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ERIE READER

Sept. 26 - Oct. 9 // Vol. 8, No. 20 // ErieReader.com



Ron DiNicola

An interview with the former pugilist and current U.S. House candidate

meterEZ Does It

The ins and outs of Erie's brand new parking app

Matt Lebowitz

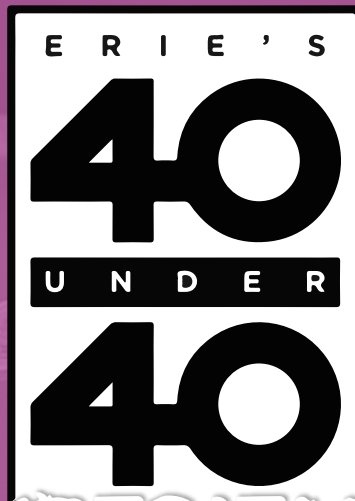
U Frame It owner offers up his whole world

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From the Editors

The debate over debates

As the midterm elections approach, this would normally be a time filled with political debates hosted by non-partisan entities, such as the League of Women Voters. This organization ensured fairness and objectivity throughout the debate process from 1976-1986 before they withdrew from presidential debate planning because, they argued, "the candidates' organizations aim to add debates to their list of campaign-trail charades devoid of substance, spontaneity, and answers to tough questions."

This claim rings particularly true in the 2018 race for Pennsylvania's 16th Congressional District. As one of the most closely watched congressional races in the country, voters in the 16th district deserve honest and transparent access to the positions of the incumbent, Mike Kelly, and Democratic challenger Ron DiNicola. In this issue, Matt Swanseger talks to DiNicola about his hopes for our district, one filled with as many opportunities as there are potential stumbling blocks.

Kelly has offered three debates, all of which effectively provide him with "home field advantage." So far, he's used the congressional district as little more than a locker room from which he rallies his team of corporate interests and presidential yes-men. Kelly's debates are rigged by partisan affiliation. He's recommended Grove City College, Butler Community College and Mercyhurst University. Grove City is a fine institution with a long history of elite Republicans who have spoken at and on behalf of the conservative Christian college. That list includes former Senator Rick Santorum, 2016 Presidential hopeful Ben Carson, and Vice President Mike Pence last year. Taking nothing away from a small liberal arts school that is able to attract such names, the conservative credentials of Grove City College leave little question as to where the spotlight might shine during such an event.

The proposed debate at Butler County Community College is literally in Kelly's backyard, where he enjoys the hometown support as well as an audience that would draw from a registered Republican advantage of nearly 30,000. One could argue that the proposed Mercyhurst University debate is a counterweight to Grove City College since that debate is in DiNicola's hometown and Democrats enjoy a nearly 30,000 voter registration advantage in Erie. However, senior administrators at Mercyhurst University have donated thousands of dollars to the Kelly campaign, according to filings with the Federal Election Commission. Quite simply, it doesn't look good for the host or the candidate who is demanding the debate take place. That debate will be televised on JET 24 on Tuesday, Oct. 8.

Alternative debates have been proposed – six in all suggested by DiNicola – including a debate outlined in a recent Erie Times-News article that would be held at the Jefferson Educational Society, moderated by C-SPAN's Steve Scully, and co-sponsored by several local media organizations. The Kelly campaign has not responded to any requests for additional or alternative debates, even after the DiNicola camp suggested a compromise of one – originally sponsored by the League of Women Voters, to be held in Mercer County.

It's time for the car salesman from Butler to come back to the table and weigh his counteroffers, because the unwillingness to negotiate a fair debate schedule leads us to believe that Mr. Kelly has something to hide. Or maybe he just has nothing to say.



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meterEZ Does It

The ins and outs of Erie's brand new parking app



The new meterEZ smartphone app, developed by local tech company weCreate, allows users to add time to any of the city's 1,700 parking meters remotely. Over 5,000 people have downloaded the app as of Sept. 10.

NICK WARREN

By Ben Spегgen

“For many years, people in the city of Erie have had to carry quarters,” said Christopher Friday, deputy director of the Erie Parking Authority, at Erie Mayor Joe Schember’s weekly press conference on August 9. “That ends today. As of today, you can download the meterEZ app and use a credit card for your parking payments.”

Just moments later, Nate Wheeler and Zach Lanich of weCreate, a web design and development company located in Erie, offered a demo of their new app: meterEZ.

Let us just say: Celebrators of coins and touters of tokens, fret not — quarters and tokens still work just as they always have. If you prefer to jog around with a jingling in your jeans, or love the scavenger hunt of digging into the depths of your car’s nether regions for a shiny George Washington, you can continue jogging and hunting all you want. The physical meters in Erie aren’t going anywhere for the foreseeable future.

And for those thinking: Well, the app only works for those with a *smartphone*, and not *everyone* has a smartphone — true, but according to the Pew Research Center report by Aaron Smith, “Roughly three-quarters of Americans (77 percent) now own a smartphone, with lower-income Americans and those ages 50 and older exhibiting a sharp uptick in ownership over the past year.” Of further note, smartphone adoption, according to

Pew, “has more than doubled since the Center began surveying on this topic in 2011: That year, 35 percent of Americans reported that they owned a smartphone of some kind.”

And increasingly, Americans are using their mobile devices to make purchases. Pew also found in 2016 that “46 percent of U.S. consumers report having made a mobile payment, which translates to approximately 114 million adults,” with nearly three-quarters of mobile payment users being Millennials and Gen-Xers, who, it’s safe to assume, won’t be abandoning such practices in droves in the decades to come.

Benefits of meter apps extend beyond the individual consumer to municipalities as wholes, particularly smaller, often cash-strapped ones.

“It’s so much cheaper for the cities, because they have no hardware to pay for,” Donald Shoup, a professor of urban planning at the University of California at Los Angeles, told Philly.com’s Michaelle Bond in May 2018. And as Flowbird, a parking and transport ticketing company reports, “most, if not all, major cities now offer payment apps,” as noted in Bond’s article.

So, Erie’s finally joining the majority (hooray!), with most app traction’s happening within the last three years. And, replacing or ripping up Erie’s more than 1,700 meters individually would be in-the-millions costly. Leaving them in place both keeps the coin-using community content and provides a way for the app to track parking spots. In Erie’s case, each meter features its own identification number.

That is, the cost to Erie to adopt app-based meter pay is zero dollars, and the longer Erie might’ve waited to go digital, well, “a day late a dollar short” is apropos.

“For Erie, by Erie,” says James Moelk, one of the three partners involved in meterEZ. “We really thought that we had a chance; here’s a tech company in Erie — and we’re always screaming for tech jobs — and we created them. It seemed like an obvious solution.”

meterEZ includes weCreate’s three co-owners (Wheeler, Lanich, and Brian Bohrer); Moelk, a developer and marketer, who’s worked on prior projects with weCreate; and John Szymanski, another developer who worked on the front end of meterEZ.

