

**Body in Motion with Angela DiFiore**  
Nov. 30 — 10 to 11 a.m.  
*Soma Erie, 2601 Peach St. [somaerie.com](#).*

**Doo-Wop Dance**  
Nov. 30 — 6 to 9 p.m.  
*LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [LifeWorksErie.org](#).*

**Master Ballet Class**  
Dec. 1 — 2:30 to 4 p.m.  
*Mercyhurst Ice Center, 501 E. 38th St. [eriedanceconsortium.org](#).*

**FOOD & DRINK**

**Thanksgiving Eve**  
Nov. 21 — 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
On the eve of Turkey Day and the shopping frenzy, support local brewing and come together at Lavery’s for live music

and the release of two seasonal beers.  
*Lavery Brewing Co., 128 W. 12th St., Unit 101 [facebook.com](#).*

**The Great Pumpkin Jam**  
Nov. 21 — 7 to 10 p.m.  
*The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. [brewerie.com](#).*

**Shittersfull First Pour**  
Nov. 23 — noon  
*The Brewerrie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. [brewerie.com](#).*

**Black Friday Tacos**  
Nov. 23 — 3 to 8 p.m.  
*Erie Ale Works, 416 W. 12th St. [eriealeworks.com](#).*

**Free Slider Friday**  
Nov. 23, 30 — 5 p.m.  
*Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. [bourbonbarrelerie.com](#).*

**Breakfast or Lunch with Santa**  
Nov. 24 — 9 & 11:30 a.m.  
*Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [ahn.org](#).*

**Rebecca Mae’s Drag Brunch**  
Nov. 25 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
*Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. [bourbonbarrelerie.com](#).*

**Celebrating Women In Tech Celebrity Bartender Event**  
Nov. 29 — 4:30 to 8:30 p.m.  
*Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. [facebook.com](#).*

**Cooking for a Healthy**

**Immune System**  
Nov. 29 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.  
*Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W. 26th St. [wholefoodscoop.org/calendar](#).*

**Wine & Cheese Pairing**  
Nov. 30 — 2 to 6 p.m.  
*Bello’s Shur-Fine, 2650 W. 8th St. [facebook.com](#).*

**Cocktails and Clay**  
Dec. 1 — 4 to 6:30 p.m.  
*Erie ClaySpace, 1505 State St. [erieclayspace.com](#).*

**Bloody Mary Sunday Fun Day**  
Dec. 2 — 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
*Luminary Distilling, 8270 Peach St. Ste. 300 [facebook.com](#).*

**Erie’s Pierogis Wine ‘n Spirits Santapalooza**  
Dec. 2 — noon to 4 p.m.  
*Ambassador Conference Center, 7794 Peach St. [localwineevents.com/](#).*

**MOVIES**

**Warren Miller’s Extreme Ski/Skiboarding**  
Nov. 24 — 7 p.m.  
*Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erieskiclub.com](#).*

**La La Land (2016)**  
Nov. 25 — 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.  
*Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](#).*

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**DECEMBER 2018 SCHEDULE**

| SUN                             | MON                          | TUES | WED | THURS                                 | FRI                              | SAT                                |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------|-----|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                                 |                              |      |     |                                       |                                  | 1 *Away vs. Flint Firebirds 7pm    |
| 2                               | 3                            | 4    | 5   | 6                                     | 7 *Home vs. Flint Firebirds 7pm  | 8 *Home vs. Saginaw Spirit 7pm     |
| 9                               | 10                           | 11   | 12  | 13 *Away vs. Windsor Spitfires 7:05pm | 14 *Away vs. Sarnia Sting 7:05pm | 15                                 |
| 16 *Away vs. London Knights 2pm | 17                           | 18   | 19  | 20                                    | 21                               | 22                                 |
| 23                              | 24                           | 25   | 26  | 27                                    | 28 *Away vs. Flint Firebirds 7pm | 29 *Away vs. Saginaw Spirit 7:05pm |
| 30                              | 31 vs. Hamilton Bulldogs 6pm |      |     |                                       |                                  |                                    |

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# JANE LYNCH:

## A SWINGIN' LITTLE CHRISTMAS

TUESDAY, DEC. 4 • 7:30 P.M. • MARY D'ANGELO PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Broadway and Emmy Award-winning actress Jane Lynch and her posse are back for a comically kitsch throwback to the old WWII USO canteen and 1960s Christmas specials of yore.

From Austria to Erie: The Vienna Boys Choir



LUKAS BECK

MONDAY, NOV. 26

An evening of vocal music steeped in history and tradition is slated for the next installment of the Mercyhurst Institute For Arts & Culture’s current season.

The Vienna Boys Choir was founded in 1498 in Vienna, Austria, and took on their current touring program and a more professional focus nearly a century ago, in 1924. The current iteration of

the group will bring their storied sound and pure voices to Erie on November 26. Composed of young boys between the ages of 10 and 14, the choir has around 100 total members, and about 25 should be expected for their performance here — they tour worldwide, in four groups, year-round. And, if you ever find yourself in Austria, a dedicated performance hall and a nearby church are graced by their voices weekly.

A little closer to home, the choir’s evening here in Erie is slated to include a blend of the more traditional choral pieces that they have been known for for centuries, as well as their take on arrangements of more contemporary music. Additionally, they have an extensive back catalogue of Christmas carols and albums, and as the holidays quickly approach, their voices, often described as “angelic,” are sure to ring in the season in perfect harmony. — Meredith Wilcox

7:30 p.m. // Mary D’Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. // Adults: \$30; Seniors: \$25; Students/Youth: \$20 // [miac.mercyhurst.edu](http://miac.mercyhurst.edu)

The Hills Come Alive at the Warner Theatre



THURSDAY, NOV. 29

A new production of *The Sound of Music* will stop at Erie’s Warner Theatre while touring across North America.

Set in 1930s Austria, this version of the quintessential musical tells the story of a nun, Maria Rainer, who accepts a job as a governess for a family of seven children — Liesl, Friedrich, Louisa, Kurt, Brigitta, Marta, and Gretl. She quickly becomes attached to the family and even finds herself falling for their widowed father, Captain Georg von Trapp.