The concept began after Moelk, who is quick to admit he’s not the quarter-carrying type, continued racking up parking tickets.

“I thought that there’s got to be a better way,” he says, noting he then observed the unique identifying numbers on each meter. “All of the dots just connected then that there’s got to be to a system that we can integrate that connects the payment gateway.”

So Moelk approached Wheeler and the group approached the Erie Parking Authority to pitch their idea. While they weren’t initially under contract, the team continued to labor on the project, notching more than 2,000 hours in development time.

“Now we’ve exceeded 3,000,” Moelk points out, on an app that Wheeler says will always be free to download.

“[The Parking Authority] wanted to see that we could actually produce what we said we could produce,” Wheeler notes. “We completely developed the app before we got the contract.”

Then, the Parking Authority signed on and meterEZ ran a few-week beta period to test the app. Then, they got a call: Can you come to the Mayor’s press conference in a couple of days? The answer: Yes.

Up went stickers on *each* meter

throughout the city (the meterEZ team did all of the peeling and sticking in a breath-taking 18 hours), alerting parkers on how to download and use the app as well as the note about a \$3 sign-up bonus and the \$2 refer-a-friend incentives. And then, Erie had the option to quit quarters.

“I’ve yet to have the app crash on me, and I’m proud of that,” Moelk says, adding: “It’s not just an app built here, it’s a really *good* app,” which the meterEZ team built from scratch.

Qualifying *good*, self-proclaimed “quarter-quitter” Brian Slawin, Regional Director and Portfolio Manager at Ben Franklin Technology Partners, weighs in: “It’s stunning, frankly, that a [first version] of any technology product just simply works,” he wrote on my Facebook wall when I put out a call for feedback from those who’ve used the app (more on that later). “I’m not sure I’ve ever seen a [software as a service] delivered cloud product just work, right out of the box; especially at scale. Kudos to Zachary Lanich and his team for making such a rock solid tool.”

As of Sept. 10, 5,100 people have downloaded the app with an average of 100 new downloaders per day, an uptick in daily downloads since the out-of-the-gate rate, according to Moelk. Wheeler puts the user adoption rates at 5 to 10 percent of Erie parkers so far, and Moelk says they have the goal of achieving 50 percent, an industry benchmark. As it stands, Erie’s adoption rate is on par with larger cities introducing apps, such as Philadelphia, which started at 10 percent adoption the first year of using meterUP.

The app’s user interface is both easy and straightforward: Create a profile and both add your vehicle (including license plate) and credit card information. Of note: You can register multiple vehicles and credit cards and toggle through them in the app’s settings.

The app tracks when meters are enforced, so if for some reason you want to try to pay after 6 p.m. at a meter that isn’t running 24/7, it’ll alert you. But, say that you’re within that window that you do need to pay, you enter the meter’s space number (the four-digit number featured on the street-facing side of each of Erie’s 1,700 parking meters) and decide how you want to pay: Either

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NEWS & VIEWS



Web design and development company weCreate, housed on the ground floor of the Renaissance Building at 10th and State, is co-owned by Zach Lanich (left), Nate Wheeler, and Brian Bohrer (not pictured). James Moelk, meterEZ's developer and marketer, stands at the right.

NICK WARREN

using your "wallet" or an individual credit card purchase.

Wheeler says his company is quick to encourage downloaders to utilize the wallet feature, which limits the credit card transaction fee to one ding per wallet-fill, rather than a per-session-purchase charge. It's a 40 cent fee for an individual credit card, half of that with the wallet. Fees like this are common to such apps, with Philadelphia, for instance, charging 40 cents per transaction.

According to Moelk, the team is continually exploring more payment options.

"People see 20 cents, 40 cents, yeah, that'd be nice if we walked with that," Moelk laughs. "But that's not the case.

"There are profits, and we will make money. But the idea is: if we get this right, we can take it to another municipality and another municipality, and in time the profits will come."

And that's one of meterEZ's goal: Prove this works in Erie, perfect the platform, and be able to shop it elsewhere, both locally and beyond.

Beyond the fees, the app functions in parallel to the principles of parkers using quarters. To wit, time is purchased on the app in the same amount a quarter will buy you. And you can add to existing time on your session; the convenience of the app is that you can do that right from your phone. Too, if a meter is time-limited (like those yellow meters that max out at 30 minutes or various downtown meters at two hours), the app reflects those restrictions.

Say you miss your window to add more time to your session. A new feature in the app alerts users to the last meter — using the four-digit ID num-

ber — they parked at, an update that occurred just a few days after Amanda Kochirka, Business Outreach Specialist at the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, commented on my Facebook post calling for feedback proposed such an idea.

"The No. 1 confusing thing: The flag is not going to change," Moelk says.

"We try to push that in every media opportunity that these are not smart meters," Wheeler adds. "This is a completely separate solution."

Like how Uber passengers have a different app than Uber drivers, meterEZ created an app for parkers and meter readers, respectively. Initially, meterEZ equipped readers with five smart tablets — the kind that are shock-proof, water-proof, and essentially Erie winter-proof — but UpSafety, a company the Parking Authority is working with now to upgrade other tech, including portable printers for readers, hosts the readers' app.

While the flag remains red, readers recognize whether a parking session is valid. And, in the event a user is inaccurately ticketed, meterEZ's website features the ability to communicate that. Because they're logging the parking data, meterEZ develops can prove the ticket's accuracy.

"EPA didn't really have that much data on how and why people parked and that's going to be a really interesting thing that comes from this," Wheeler says.

Moelk adds that there'll be "no selling data. We don't want that done with our stuff, so we're not doing that to you."

Moelk and Wheeler say they've received overwhelmingly positive feedback from users. Not to just take

their word for it, I put that call out for feedback on Facebook. The comments ranged mostly from excited to appreciative to full-throated adoption.

Former Erie Mayoral Republican candidate and regular Facebook dissenter and watchdog Jon Whaley wrote: "I initially was a big naysayer. I was sure that a local company would waste time and \$\$\$ and just replicate what was already available. I downloaded the app and use it all the time. Love it."

Notable, too, was Lanich's active engagement with the commenters. I didn't tell meterEZ I planned to post this, no heads-up at all. But as the comments began coming in, Lanich addressed the recommendations in real-time, including something Wheeler noted in my interview with him: The ability of businesses and organizations to validate someone's parking session, something that's on the development horizon. Which leads one to wonder what the engagement of one of the big dogs in the parking app industry might be have been like.

Also on the horizon, Moelk is excited about integrating local events on the app in what he calls "non-obtrusive ways." "Not ads, but events," he stresses. "We want it to be meaningful."

"One thing we all hate as consumers is being inundated with ads," Wheeler adds. "We get it everywhere we go, so we really want to have information that people are going to find valuable and want to look at as opposed to..."

"Because as soon as you do that, no one is going to look at the events or want to use the app," Moelk interjects. "We want this to be a value-driven app."

Have quarters taken a backseat to apps in 2018? It's safer to say they're still riding in the front of the car, but perhaps not in the driver's seat, as meterEZ is driving Erie, like many other cities, into the future of paid parking.

"We're going to be continuing to look for ways to make life easier, make life better," Wheeler says.

Ben Spегgen can be contacted at bSpегgen@ErieReader.com. You can follow him on Twitter @BenSpегgen.

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Searching with Purpose: Erie Data Systems

Local tech business finds success through innovative ways to help those in need



Local entrepreneur Craig Stadler is interested in unearthing the “classic, obscure, independent, and strange” at his Erie Movie House. Through his other endeavor, Erie Data Systems, Stadler is using metadata technology to unearth promising possibilities in the future of the law enforcement and special needs communities.

NICK WARREN

By: Aaron Mook

If locals recognize Craig Stadler’s name, it’s most likely because they are familiar with the Erie Movie House, Stadler’s theater and venue that specializes in “everything classic, obscure, independent, and strange.”

“My wife and our curator, Nicole, is really into film, and I am into nostalgia,” says Stadler. “The 50-50 experience is what I think makes the Erie Movie House unique and special. I have stocked the venue with items from the 1940s to now, from pinball machines and fortune telling napkin holders to diner booths and antique video game consoles. We even offer virtual reality experiences, all in an intimate theater setting.”

But the attention the Erie Movie House has drawn barely scratches the surface of Stadler’s work, much of which has been invested in his own company — a result of the current tech boom and the creator’s history within Silicon Valley. After years of learning code, Stadler began to contribute articles to computer magazines across the

country, leading to his being published by the age of 16. Thus began a winding journey throughout the industry that would eventually lead him back to Erie.

“I got my real first job as a nuclear software engineer,” explains Stadler. “After several years, I headed to California for the first ‘dot com’ boom in 1997. I started my own software company, East Bay Technologies, and developed the first television streaming product ever for Windows and Mac. Ctube, believe it or not, actually preceded YouTube! In 2011, I moved back to Erie with my wife to be with family and start another tech-related endeavor.”

That endeavor would become Erie Data Systems, a company that continues to develop a storied history in our city. Stadler describes “big data” as his passion and focus, offering collection, organization, and meaningful access to large amounts of information. Erie Data Systems was the first company to offer these services to customers on a global scale, and Stadler is hopeful that the company may assist Erie in becoming more tech-centric.

Erie Data Systems’ initial offering — Exif-Search — was the first product of its kind. It was also just the beginning for the blossoming institution.

“A colleague of mine suggested I cat-

alog all the images on the Internet so they could be searched by their metadata, allowing police and research businesses to access them unlike ever before,” recalls Stadler. “I decided to embark on the challenge first as a technical feat, soon realizing the impact it could have on a greater good.”

With benefit to law enforcement on the mind, Stadler began searching for the most deserving test group to hand over one billion images to. This led to a widely publicized partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). Full access to Exif-Search was donated to the organization to use on open investigations, and after only two months, Stadler received confirmation that the tool exceeded their expectations and would continue to be used.

As Exif-Search began to take on a new life, Stadler once again felt ready to make his next move with Erie Data Systems — this time, his inspiration coming from the gym.

“I was exercising and there were TVs on, naturally with captions,” says Stadler. “I thought to myself, this is data, this is useful. So I did some research and was unable to locate any search engines used to find captioned data online. I set out to create a product to search for video content using closed captioning. My goal was to provide a single, simple place to find captioned videos online or on TV regardless of location, including Facebook, Youtube, Hulu, Netflix, etc. Why not provide necessary access to content with closed captioning to those who need it most?”

To better design the product that would eventually be known as CaptionSeek, Stadler worked with a focus group of sorts for the very first time, starting with an individual in Erie and growing to include members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities online. Initial reception to CaptionSeek was extremely positive, with many feeling their community was rarely catered to by the tech industry.

“If I could get validation from people all over the world who could utilize the search engine, it would give me the reassurance I needed to launch it publicly,” says Stadler. “Additionally, following the launch, a father contacted me to let me know the tool was being used to locate videos for his young son who is autistic. It’s always nice when something you’ve created goes on to benefit more than the communities it was targeted toward.”

It’s exceptional to hear the amount of work Erie Data Systems has been capable of in just the past year, and while it continues to grow, so does the Erie Movie House’s presence within the community. The venue has grown into a space shared by sports teams, special needs groups, independent filmmakers, and companies not only local to Erie, but occasionally, from around the world. Stadler continues to balance these two demographics, and as the self-appointed “mad scientist” of Erie Data Systems, he believes in the importance of cheerleading the collective efforts of Erie’s tech industry.

Aaron Mook can be reached at amook@eriereader.com

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Team Players

LECOM's athletic sponsorships score big nationally



The LECOM badge is displayed prominently on the practice jersey of Cleveland Browns rookie runningback Nick Chubb (31) with defensive back Briann Boddy-Calhoun (20) in pursuit. The school began its partnership with the Browns in 2016 to extend its recruiting reach in nearby Northeast Ohio. The Browns are just one of several professional sports teams LECOM has allied itself with over the past decade.

By: Matt Swanseger

Although the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine has no athletics programs of its own, its recruiting efforts may be among the best in the country — incidentally through the other collegiate and professional programs with whom it has partnered.

If you watched HBO's *Hard Knocks: Training Camp with the Cleveland Browns* this summer, you might have noticed a familiar sight. Yes, dropped passes and missed tackles accompanied by flurries of expletives — Rome wasn't built in a day (or in this case, 20 years, but this year's roster offers a foundation). But those things are universal to all NFL practice fields; the "LECOM" logos affixed to the Browns players' practice jerseys and decorating press con-

ference backdrops are not. Despite the Browns' repeated misfortunes, the fact remains that they represent one of 32 franchises in the most visible and most popular sports league in America, and their roster carries some of the most gifted athletes in the world.

The benefit of this is twofold, according to Pierre Bellicini, LECOM's director of communications and marketing. "If you look at your college or professional athlete, they are the epitome of health and wellness. Osteopathic medicine is about preventative medicine and helping the body heal itself ... the bottom line is yes, it's a good marketing tool and helps market the school's name, but it also markets health aspects we care to promote. These athletes lead very healthy, very active lifestyles."

Not only do athletes exercise vigorously, eat right, and take care of their

bodies, but they and their teams travel far and wide, and often inspire fierce loyalty. Such was the impetus behind LECOM's first partnership, with our own Erie BayHawks of the then-NBA Developmental League (now the NBA G League) in 2008. "They approached us with something new to the sports world — being a presenting sponsor of the team," recounted Bellicini. The LECOM logo can to this day be found on the court floor, attached to the BayHawks own logo, and throughout the team's advertising and marketing materials. "We were pioneers of that marketing. No matter where the BayHawks play, you see the LECOM name. This way we get our name out much further than we could by only advertising locally."