And, as most film and musical fans know, trouble arises when Captain von Trapp is drafted to join the German Navy, which would force him to fight against Austria. To avoid this, he makes plans to flee with Rainer and the children.

Captain von Trapp is played by Mike McLean, who has previously partaken in national tours as Benny in *Guys and Dolls* and Frank Jr. in *Saturday Night Fever*. Rainer is played by Lancaster, Pa. native Jill-Christine Wiley, who is also familiar with national tours. She has acted as an understudy for Belle in *Disney’s Beauty and The Beast*, a role she also played at a regional level.

The musical features music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. Songs include “Edelweiss,” “My Favorite Things,” “Climb Ev’ry Mountain” and “Do-Re-Mi.”

“Even if you’ve seen *The Sound of Music* before, it’s worth going again to see it this way,” wrote Nancy Churnin in the *Dallas Morning News*.

This version of the musical runs about 2 hours and 40 minutes long, including intermission. It’s recommended for audiences age six and older. — Tracy Geibel

7:30 p.m. // 811 State St. // \$38.75 to \$58.75 // [nacentertainment.com/the-sound-of-music-erie](http://nacentertainment.com/the-sound-of-music-erie)

**Splice Film Fest: Winners of 2018**  
Nov. 30 — 7 to 10 p.m.

Just shy of six months past the Erie Film Festival, a one-night event will display the winners.

Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. [facebook.com](http://facebook.com).

**RBG (2018) + Rust Belt New Americans (2018)**  
Dec. 5 — 5:30 p.m.

The story of the “Notorious RBG,” a fierce women’s rights activist and Supreme Court justice, will be opened by short film by MenajErie Studio.

Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. [filmsocietynwp.org](http://filmsocietynwp.org).

**Backyard Wilderness**  
Ongoing — 10 a.m., 1 p.m., & 4 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [biggreenscreen.com](http://biggreenscreen.com).

**Amazon Adventure**  
Ongoing — 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [biggreenscreen.com](http://biggreenscreen.com).

**Earthflight**  
Ongoing — noon & 3 p.m.

Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [biggreenscreen.com](http://biggreenscreen.com).

VISUAL ARTS

**Jamie Borowicz & Amy Hahn**

Opening Nov. 23; ongoing through Jan. 8, 2019

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

**Learn Ceramics: 4 Week Hand-Building**  
Nov. 26 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Erie ClaySpace, 1505 State St. [erieclayspace.com](http://erieclayspace.com).

**Mosaic Thursdays**  
Nov. 29 — 5 to 8 p.m.

Artlore Studio, 3406 W. Lake Rd. [facebook.com](http://facebook.com).

**Art After Hours**  
Nov. 29, 30 — 5 to 8 p.m.

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

**Victorian Holidays**  
Nov. 30 through Dec. 31 — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Hagen History Center, 356 W. 6th St. [eriehistory.com](http://eriehistory.com).

**Erie ClaySpace Family Workshop**  
Dec. 1 — 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Erie ClaySpace, 1505 State St. [erieclayspace.com](http://erieclayspace.com).

**NPAA Holiday Show**  
Dec. 1 through 8

Attic Rehab, 1501 State St. [npaaonline.org](http://npaaonline.org).

**PASNWPA: Endless Possibilities**  
Dec. 1 through Dec. 31

Erie Art Gallery, 24 W. 8th St. [pasnwpa.org](http://pasnwpa.org).

**Sr. Projects & Advanced Studio Projects**

Dec. 4 — 7 to 8 p.m. (opening reception, through Dec. 12 thereafter)

Allegheny College, 520 N. Main St., Meadville, PA 16335 [sites.allegheny.edu](http://sites.allegheny.edu).

**Ceramics by Tom Hubert**  
Ongoing through Dec. 11

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

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

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

**Healing HeARTS**  
Ongoing through Feb. 17, 2019

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

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

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

**Tyanna Buie: Recollections**  
Ongoing through Apr. 2019

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

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

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

THEATER

**You Can’t Take It With You**  
Nov. 24 — 7:30 p.m. & Nov. 25 — 3 p.m.

All An Act, 652 W. 17th St. [allanact.net](http://allanact.net).

**The Sound of Music**  
Nov. 29 — 7:30 p.m.

Warner Theatre, 811 State St. [nacentertainment.com](http://nacentertainment.com).

**Christmas Memories**  
Nov. 27 — noon & Nov. 30 — 7 p.m. & Dec. 1 — 5:30 p.m. & Dec. 2 — 2:30 p.m.

Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. [canterburyfeast.com](http://canterburyfeast.com).

COMEDY

**FUBAR Comedy Presents...**  
Nov. 23 — 8 to 10 p.m.

Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. [facebook.com](http://facebook.com).

**Don Reese**  
Nov. 24 — 6:45 or 9:30 p.m.

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

**Vicki Barbolak**  
Nov. 29 — 7 p.m. & Nov. 30 — 6:45 or 9:30 p.m. & Dec. 1 — 5, 6:45, or 9:30 p.m.

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

SPORTS

**Bayfront Brawl VI**  
Nov. 21 — 7 p.m.

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [erieevents.com](http://erieevents.com).

**ERC Turkey Trot**  
Nov. 22 — 7:30 a.m.

Beach 1 at PI State Park, 1

Peninsula Dr. [erierunners.club](http://erierunners.club).

**Erie Otters vs. Barrie Colts**  
Nov. 22 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [ottershockey.com](http://ottershockey.com).

**Erie Otters vs. Peterborough Petes**  
Nov. 24 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [ottershockey.com](http://ottershockey.com).

**Erie BayHawks vs. Raptors 905**  
Nov. 27 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [gleague.nba.com](http://gleague.nba.com).

**Erie Otters vs. Owen Sound Attack**  
Nov. 28 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [ottershockey.com](http://ottershockey.com).

**Lights! Camera! Action! Cheer & Dance Extravaganza**  
Dec. 1

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [champi-oncheercentral.com](http://champi-oncheercentral.com).

**Erie BayHawks vs. Wisconsin Herd**  
Dec. 1 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [gleague.nba.com](http://gleague.nba.com).