Since then, LECOM has allied itself with (in no particular order) the Erie Commodores FC, the Buffalo Sabres, the New York Jets (with emphasis on targeting Hispanic students through the Jets' Spanish-language radio station and newspaper), the PGA Web.Com Tour (the LECOM Health Challenge at Peek'n Peak Resort in Clymer, N.Y., observable by anyone in the 192 countries

that receive the Golf Channel), and the Pittsburgh Pirates (McKechnie Field in Bradenton, Fla., where the Pirates hold spring training, was recently renamed LECOM Park. LECOM operates a branch campus nearby). LECOM also advertises in the Yankees' and Orioles' Grapefruit League facilities. In addition, the LECOM system provides the team physicians for the Commodores, Mercyhurst University, Mercyhurst Preparatory School, and Corry High School.

In regard to Mercyhurst University, Bellicini was excited to announce title sponsorship of the LECOM 2018 Ice-breaker Tournament, the NCAA Division I ice hockey kickoff series being held at Erie Insurance Arena on October 12 and 13. In the tournament, the Lakers will host top-tier programs such as Notre Dame, Providence, and Miami of Ohio (all NCAA Champions within the past five years), drawing national attention from college hockey fans.

While not everyone makes it through to the final roster of an NFL team or to the final round of a hockey or golf tournament, partnering with the teams and athletes people care about will ensure that LECOM — and in turn, Erie — continues to make the cut.

Matt Swanseger is an unaffiliated former power-walking champion and has indubitably cursed at the Cleveland Browns more than any coach current or former. He can be reached at mswanseger@eriereader.com

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A Fighting Chance?

Slugging out some tough questions with former pugilist and current U.S. House candidate Ron DiNicola



JESSICA HUNTER

By: Matt Swanseger

The Minutemen militia of the American Revolution prided themselves on being ready to respond “at a moment’s notice.” As it was then, as it is now with another fighter of local renown, current lawyer and former U.S. Marine and boxer Ron DiNicola, the gunshot being the redistricting of the Pennsylvania congressional map this past winter, which reunited previously divided Erie County. DiNicola has put his gloves on and reentered the political arena after a 20 year hiatus, vying for the new PA District 16 title in the U.S. House of Representatives after having been knocked out previously in the 1996 PA-3 bout against Republican Phil English. His opponent in this match is Mike Kelly, who has been barely threatened since being elected to his PA-3 seat eight years ago.

DiNicola has been training vigorously for this moment, committing himself to community service and working both in private practice and as a public defender. Although he won’t be fighting with both hands tied behind his back this time thanks to the fairer congressional district map, he will face an

uphill battle against issues such as low turnouts at the polls and voter apathy — for instance, at the primaries this spring, only 22 percent of registered voters showed up.

I was also ready at a moment’s notice after receiving a last-second call from campaign manager Tony Coppola, nullifying my scheduled Wednesday morning phone interview with the Democratic candidate in favor for a face-to-face conference in his downtown office. With any luck, Erieites of all demographics will roll out of bed and answer their call to vote in the election on November 6.

Matt Swanseger: Tell me about the general vibe and tenor of the voter base as you’re going around campaigning? Do you think they’re hopeful? Concerned? Do you think they’re ready for a change? What is your outlook in regard to this race?

Ron DiNicola: Well my outlook and their outlook are merging, but [within] their outlook in my view is there is a great deal of concern and frustration associated with the inefficacy of Congress. Most people just don’t feel Congress is working for them. And by the way, they’re right. The first thing you struggle with with voters is giv-

Ron DiNicola, democratic challenger for the newly drawn Pennsylvania District 16, has his work cut out for him to unseat Republican incumbent Mike Kelly in the U.S. House of Representatives. However, with traditionally left-leaning Erie County reunited under the new congressional map, DiNicola is optimistic about his chances.

ing them a sense of “why should I care anymore?” Congress is gridlocked and it’s not getting anything done in regard to all the important issues that are facing us. So there’s a great deal of anxiety about that.

Now, having said that, what I have also said is that we have to take that anxiety and frustration and channel it into the energy to change things. The good news is that there is an appreciable number of folks who are energized about the possibility of changing things and are compelled by the urgency of the situation. So they’re anxious about the possibilities of our little slice of democracy here — which is the 16th District of Pennsylvania, that maybe we can put our imprint on it. We have an unprecedented number — in my view — of volunteers coming to the campaign, people who tell me everyday “Thank you for running,” people who ask me everyday, “How can I help?” So I think that’s what I’m experiencing from the voters.

MS: That’s encouraging. Now you had run for office before. What compelled you to get back into the race? Did you always have a comeback in mind or was there a pivotal moment or event somewhere in the past 20 years or so that reignited your drive to get back into the political arena?

RD: I wasn’t planning to run for Congress. I was enjoying the professional work I was doing; I was enjoying the opportunity to be active in the community on projects that I thought were important (such as Pre-K for PA, Empower Erie, the Police Athletic League). So I was enjoying that kind of work, even though it was volunteer work and it was hard and it was a lot of extra stress — but it was fun.

The catalytic event here was when the Pennsylvania Supreme Court threw out the disgraceful redistricting map that emasculated Erie’s federal presence. What happened there was that the U.S. Supreme Court had been

struggling over a standard of review to assess unlawfully gerrymandered districts. They lamented that there was no standard that they could apply to be able to police the issue of gerrymandering. The Pa. Supreme Court didn’t feel encumbered in that way. They said, “look, we know a gerrymandered district when we see it” and it bears no resemblance to the geographic map of communities, cities, boroughs, and towns that need to be consolidated as an area of shared interest.

The Pa. Supreme Court said, “That’s unconstitutional as far as we’re concerned.” So they did something that no one else in the country had thought of — which was to base the map on the Pennsylvania Constitution as opposed to the federal constitution. That changed everything. It reunited Erie County, reunited Crawford County, and created a much more competitive congressional district. I got into it at the very last minute. My wife and I had several conversations about it. We felt it was a seminal moment for the community and the region. We thought about it long and hard and decided it was too important to ignore. I’ve always believed public service was a duty and so we got into it.

MS: What were your biggest takeaways from those ‘90s campaigns and how are you applying those lessons today? Are there any parallels you can draw between your opponent then and your opponent now?

RD: I’ve spent a lot of time driving up and down I-79 in my life and been in the towns and boroughs of Western Pennsylvania probably as much as anybody, meeting the people and being at their events and their functions and experiencing what their reality is. And to answer the question, I’d like to say that things have gotten better for them, but by and large, the cities and towns and boroughs of Western Pennsylvania are still struggling for sustainability. They’re still struggling with the challenges associated with structural unemployment and the flight of young talent and the question of “what will become of us?”

I feel and I have strong views about the need to put the federal government back on the side of those cities and towns, who actually built Amer-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ron DiNicola is used to putting up a fight as a former U.S. Marine and boxer. He trained under Lou Bizzarro and Stan Rocky (at left) in Erie, winning the All-Marine boxing title along with various state Golden Gloves titles. DiNicola's late brother Vincent stands ringside.

ica and find themselves to some extent languishing in the backwater of attention from Washington while the special interests dominate the political process. I don't really see the federal government on the side of the middle class or working families or the cities and towns in our region. So what I have learned is we've got to address that. And that's what's important for the region.

I feel a great sense of optimism now in the sense that we have a new innovation class coming into play in a lot of places that need more tools. And we can see some of that in Erie with the development we have going on here and the change in perspective and attitude and outlook and I see it in other places in the region. So I think there is good reason for us to be hopeful as long as we have a plan moving forward and as long as that plan includes a functional federal government that is going to be on the side of working families and the

working class.

MS: How do you respond to Mike Kelly's ads? Is it possible for you to take the high road with this campaign or do you have no choice but to roll up your sleeves and give it back? How would you describe the opposition's plan of attack and how have you countered it so far and how will you counter it down the stretch?

RD: I think there is plenty to talk about on the issues. So we're really focused on that. The attacks on me are kind of canned in my own view — I'm a lawyer, so I represent people and fulfill a Constitutional duty and some of the cases I've been involved with in the past happen to be criminal cases. Those cases have been grossly misrepresented in the advertising against me, but I'm not going to spend much time on that nonsense because I view it as being an aside to the race which is "What are we going to do with America? And how are we going to make

Congress more responsive to the needs of working families of Pennsylvania?" And right now, my opponent is not doing that. My opponent is serving the special interests. And when he's not serving the special interests, he's serving his own interests, and I've got a lot to talk about. So I don't really view that as a negative. I view that as a fair playing field on helping the voters decide what their future ought to be for their representative in Congress.

MS: To your point earlier, you mentioned an energy and an eagerness for change as you've been making the rounds. How are you working to engage younger people — and especially minorities — and helping them to realize their vote matters?

RD: We have a number of young people actively involved in leadership positions in the campaign. So I think that's one of the ways you do that; you surround yourself with a variety of people, including young people who help you manage the campaign. So we're very excited about that. We have reached out to them and will continue to make ourselves available to meet with them. We find them in almost every meeting that we have, whether it's on the environment, economic development, or in our canvassing program, so I'm very excited about it. I have three daughters — ages 21, 19, and 15 — so I have my own pipeline to the views of young people and their friends and their social networks.

So I consider that to be a high pri-

ority for my campaign and I find it deplorable that my opponent would not meet with young people. I have an open door policy and I intend to have public town halls. I made a pledge on that going forward and I'm also going to do that as part of this campaign. So I'm looking forward to that opportunity to have those conversations and I've had many of them already. In any event, I'm feeling good about it and I'm feeling we have a lot of diverse attitudes within the campaign and we have a lot of young people canvassing and knocking on doors for us.

MS: That's good and all, but I think to win this race, you guys will need these underrepresented voting demographics to actually show up at the polls. I heard a statistic that less than 10 percent of the city's African-Americans showed up at the polls in the previous Presidential race, so that's a big issue. These are the people who most need the change around here but they're not leveraging that change by showing up to vote.

RD: We've had block parties within the inner city; we're planning on having more demonstrations in the inner city; we're planning a march in the inner city. We're going to try to do everything we can to move the needle on voter turnout. That's a big part of our effort so we're focused on that.

MS: Politics seem more contentious and divisive than they have ever been. Do you see any hope of ending the squabbling and striking some kind of accord across the aisle or do you believe the ideologies of each party have drifted so far apart that compromise is wishful thinking?

RD: I do see reason for hope, and part of it is that there are a record number of veterans running now. I think veter-



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FEATURE



JESSICA HUNTER

Ron DiNicola shakes hands with Julie Barry at the Town Hall Gathering of Erie's Minority Communities at the Booker T. Washington Center. DiNicola prides himself on touring the cities, towns, and boroughs of Western Pennsylvania along I-79 and connecting with the constituents of PA-16 he hopes to be answerable to.

ans are a good fit for the times we are living in. I think that perception you've articulated is right. What we're running against is the fact that members of Congress are stuck in ideological ditches and they can't get out of them to find common ground in the middle of the road. That's what the American people are insisting on. They're tired of the nonsense.

So I think that veterans bring an accountability factor and a mission-oriented psychology to the playing field. They're practical, they are about moving forward, and they're about getting things done. I think they're not going to waste a lot of time on ideological extremes. Most of the problems we're facing are solvable if we have the resolve to come together in common sense problem-solving, which is something I have some experience in. Most of the projects I've been involved with in the community have involved bringing together the Chamber of Commerce, organized labor, university presidents, and the base community and getting them to work with one another.

I think that's critical and that's a clear distinguishing factor from my opponent. My opponent really spews divisiveness and what we really need to do is find common ground. How do we find the common-sense approach to solving our problems? People want to bring the volume down on the divisive rhetoric. They want some civility. They want some cooperation. They want people to compromise and be accountable. But when we have gerrymandered seats, which is what we've had here, and you have a safe seat as an incumbent and

you've picked your constituency, then you have no incentive to compromise with anybody. Because you're not accountable to anybody. That's what we're fighting against. That's why the redistricting was so critical.

MS: Because now you have a shot.

RD: Now we have a shot and it makes me more accountable. You can't ignore large segments of your constituency. You have to try to understand what's in the best interest of the region and the country. I'm focused on that. I think if you do that, and you have a track record of doing that, that's a pretty good indication on how you're going to try to govern. I think that's where my opponent gets a failing grade time and time again. They voted to eliminate the Affordable Care Act. They were in control of the government. Congress had its say for several years — they could've come up with another plan if they felt it was bad, or fixed it — and we'd have voted on that, but you don't just dismantle it. You don't just dismantle healthcare for the country and say "okay, that's what we had to do because it was bad." You have to come up with something that gives you a way forward.

Tony Copolla: If I may interject one thing, Kelly is on CNN at the time they're talking about the Republican healthcare bill saying that insurance

companies need to charge people with preexisting conditions more because it's a business decision.

RD: Let me say this too. I understand this because I have a preexisting condition, an eye condition, and I know what it's like to need to have good insurance. I can afford good insurance. But people who are out there who don't have the ability to buy good insurance need to have a system where they can get affordable insurance. This is not something that is a foreign concept for us — universal access to good quality health insurance is important for our country. It's important for our economy. We can't stifle small businesses from getting started and destroy our competitive edge in the international market because of ballooning healthcare costs. So we have to figure out a way to cut out the red tape and the layers and layers of bureaucracy that exist in the healthcare system. We need to find a way through that. But that's going to require people that really want to solve the problem and not people who want to use it as political football. So that's really a challenge for us.