**Erie BayHawks vs. Greensboro Swarm**  
Dec. 4 — 7 p.m.

Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. [gleague.nba.com](http://gleague.nba.com).

COMMUNITY

**New Horizons Music Project: Strings & Folk**  
Nov. 22, 29 — 2 to 5 p.m.

LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [LifeWorksErie.org](http://LifeWorksErie.org).

**Festival of Trees**  
Nov. 23, 24 — 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. & Nov. 25 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you bring grandma, don’t let her get run over during the reindeer experience. Instead, look at the decorated trees, get breakfast with Santa, or one of the festival’s many other activities.

Bayfront Convention Center, 1 Sassafras Pier [ahn.org](http://ahn.org).

**Dungeons & Dragons**  
Nov. 24 — 9 a.m. to noon

Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

**Ember+Forge Coffee and Gifts**  
Nov. 24 — 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

When you spend \$50 on gift cards for those on your shopping list, get a bag of coffee. In the spirit of supporting local merchants, E+F advertises taking a cup of coffee to go and walking to other shops to celebrate the sale day.

Ember + Forge, 401 State St. [facebook.com](http://facebook.com).

Two Locations for

Thrilled to be Back: Punchline Hangs Out at BT



Pittsburgh pop-punkers Punchline have returned to their roots with their latest release, *Lion*, and are returning to Erie to headline a show at Basement Transmissions.

FRIDAY, NOV. 30

Pittsburgh pop-punkers Punchline are coming back to Erie, alongside Colourshow, Archway, and It Kicks. Punchline have a long history of making the trip up from the Steel City to the Gem City, one that dates back to the days of The Hangout and Forward Hall, and are now continuing that tradition at Basement Transmissions. Punchline released their eighth full-length album, *Lion*, last March, and followed up with a music video for the single “Darkest Dark”, which was filmed at various sites around their hometown in August. *Lion* feels much more like classic

Punchline than the last few releases by the band, finding their way back into more rock-inspired tunes, rather than the synth-based pop sound found on *Thrilled* and *Politefully Dead*. “If you already like our band, there’s a good chance this will be your favorite album of ours,” bassist Chris Fafalios told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. “I feel pretty strongly this is the album people want from us.” Opening the gig are alternative rockers and fellow Pittsburghers Colourshow, whose 10-track album *Run Away From Everything* was released last year. Rounding out the bill are Meadville/Greenville emo-punkers Archway, who released a music video for their single “Metanoia” in July, and local pop-punk newcomers It Kicks. — Tommy Shannon

5 p.m. // 145 W. 11th St // \$12 advance, \$14 doors // All ages // [Punchlion.com](#)

Hookah Hits at the Rook



No strangers to the jam scene or the Erie area are the members of ekoostik hookah, who bring two sets to the Kings Rook Club to kick off December.

SATURDAY, DEC. 1

December will mark almost a year since ekoostik hookah’s last (and first) time hitting the King’s Rook Club. But the Columbus, Ohio-based hookah — a well-loved group that’s been a preeminent powerhouse in the festie scene and jam band community-at-large for nearly three decades running — are no strangers around here. They’ve joined in and headlined multiple musical gatherings at numerous locales through the years, going all the way back to the Forward Hall days of the 1990s, and, in the more recent past, at the gone-but-not-forgotten Crooked i, as well as various summer music fests

around the region — they’re a mainstay at the Gathering at Chaffee’s. They’ll be back at the Rook on Dec. 1, bringing another double-dose (that is, two sets) of hookah. A couple of hits of that goodness should be just what the doctor ordered for us to start really ringing in the holiday season. “We’ve always enjoyed our shows in Erie,” founding member and vocalist/keyboardist/guitarist Dave Katz told us last year. Well, fellas, we’ve always liked the hookah, too, and look forward to the journey it’ll take us on this time around. — Ryan Smith

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. // 1921 Peach St. // \$12 for members, \$17 for non-current members // 21+ // [facebook.com/kingsrookclub](#)

**Elusive Fox Boutique**  
Nov. 24 — 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Refreshments, door prizes, and handmade gifts will be plenty. EFB will also be at Erie Marketplace celebrating Small Business Saturday. [Elusive Fox Boutique, 3604 W. 12th St. facebook.com](#)

**Warner Winter Wonderland**  
Nov. 24 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Nov. 25 — noon to 4 p.m.  
To benefit the restoration of the Warner, join the theater for two days of shopping, silent auctions, visits with Santa and more. Give a donation to the Second Harvest Food Bank to earn \$1 off the \$3 admission cost. Admission for children under 12 is free. [Warner Theatre, 811 State St. erieevents.com.](#)

**6th Annual Made In Erie Marketplace**  
Nov. 24 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Twenty-six vendors are slated for the 6th annual fair of locally made goods, coinciding with Small Business Saturday. [Church of the Nativity Community Center, 109 German St. facebook.com.](#)

**Shop Small at The Colony**  
Nov. 24 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Celebrate The Colony, a

center for small shops, with free pancakes in the morning and earn prizes throughout the day by visiting all participating stores. [The Colony, 2580 W. 8th St. facebook.com.](#)

**Chicory Hill Herbs**  
Nov. 24 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Pick up and sample scents of the season (and many more varieties of teas and herbs) during one day of unique sales. [Chicory Hill Herbs, 2516 Peach St. facebook.com](#)

**Shop Small Saturday On The Hill**  
Nov. 24 — 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.  
If you caught our issue earlier this year, you’re aware that Independence Hill is full of independent shops. Coming off the momentum of Black Friday, the boutiques of the area will be hosting sales of their own. [Pointe Fourre Vintage Boutique, 2508 Peach St. facebook.com.](#)

**Families Go Hiking**  
Nov. 24 — 11 a.m.  
[Pl Lighthouse Parking Area, 1 Peninsula Dr. trecpi.org.](#)

**Erie Animal Network**  
Nov. 24 — 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Stock up and prepare to stuff the stockings of the pet-lovers in your life with holiday gifts

from the local animal network. [Erie Animal Network, 1831 W. 26th St. facebook.com.](#)

**Compassionate Heart**  
Nov. 24 — 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Open house attendees can visit the business’ new location, receive a coupon for future purchases and one-day deals on massage treatments. [Compassionate Heart, 2005 W. 8th St. Suite 101 facebook.com.](#)