MS: Among the priorities you'd bring to Congress, you've listed long term protection of Medicare and Social Security, enhancing education, environmental protection, and opening economic opportunity. These concerns are vital to the longevity of not only our community, but also communities everywhere. Yet they seem as if they're being continuously undermined. Can you speak to each of these goals you're targeting?

RD: Well, let me focus it this way. There's a portal issue; there's a door we need to go through to get to all the other issues. The portal issue is we've got to fix Congress. If your lawnmower is broken, you can't mow the lawn. You're not going to be able to do much, so you've got to fix the lawnmower and then you go on to the next task. Right now we have a Congress that's broken; it doesn't work. It's accountable to special interests; it's a plutocracy. Money is dominating the political process and in turn the policies of our country. So we've got to fix that.

That's number one. Once you get that done, then you go through the portal and figure out what you're going to focus on and how you're going to get it done. And for me, the economic development equation for Western Pennsylvania is pretty straightforward. Three things: One, we have to have a workforce that's prepared to meet the chal-

lenges of the jobs that are coming. That means they have to have certifications 60-65 percent of jobs in the future will require — knowledge of mathematics, science, engineering, etc. So we need to make sure that they're prepared, because the jobs that sustained us before are not the jobs that are coming.

Secondly, we need to have livable communities, because people aren't going to want to invest in the future of a community that is riddled with economic inequalities and poverty and stricken with a hollowing out of the urban core. There are a number of towns that are struggling with that in the region. We have to find pathways to get people out of poverty and create communities that are sustainable and strong and healthy.

The third thing is, because we're situated in the Great Lakes Basin, the largest freshwater system in the world, and we have rivers, lakes, and streams that

“Right now we have a Congress that's broken; it doesn't work. It's accountable to special interests; it's a plutocracy. Money is dominating the political process and in turn the policies of our country. So we've got to fix that.”

are a precious resource. We have to be very vigilant about the environment. My opponent has the worst record in Congress on the environment. We have 50 miles of lakefront; we have an extraordinarily gifted environment in our region. Go all the way down Western Pennsylvania and look at the lakes and the streams and the wooded areas that we have — these are a real resource for us. Migration patterns are changing in this country. Geographic proximity given advanced technology is not what it used to be. People can choose where they want to be. We need to make sure we're a region people are going to want to choose. The innovators, the people that are interested in investing in new business and opportunity. We want to make sure [Western Pennsylvania is] a candidate for that. One thing we can't make a mistake on is the environment. This is a big challenge for us. We can't afford to be represented by somebody who's got the worst record in Congress

on the environment.

MS: Especially here with the lake which is the central resource for our community. Can you speak a little bit to repeated short-changing of the public school system and its struggle to stay afloat? What sort of efforts would you make to end the tax breaks and exemptions and establish the funding base for a more stable foundation for our children and our future?

RD: Public education as it relates to a taxing standpoint is a local and state issue. However, the federal government has a sustaining role to play in setting the tone for public education and creating opportunities at every level of educational development. And also it provides much-needed financial support. What we have seen is that the federal component has consistently decreased, and we've seen it decrease by federal actions that have undervalued the importance of education. I've worked very, very hard for education: Pre-K for PA, giving three- and four-year-olds the tools they need to hit the ground running, because we know if we do that, we're going to save costs on special education, truancy, dropouts, and later the criminal justice system. We know that's a huge investment. I grew up in a family where my father, who was an immigrant and built the house I grew up in, died, so my mother was left with three children, very little skills, very little education. But she made sure I was educated, that my brother and sister were. We have more than paid back the Social Security benefits we got after my father died and whatever assistance we received during that period of time.

That's the kind of investment that America needs to make in its young people. And right now education is becoming less and less affordable and we're seeing the undermining of our public school system. We need to renew our commitment to education. My opponent has a different view. He sees this as exclusively a local issue. But the party he belongs to is the party of Lincoln, that brought us the Morrill Land-Grant Act, which was one the most dramatic commitments the country could make to affordable education. I'm a strong supporter of education because I think that's another portal issue for us to be competitive and be strong and create those livable communities that we need.

Matt Swanseger can be reached at mswanseger@eriereader.com

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CUMULUS

CONNOISSEUR MEDIA

BT Gets Knocked Loose



MARKUX FELIX

THURSDAY, SEPT. 27

Knocked Loose, one of the most hyped-up bands in heavy music today, is coming to Erie, playing alongside local and regional favorites at Basement Transmissions.

The Kentucky-based hardcore/metal-core quintet made a name for themselves with their debut EP *Pop Culture* in 2014 and quickly gained ground by touring with the likes of The Acacia Strain, Counterparts, and Expire. The band's 2016 full-length album *Laugh*

Tracks brought them to greater heights faster than anyone expected, and they're showing no signs of slowing down.

Ashtabula's Homewrecker, one of the region's hardest-working bands, takes the second spot on the bill. Their latest album, *Hell is Here Now*, released earlier this year on Good Fight Records. The record feels reminiscent of late '80s/early '90s death metal, while still maintaining the contemporary thrash roots that brought the band to where they are today.

The opening sets belong to Facewreck, Pittsburgh's toughest new beat-down hardcore (check the new music video for their track "Gorilla Warfare"), and Erie melodic metalheads Shiver. — Tommy Shannon

7 p.m. // 145 W. 11th St. // \$15 pre-sale, \$17 doors // All Ages // knockedloosehc.com

Know Your Mungion



NICK WARREN

FRIDAY, SEPT. 28

One of the most exciting bands to emerge from the festival circuit in some time, Mungion are headed to the King's Rook Club for an evening of musical exploration. Pronounced like the pungent vegetable and satirical news source, the quartet hail from the Chicagoland area. Relying on a keen musical dexterity, they're something to behold in a live setting. For many people in the area, their first introduction to the band came at Night Lights 2017. The previous night in Detroit, the band had their tour van stolen, amounting to over \$40,000 in missing equipment. They soldiered on to Sherman, immediately winning over the crowd not only with their harrowing narrative, but with

an undeniable musical acumen — using Aqueous' borrowed instruments, no less. One of those in attendance was promoter Ryan Bartosek, who immediately sought to get them to the King's Rook Club. While they unfortunately had to cancel an initial appearance that November, they were secured to close out

The Gathering at Chaffee's this year. "Mungion absolutely floored 1,500 people" Bartosek said about the set, explaining that they "were declared the festival's new favorite band." Their second full-length studio album, *Ferris Wheel's Day Off*, is due out on Friday, Oct. 5, and gives a nod to their windy home city. Expect lightning fast, intricate lead lines and diminished runs from guitarist/singer Justin Rekam, with entrancingly technical grooves from the whole band. Added Bartosek, "anyone unfamiliar should plan to come to the Rook and experience this explosive show first hand." — Nick Warren

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. // 1921 Peach St. // \$7 for member, \$10 for non-members // 21+ // facebook.com/kingsrookclub

In Vino, Veritas...in North East - WineFest 2018



FRIDAY, SEPT. 28

There is a lot of good stuff going on in North East these days, from the delectable donut delights at Little Shop of Donuts, to the gorgeous sunsets at Fisherman's Beach, or the excellent course offerings at the ever-expanding Mercyhurst University branch campus, but for many of us in the region, North East is synonymous with wine.