**Dramashop Holiday Marketplace**  
Nov. 24 — 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Shop local theatre and snag Dramashop merchandise along the way. Local vendors will also be selling stocking stuffers and other holiday trinkets. [Dramashop, 1001 State St. Suite 210 facebook.com](#)

**Erie Handmade Fair**  
Nov. 24 — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Highlighting over 24 vendors selling handmade wares and music by Erie folk-pop vocalist Brooke Ashley Surgener. [Polish Falcons Club, 431 E. 3rd St. facebook.com.](#)

**Christmas at the Station**  
Nov. 24 — noon to 4 p.m.  
[Lake Shore Railway Museum, 31 Wall St., North East, PA 16428 lakeshorerailway.com.](#)

**Ironstone Meadery Small Business Saturday**  
Nov. 24 — 1 to 9 p.m.  
Satisfy your need for mead at this Greene Township startup. [Ironstone Meadery, 9333 Tate Rd. ironstonemeadery.com.](#)

**Shop Local at Erie Art Gallery**  
Nov. 24 — 1:15 to 8:15 p.m.  
Sip tea and shop unique art, jewelry, sculptures and more local creations to finish (or begin) your holiday shopping. [Erie Art Gallery, 24 W. 8th St. facebook.com.](#)

**Pokemon League**  
Nov. 24 — 2 to 4 p.m.  
[Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.](#)

**Attic Rehab Open House**  
Nov. 24 — 5 to 9 p.m.  
Revisit Basement Transmissions’ old stomping grounds to reminisce, take advantage of holiday sales, or peruse the gallery while enjoying refreshments. [Attic Rehab, 1501 State St. facebook.com.](#)

**Light Up North East**  
Nov. 24 — 5:30 to 8 p.m.  
[Gibson Park, North East, PA 16428 facebook.com.](#)

**What Is Junior Jeopardy?**

Nov. 26, 27 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
[Multiple library locations erielibrary.org.](#)

**Creating Family Memories with PowerPoint**  
Nov. 27 — 10:30 a.m. to noon  
[LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.](#)

**Art Exploration Studio**  
Nov. 27, Dec. 4 — 1 to 3 p.m.  
[LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.](#)

**Read to a Therapy Dog**  
Nov. 27 — 4:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
[Iroquois Ave. Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. erielibrary.org.](#)

**Ukulele Workshop**  
Nov. 27 — 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
[Dickey’s BBQ Pit, 3716 Liberty St. facebook.com.](#)

**Beginner Improv**  
Nov. 27 — 6 to 7 p.m.  
[LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. LifeWorksErie.org.](#)

**Yoga by the Bay**  
Nov. 28 — 5:15 to 6:15 p.m.  
[Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.](#)

**In Office Diagnosis of Knee & Shoulder Conditions**  
Nov. 28 — 6 to 7 p.m.  
[Millcreek Municipal Bldg., 3608 W. 26th St. LifeWorksErie.org.](#)

**Adult Art Classes**

Nov. 28, Dec. 5 — 7 to 9 p.m.  
[Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.](#)

**Learn to 3D Print**  
Nov. 29 — 9:30 to 11 a.m.  
[Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.](#)

**Alzheimer’s Support Group**  
Nov. 29 — 3 to 4 p.m.  
[Lincoln Community Center Library, 1255 Manchester Rd. erielibrary.org.](#)

**Green Screen for Video Projects**  
Nov. 29 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.  
[Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.](#)

**Mosaic Quilt Workshop**  
Nov. 30 — 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
[Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.](#)

**Hands-On: O’Keefe Letters**  
Nov. 30 — 6 to 7 p.m.  
[Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. erieartmuseum.org.](#)

**Fireside Talk: Turkey Vulture**  
Nov. 30 — 7 p.m.  
[Rotary Pavilion at Pl State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. trecpi.org.](#)

**Active Apples**  
Dec. 1 — 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.  
[Lake Erie Arboretum at Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.](#)

**DIY Holiday Gifts**

## CALENDAR

### Bringing it Home: Erie Philharmonic preps for annual holiday concert



cal stylings of American icon Judy Garland." By way of Cleveland, to New York City, Ellison has cultivated a critically acclaimed revival — in spirit, staging, and song — of the legendary entertainer.

Also joining the Erie Philharmonic, led by conductor Daniel Meyer, is the Erie Philharmonic Chorus under the direction of Thomas Brooks, and Collegiate Academy Vocal Jazz under the direction of Susan Huster.

Doors open early for family activities at the 2:30 p.m. showing and tickets for the 8 p.m. showing are already almost sold out.

"Come Home for the Holidays" is the third of five concerts in the Erie Philharmonic's 2018-2019 pops series. The next pops series concert will feature music from *The Wizard of Oz* played in synchronization with the original film. This is set for Saturday, Feb. 9 and Sunday, Feb. 10. — Tracy Geibel

2:30 p.m. or 8 p.m. // 811 State St. // \$22 to \$56, \$10 for students // (814) 455-1375 // [eriephil.org](http://eriephil.org)

#### SATURDAY, DEC. 1

The Erie Philharmonic will kick off the holiday season with two performances of its annual "Come Home for the Holidays" concert at the Warner Theatre.

This year's concert will feature jazz-flavored arrangements courtesy of special guest soprano Joan Ellison, who has been described as an "expert in the vo-

Dec. 1 — 10 a.m.  
Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W. 26th St. [wholefood-scoop.org/calendar](http://wholefood-scoop.org/calendar).

#### Coloring for Grown-Ups

Dec. 1, 8 — 10 a.m. to noon  
Multiple library locations [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

#### Schoolhouse Craft Festival

Dec. 1 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Dec. 2 — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Keep your holiday gifts home-made with the help of the 29th annual craft festival (featuring new vendors this season).

McDowell Intermediate High School, 3320 Caughey Rd. [asburywoods.org](http://asburywoods.org).

#### Holiday Art Sale & Open House

Dec. 1 — 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
With free admission on tours and sales, The Studio at St. Mary's opens their doors for shoppers looking for local art. The Studio at St. Mary's, 310 E. 10th St. [studioatstmarys.com](http://studioatstmarys.com).