Rows and rows of vines dot the landscape, and driving along Route 20 with the windows down on a sunny September day will fill your nostrils with the luscious scent of juicy grapes at peak ripeness, just begging to be plucked and turned into glorious vino. The much-anticipated celebration of this process — particularly the final stage, when we all get to drink the fruits of people's labor — occurs every year in late September at North East's Wine Country Harvest Festival, or WineFest.

WineFest is turning the big 37 this year, and what started as a minor street fair has grown into a two-park-total-town-takeover, a three-day event that takes practically a whole year to plan in its entirety and draws thousands of guests, both local and out-of-town.

"Our residents are such wonderful supporters," Katie Houpt, marketing coordinator for the North East Chamber of Commerce said. "They put up with the traffic interruptions and full parking spaces and still come out in force to celebrate all the wonderful things our grape-belt town has to offer."

We do appreciate their patience every year, and show it by ponying up some serious cash while we're in town — hotels and inns are booked up, restaurants flooded with hungry patrons. And while

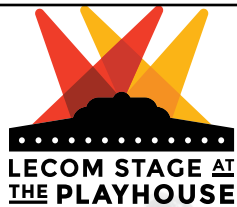
The region's wineries converge on North East at the annual WineFest, now in its 37th year, with samplings and bottles for sale at Gravel Pit and Gibson parks.

WineFest is clearly all about the incredible local wine, fantastic fair-style eats and jammin' good times on its main stage, the 'Fest also opens its gates to plenty of local vendors as well.

Lauren Gillespie of Erie runs a trendy online clothing boutique with her sister, Alyssa Layman of Fairview. This is their first year vending at WineFest and they are thrilled to get their shop, Allure Boutique, out from behind the screen. "We are so excited to be doing our first event at the North East WineFest," Lauren said. "We have been looking forward to getting out in the community and meeting new customers and fellow business-owners."

As always, Gibson Park in the middle of town is the place to be for a more easy-going, family-oriented atmosphere; the larger portion of the event is set in the more fast-paced Gravel Pit Park, where tickets for tasting are currently on sale (and will continue to be on sale at the gate), and where acts like Danger Bird, Six Year Stretch and The Breeze Band will perform. The North East Chamber of Commerce packs the weekend full of activities, such as the ubiquitous grape stomping, a cruise-in car show, and Bike Wine Country tours by Lake Country Bike. — Cara Suppa

Friday: 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. // Gravel Pit Park & Gibson Park, North East // nechamber.org/about-winefest // See website for ticket prices and details



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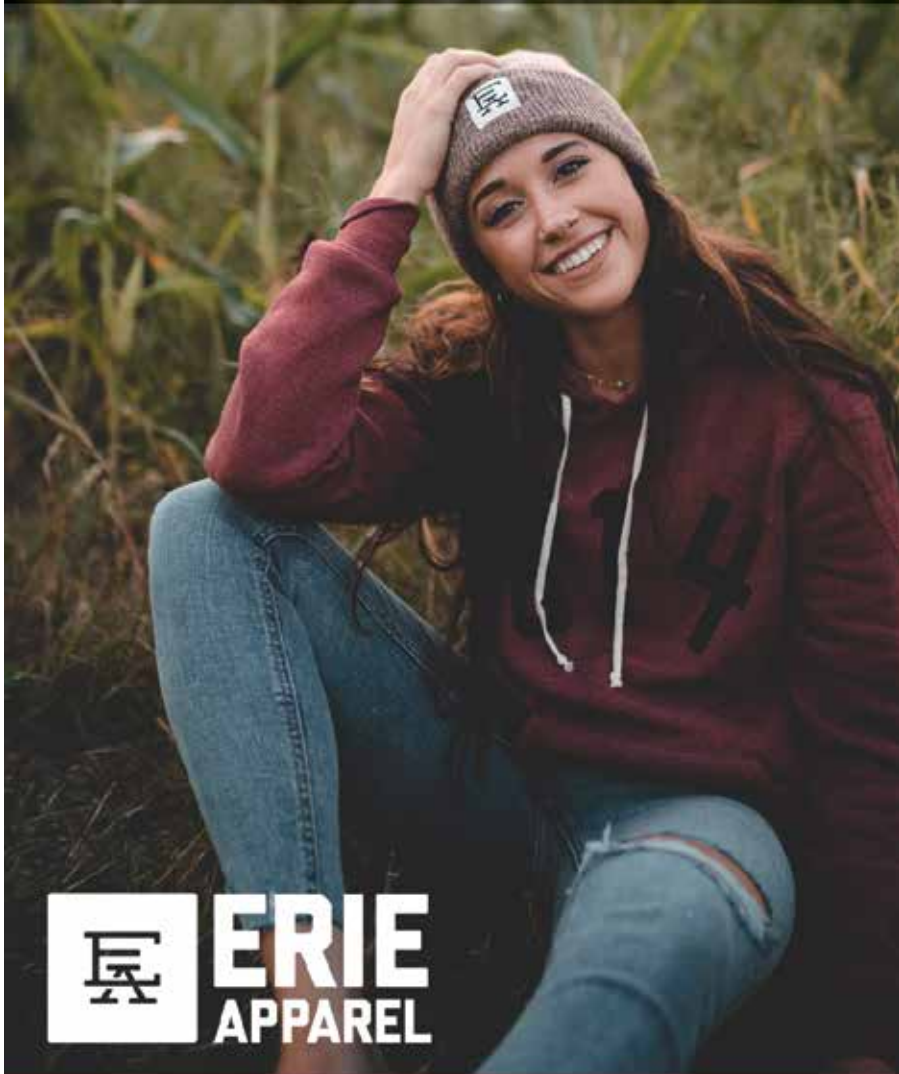
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Stirring Up Memories with Pink Martini

Talking to pianist Thomas Lauderdale on his musical journey



Pianist Thomas Lauderdale (far left) spearheads Pink Martini, an eclectic collective that blends vintage and contemporary musical styles of multiple genres and languages. The group will perform at Mercyhurst's Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center on Oct. 4.