#### Sugar Plum Weekend

Dec. 1 — 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. & Dec. 2 — 12:30 to 5 p.m.  
North East Chamber of Commerce, 44 W. Main St., North East, PA 16428 [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/necomm).

#### Fabric Mosaic Workshop

Dec. 1 — noon to 4 p.m.  
Millcreek Branch Library,

2088 Interchange Rd. Ste. 280 [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

#### Erie ClaySpace Family Workshop

Dec. 1 — 2 to 3:30 p.m.  
Erie ClaySpace, 1505 State St. [erieclayspace.com](http://erieclayspace.com).

#### Teen Advisory Board Meeting

Dec. 1 — 2 to 4 p.m.  
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

#### Chakras 101

Dec. 1 — 6 p.m.  
Whole Foods Co-Op, 1341 W. 26th St. [wholefood-scoop.org/calendar](http://wholefood-scoop.org/calendar).

#### Holiday Punk Rock Flea

Dec. 2 — 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
The annual alternative flea market will fill rock music venue with antiques, vintage wares, records, homemade sauces, spices, clothing and more. Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com).

#### Polar Express Christmas Party

Dec. 2 — noon to 4 p.m.  
The Brewerie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St. [theepilepsyproject.org](http://theepilepsyproject.org).

#### A Day in the Life of a Lighthouse Keeper

Dec. 2 — 1 p.m.

Presque Isle Lighthouse, 1 Peninsula Dr. [trempi.org](http://trempi.org).

#### PI History Series: All Washed Up

Dec. 3 — 6 p.m.  
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. [trempi.org](http://trempi.org).

#### A Christmas Romance Novel

Dec. 4 — 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach St. [LifeWorksErie.org](http://LifeWorksErie.org).

#### Cozy Mystery Book Club

Dec. 4 — 1 to 2 p.m.  
Iroquois Ave. Branch Library, 4212 Iroquois Ave. [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

#### Gentle Yoga & Meditation: Level 2

Dec. 4 — 6 to 7:30 p.m.  
Also Dec. 3 at Lincoln Community Center Library (same time). Edinboro Branch Library, 413 W. Plum St., Edinboro, PA 16412 [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

#### Hatha Yoga 1

Dec. 5 — 11 a.m. to noon  
Edinboro Branch Library, 413 W. Plum St., Edinboro, PA 16412 [erielibrary.org](http://erielibrary.org).

#### Holiday Fun at Claytopia

Dec. 5 — 1 to 3 p.m.  
Claytopia, 924 W. Erie Plaza Dr. [LifeWorksErie.org](http://LifeWorksErie.org).

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## Motown Brings Christmas Fun to Erie



### SUNDAY, DEC. 2

Many of our parents and grandparents grew up with their childhood and young adult life framed by the sweet sounds of Motown Records. Timeless music from soul singers such as Diana Ross, the Four Tops, and the Isley Brothers became the soundtrack of the 1960s and beyond. Even today, the classics that were produced within Hitsville, USA are still being played by millions all over the world. And if you think that the legends of yesterday weren't ever in the holiday spirit, there's a CD somewhere with the Temptations' rendition of "Silent

Night" that has comforted many homes across America. On December 2nd, the time capsule will once again open with the Motown Experience coming to Erie to take over the Warner Theater with *A Motown Christmas*. If you're unfamiliar with this collective, it is a musical conglomerate consisting of the past and present members of three of Motown's biggest acts — the Temptations, the Miracles, and the Capitols.

This show is bound to give audiences a taste of their holiday favorites as well as the group's own unforgettable gems — that set the landscape for music — and are guaranteed to have you singing

**The Motown Experience, a conglomeration of three of Motown Records' biggest acts (The Temptations, The Miracles, and The Capitols), will lend their sweet harmonies to the Warner Theatre for *A Motown Christmas*.**

along throughout the entire show. The Warner Theater will be howling soulful carols and chart-topping hits to get your Christmas started on a good foot — or two, if you're compelled to get up and dance, which none of the performers will mind. Nostalgia and new memories will blend perfectly as Charles Franklin (the Temptations), Dave Finley (the Miracles), George Wilson (the Capitols) and many others will captivate you with not only their rich vocal harmonies, but also their unmatched choreography — but that won't stop you from trying to imitate them once you get home. So whether you're more of a "Frosty the Snowman" person or a "Love Machine" fanatic, this night plans to take you back to a time where music, togetherness, and fun actually mattered. — Charles Brown

7 p.m. // 811 State St. // \$38 - 48 // [amotownchristmas.com](http://amotownchristmas.com)

## Laugh, Sing, and Swing Along with Jane Lynch's *Swingin' Little Christmas* at the Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center



**Jane Lynch (center), best known for her role as Sue Sylvester on the hit TV series *Glee*, will be joined by Tim Davis (left) and Kate Flannery (right) for *Jane Lynch's Swingin' Little Christmas*, a "USO-style variety show that offers something for everyone," according to MIAC director Brett Johnson.**

### TUESDAY, DEC. 4TH

Every so often, Erie gets a performance so unique in its description and so original in the things it promises that it's able to turn even the most unexpected heads. By all counts, *Jane Lynch's Swingin' Little Christmas* is one of those performances.

"*Jane Lynch's Swingin' Little Christmas* is a USO-style variety show that offers something for everyone," says Brett Johnson, director of Mercyhurst's theater program and the Mercyhurst Institute for Arts & Culture. "[It's got] side-splitting comedy, masterful musi-

cality, witty banter, and holiday cheer."

Johnson's explanation is a great tip of the iceberg, but the show only becomes more intriguing as one begins to peel back the layers of each performer and what they bring to the show.

Jane Lynch is both an Emmy and a Golden Globe winner for her role as Sue Sylvester on *Glee*, but she's also widely known for her work in landmark 2000s comedies such as *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, *A Mighty Wind*, and *Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby*. Lynch is joined by Kate Flannery, best known for her role as Meredith Palmer on *The*

*Office*, as well as recent appearances on *The New Girl*, *Another Period*, and *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*. The pair is rounded out by Tim Davis, who has produced music and sung next to Lady Gaga, Josh Groban, and Childish Gambino. Flannery and Davis have performed as Lynch's sidekicks in the past, with both being featured in her "anti-cabaret show," *See Jane Sing*.

Together, backed by the Tony Guerrero Quintet, the trio will perform both original compositions ("Sentimental Christmas") and covers ("We Three Kings," "Up On the Housetop"). This hit show was even released as an album in 2016, with "Winter's Never Cold (When You're Around)," an original Tony Guerrero composition, reaching No. 8 on the Billboard charts. For anyone still unconvinced that this is a must-see show, a quick listen of the record might be the perfect way give your holiday spirit a much-needed test drive. — Aaron Mook

7:30 p.m. // 501 E. 38th St. // General Admission \$35, Seniors \$30, and Students and Youth \$25 // [miac.mercyhurst.edu](http://miac.mercyhurst.edu)

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MOVIE REVIEWS

Girl Power: *Widows* is a Thoroughly Exciting Thriller

★★★★★

Steve McQueen is a director that hasn't really clicked with me yet. He's a talented filmmaker to be sure, but with the exception of the great *12 Years a Slave*, I find his style too bombastic for somber, contemplative dramas. His new film *Widows*, however, intrigued me because it is a heist film, the kind of story that absolutely requires bombast. The film manages to rise above its genre clichés thanks to slick direction and some fantastic performances.



20TH CENTURY FOX

Based on a 1980s British television series of the same name, the film updates its story to present day Chicago and follows four women who find themselves trapped under the debt of their dead husbands' criminal activities. With nothing to lose, these women decide to plan a big heist in order to pay off the debt and forge new lives. However, as with all caper films, there are twists around every corner and nothing is ever how it seems.

McQueen has a lot of fun with the film's pulpy, high-stakes story, but he also manages to make a few clever allusions to political corruption and the massive economic inequality found in America. The story can be sometimes a little too convenient and the dialogue is occasionally risible, but the film makes up for it with spectacular cinematography (including one ingenious tracking shot set entirely on the hood of a car) and stellar performances by the ensemble cast, with special shout-outs to Viola Davis, a coldly sinister Daniel Kaluuya, and a star-making performance by Elizabeth Debicki. If you're interested in a crime caper with a little more to say, check it out. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: Steve McQueen // Written by: McQueen and Gillian Flynn, based on the TV series by Lynda La Plante // Starring: Viola Davis, Michelle Rodriguez, Elizabeth Debicki, Cynthia Erivo, Colin Farrell, Brian Tyree Henry, Daniel Kaluuya, Jacki Weaver, Carrie Coon, Robert Duvall and Liam Neeson. // 128 minutes // Rated R

Nazis and Zombies and Mutants! Oh My!: *Overlord* is a Gory Good Time

★★★★★

Audiences in this day and age seem to be obsessed with realism in films. Movies can be about the craziest subject matter imaginable but there has to be some kind of explanation for how it all happened or else the audience may turn on the film. It can be exhausting, and sometimes I'd welcome more films that just revel in their ridiculousness. Suffice to say, this is all a segue to rave about the new action/horror hybrid *Overlord* which doesn't care one iota about how ridiculous it is. It's a story plucked right from a dime-store pulp magazine. It's *Saving Private Ryan* reimagined as a part of the *Resident Evil* series and it's a fun time at the movies.



PARAMOUNT

Taking place the night before the D-Day landings, the film follows a group of American paratroopers caught behind enemy lines who must trek to a small town in order to blow up a radio tower in a church. Unbeknownst to them however, this town is being used by Nazi scientists to create a new secret weapon: an army of horrifying mutated creatures who are nearly unstoppable.

After an absolutely thrilling opening, the film takes its time getting to the good stuff, but once it does, it never lets up. With some fairly well-choreographed battle sequences, truly stomach-churning body horror and some creepy imagery straight out of an E.C. horror comic, the film is a treat for genre fans. There isn't much in terms of character, everything is heightened from the over-the-top acting to the over-the-top gore, and the story is bare bones. However, for some brutal, silly entertainment, you can't do much better. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: Julius Avery // Written by: Billy Ray, Mark L. Smith, and J.J. Abrams // Starring: Jovan Adepo, Wyatt Russell, Mathilde Olivier, Pilou Asbaek, John Magaro, Iain De Caestecker, Dominic Applewhite, Jacob Anderson, and Bokeem Woodbine // 110 minutes // Rated R



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MUSIC REVIEWS

Vince Staples  
*FM!*  
Def Jam Records

★★★★★

Just a year and some change after the release of his game-changing sophomore LP, *Big Fish Theory*, Vince Staples returns with a self-described “mixtape” that sounds eclectic on paper and refined on wax (or digital audio file). *FM!* pays tribute to hip-hop radio, highlighting the rapper’s noteworthy ability to leap from style to style, separated only by short skits of radio banter and teasers for peers Earl Sweatshirt and Tyga (the album’s cover also bears homage to Green Day’s 1994 album *Dookie*). At a sparse 21 minutes, *FM!* is a small-screen release compared to the blockbuster that was *Big Fish Theory*. But even with its scope scaled back, the tape demands attention and repeated listens. Some of the beats here and their subsequent production (“Feels Like Summer,” “Don’t Get Chipped”) must be heard through a decent pair headphones to be believed. The disc’s surprise guest appearances blend into their respective compositions effortlessly (outside of the aforementioned teasers), but the North Long Beach rapper remains the star here, continuing to both celebrate and mourn the respective highs and lows of life on the West Coast with his innovative flows. — Aaron Mook



Laura Jane Grace and the Devouring Mothers  
*Bought to Rot*

★★★★★

Bloodshot Records  
So why exactly is Laura Jane Grace not making another Against Me! record? Since the earliest days of band’s inception in 1997 until present, Grace was the band. Her personal perspective and unflinchingly honest lyrics tracked a journey from a Gainesville anarchist folk-punk pioneer to one of the best-known trans figures of our day (living in Chicago and generally favoring an electric rock sound to boot). Heavy is the mantle of Against Me! Fans have come to expect a certain voice for the band, and Grace has many voices that don’t necessarily belong in the AM! canon. The same thing happened a decade ago when she — still going by her birth-name, Tom Gabel — released the *Heart Burns* EP. This record is similar, with a few standout moments, but mostly feels like a recorded compilation of b-sides. The biting humor of “I Hate Chicago” is pure *As The Eternal Cowboy* stream-of-consciousness glory, and probably the best song on the album. Five of the album’s 14 tracks follow the naming convention “The \_\_\_ Song,” the catchiest being “The Airplane Song.” The tone of the record most closely resembled 2011’s *White Crosses*, filled with midtempo, unspecific, and underappreciated tracks. — Nick Warren



Yung Lean  
*Poison Ivy*  
YEAR0001 Records

★★★★★

2017’s *Stranger* was an unexpected move in the right direction for Yung Lean, the Swedish Soundcloud rapper with a penchant for loneliness and substance abuse. The rapper’s consistently unique aesthetic choices hit independent hip-hop just before a wave of imitators made them the norm, and seemingly out of nowhere, *Stranger* solidified the 22-year-old MC as one of the genre’s most proficient voices. This context is key in understanding Yung Lean’s new mixtape, *Poison Ivy*, and some of the critical reactions surrounding it. *Poison Ivy* has been referred to as a “step backward” by some, and it certainly fails to reach the highs of its unexpected predecessor. When observed as a collection of odds and ends, however, there are some (mostly instrumental) moments that still rival the genre’s best. Most of these moments come from the mixtape’s production, extending *Stranger*’s aesthetic and soaking in another set of hazy synths fit for a John Carpenter film. There aren’t many standouts here — the singing vehicle “french hotel” may be the closest thing here — but as a whole, *Poison Ivy* has just enough of Yung Lean’s charm to please anyone who chooses to buy into it. — Aaron Mook



Anderson . Paak  
*Oxnard*  
Aftermath Records

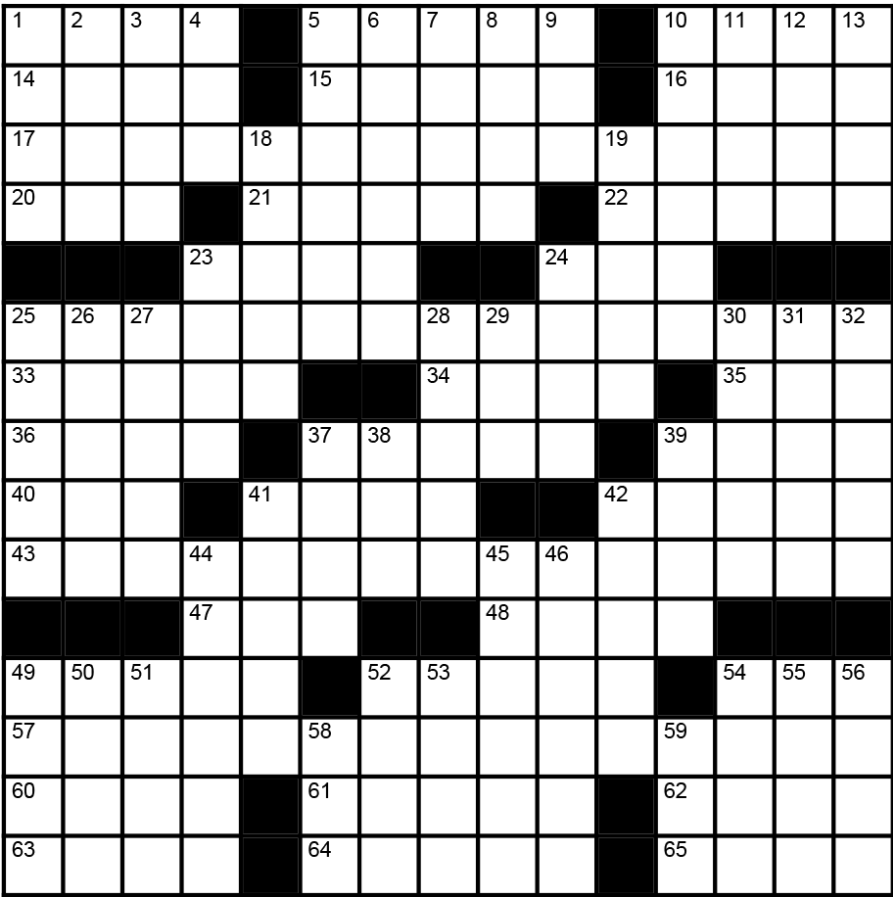
★★★★★

The follow up to Paak’s debut, the 2016 masterpiece *Malibu*, had to come sometime. Continuing to move north up the California coast, his third studio album is titled *Oxnard* (his 2014 debut being *Venice*), and finalizes his “beach series.” While not reaching the atmospheric heights of his sophomore album, this album is an inspired fusion of hip-hop, funk, and soul. There’s an inviting, old-school air here, aided by significant collaborations from Dr. Dre. Nineties kids will be in a smoky heaven with “Anywhere,” thanks to a guest appearance by none other than Snoop Dogg. There are great guest spots sprinkled throughout these 14 tracks, the best and most obvious being on the lead single “Tints,” which features Kendrick Lamar, effectively giving this album the powerhouse’s blessing. *Oxnard*, Calif. is Paak’s birthplace, and the warm feeling is evident with nearly measure. Even more aggressive tracks like “6 Summers” have their gorgeous moments, even when tackling complex issues. If you were a fan of *Malibu* — as you darn well should be — you won’t be disappointed. If you’re just discovering Paak now, rejoice, and remember these tracks when the warmer months set in. — Nick Warren



TOMMY IN TOON — BY TOMMY LINK





Across

1. Preppy clothing line

5. Some jets

10. Email best not replied to

14. Bit of viral web content

15. Sleep clinic concern

16. Racer with the tortoise

17. What Tom Brady suffered on the field before he wed Gisele Bundchen?

20. John Quincy Adams, to John Adams

21. Ostracized sort

22. Lock of hair

23. Ally (with)

24. "Two, three, four" lead-in

25. "Goldman's banking partner? He's catching some rays!"

33. The "P" of R.S.V.P.

34. Polemologists study them

35. "May \_\_\_\_ excused?"

36. Where Arthur Ashe played college tennis

37. Exclamation of feigned innocence

39. "Bonanza" brother

40. Orbison or Lichtenstein

41. Very large, informally

42. Disney and Whitman

43. Title that Kenny G would gladly accept, presumably?
47. Ctrl-\_\_\_\_-Del

48. Bingo relative

49. Katherine of "27 Dresses"

52. Green

54. Filmdom's Farrow

57. Situation after all the security guards quit their jobs at a luxury store located at 611 Fifth Avenue?

60. Stick \_\_\_\_ in the water

61. Kind of nerve

62. "Star \_\_\_\_ Beyond" (2016 film)

63. Do some programming

64. "\_\_\_\_ you!"

65. Pro votes
18. Most wanted

19. Concert memorabilia

23. Actor LaBeouf

24. "\_\_\_\_ goes nothin'!"

25. San Antonio hoopsters

26. Major manufacturer of soda cans

27. Flower part

28. When some bars close

29. Overly theatrical type

30. Garlicky mayonnaise

31. "NCIS" aier

32. "Siddhartha" author

37. Sunset's direction

38. 6 ft., maybe

39. Xbox space-war franchise

41. \_\_\_\_ Yello (soft drink)

42. Dropped off

44. "Hear, hear!"

45. Husky cousins

46. Football Hall-of-Famer Ernie

49. Grp. that interrogated Alger Hiss

50. Within: Prefix

51. Apple debut of 2001

52. Carter of "Gimme a Break!"

53. Something to clear up?

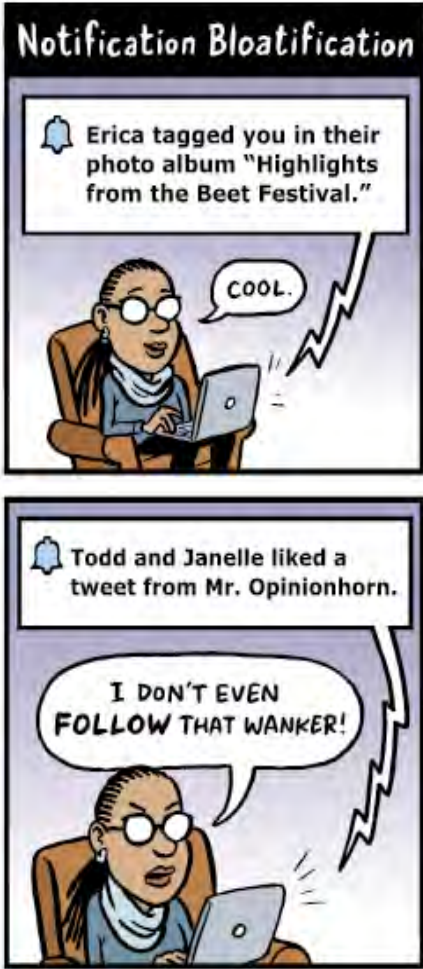
54. Farm female

55. Store with a three-syllable name in four letters

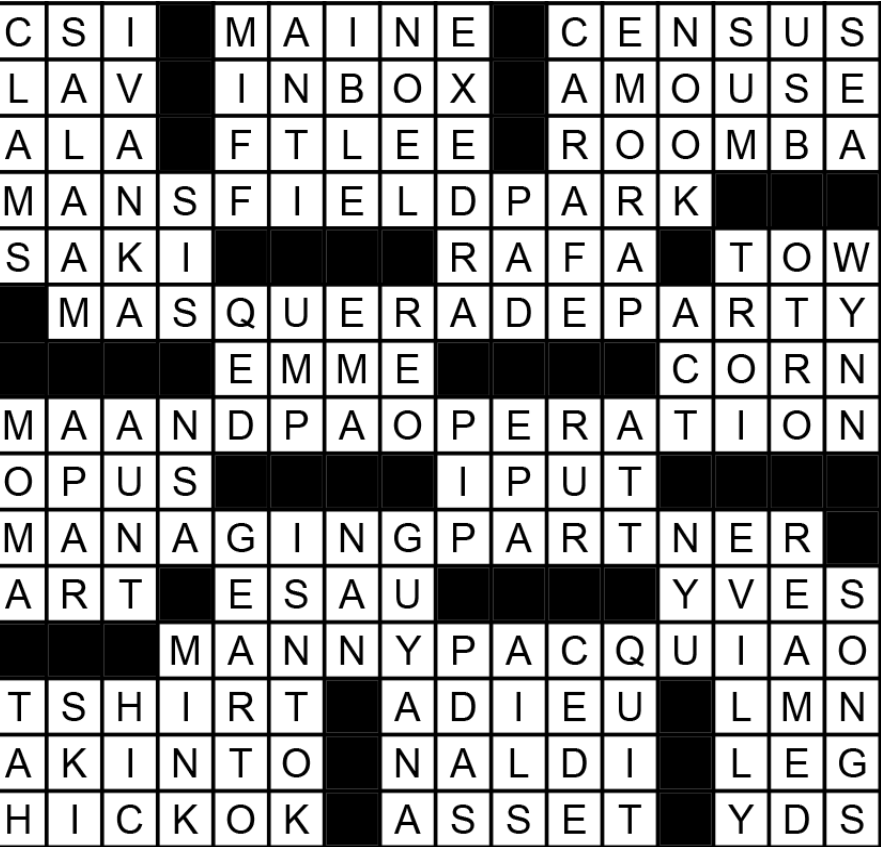
56. Requests, with "for"

58. Moonshiner's vessel

59. Dump



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\$9.99 BUFFET



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Fridays 4pm-10pm • Saturdays 12pm-10pm

Featuring a variety of new dishes everyday from  
all around the world that will surely have you  
coming back for more.

### POT LUCK SUNDAYS

12PM-3PM

Come and join our family style lunch.  
You never know what you'll find!



Includes Soft Drink. Milk Products \$1.50. \$14.99 Non-ONE Club Members.  
ONE Club discounts do not apply. Menu items subject to change.

If You or Someone You Know  
Has a Gambling Problem,  
Help is Available.  
Call 1-800-GAMBLER.