THURSDAY, OCT. 4

As his group, Pink Martini, continues to tour behind its latest album, *Je dis oui!*, front-man/pianist Thomas Lauderdale sounds downright astonished that he still gets to follow his musical inspirations and make a living in the process.

"We've been going for 22-plus years," Lauderdale said, reflecting on his Pink Martini journey during a recent phone interview. "On paper it's preposterous; it seems so implausible for a band playing this kind of music and traveling the world for 22 years would actually be able to function. But here we are. We're very lucky."

The musical niche Lauderdale and Pink Martini have carved out is indeed unlike any other in pop music. The group's music traverses a spectrum that takes in vintage and contemporary pop, jazz, classical and a range

of international styles. The songs are sung in a host of languages — with *Je dis oui!* spanning eight different languages. The musical mix begins to make sense when one learns a little about Lauderdale's background and upbringing.

"I'm the oldest of four adopted children. My parents were white, but they adopted a multi-cultural family," he said. "My father went back and forth between being a minister and being a plant nurseryman. So I spent a lot of time both in the church and also growing up on a plant nursery in Indiana. After church services, I would go up to the piano and pound out the hymns that I had heard during the service. My parents sort of took it as a sign. "So I started piano lessons when I was six," Lauderdale said. "There were sort of six things that really were my childhood soundtrack. They were Ray Conniff, Ray

Charles, Roger Miller, the New Christy Minstrels, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the soundtrack to *Jesus Christ Superstar*. That was my childhood. That coupled with the fact that I studied a couple of different languages and classical music and also loved show tunes, from the likes of Rogers & Hammerstein. Those are the influences. And what you get really is Pink Martini from all of that."

Lauderdale did not initially see music as a career option. After attending Harvard University, he moved to Portland, Oregon and had an eye on a future in politics. "I was working at city hall when I was in high school and even throughout college and beyond college," he said. "My goal was really to become mayor of Portland. That was my hope."

As part of his preparations to perhaps run for office, Lauderdale started attending fundraisers for various political campaigns and progressive causes. He noticed the musical groups hired for these events left a lot

to be desired. He saw that as an opportunity to put his musical background to work and formed Pink Martini in 1994 to perform at these events.

Soon Lauderdale's political ambitions began to fade and he started envisioning a future for Pink Martini that went beyond playing fundraisers. In 1997, Pink Martini released its debut album, *Sympathique*. The album caught on internationally, and in France the group was nominated for best new artist and the title song was nominated for "Song of the Year" at 2000's France's Victoires de la Musique Awards.

Since then, nine albums have followed (including a 2010 holiday release, *Joy to the World*). Now, as the group tours behind *Je dis oui!*, Pink Martini has built a catalog that boasts several gold albums and total album sales of more than three million.

Je dis oui! ("I say yes" in French) figures to continue to build on the group's accomplishments. It features a lively global pastiche of original songs (three of which come from the soundtrack to a soon-to-be-released film, "Souvenir," featuring French actress Isabelle Huppert) and outside tunes ranging from Cole Porter's "Love For Sale" to "Kaj Kohla Khan" ("The Tough Guy with the Crooked Hat"), a song made

famous by the popular Iranian singer/actress Googoosh. Lauderdale considers *Je dis oui!* a particularly cheerful album that reflected the positive place he and the band have reached in life and their musical journey.

"I'm happier than I've been in years. I feel pretty comfortable in my life (right now)," Lauderdale said. "So that's reflected in the music. It generally comes out in the music. Also, I mean, walking into the studio, just listening to the songs we were going to record and had the rights to record them and the band was pretty well prepped, so there wasn't a lot of learning on the spot. It was just, it was more of a reflection of music we had been working on and developed." Lauderdale said fans can expect an eclectic and entertaining evening of music at Pink Martini's shows this fall.

"The shows these days are sort of like the greatest hits plus material from the new record," he said. "There's a lot going on always at these Pink Martini shows. It's always moving, so hopefully nobody will leave feeling unsatisfied." — Alan Sculley

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

The Bean Coffee Shop, 12 S. Lake St., North East, PA 16428 eriefoodtours.com.

MOVIES

Life of the Party

Sept. 27 — 12:30 p.m.
Lifeworks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show

Sept. 28 — 8 p.m. or midnight
Starring Tim Curry, Susan Sarandon and Barry Bostwick, fans of this interactive cult classic will have two show times to choose from.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

The Fifth Film

Premiere Encore

Sept. 29 — 7 p.m.
Erie Movie House, 3424 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

Finding Forrester

Sept. 30 — 1:30 p.m.
Blasco Memorial Library, 160 E. Front St. erielibrary.org.

Isle of Dogs (2018)

Oct. 3 — 5:30 p.m.
Wes Anderson's newest film will be shown as part of the Film Grain dinner-and-a-movie series.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. filmsocietynwpa.org.

Chappaquiddick

Oct. 4 — 12:30 p.m.
Lifeworks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

A Life in Paint

Oct. 4 — 7 to 9 p.m.

Oddity Productions and Erie Art Museum present the newest short documentary by Erie filmmaker Danny Pakulski.
Erie Art Museum, 20 E. 5th St. facebook.com.

Leave No Trace (2018)

Oct. 10 — 5:30 p.m.
Bourbon Barrel, 1213 State St. filmsocietynwpa.org.

Rust Belt New Americans

Oct. 10 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Based on the photo series by Maitham Basha, the film premiere will include a reception prior to the showing and panel discussion following.
Reed Union Building Auditorium (Room 117), 4701 College Drive behrend.psu.edu.

The Gospel According to Andre

Oct. 10 — 7:30 p.m.
Walker Recital Hall, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

Backyard Wilderness

Ongoing — 10 a.m., 1 p.m., & 4 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Amazon Adventure

Ongoing — 11 a.m. & 2 p.m.
Tom Ridge Environmental Center, 301 Peninsula Dr. biggreenscreen.com.

Earthflight

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

VISUAL ARTS

Adult Art Classes

Sept. 26, Oct. 3, 10 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Frontier Park, 1501 W. 6th St. leaferie.org.

Mosaic Thursdays

Sept. 27, Oct. 4 — 5 to 8 p.m.
Artlore Studio, 3406 W. Lake Rd. facebook.com.

Photography of the NPAA

Sept. 27 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Reception time listed above, ongoing through Oct. 27 thereafter
Cummings Art Gallery at Mercyhurst Univ., 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

EUP Art Department

Faculty Show

Sept. 28 — noon to 3 p.m.
One of two galleries on campus, Bruce Gallery will host works across multiple mediums by Edinboro faculty.
Doucette Hall, 215 Meadville St., Edinboro, PA 16444 events.edinboro.edu.

Bakers Dozen: 13 Artists on Found Objects

Sept. 28 — 5:30 to 9 p.m.
One Black Whisker Gallery, 130 W. 13th St. erieartsandculture.org.

Hands-On: Prints

Sept. 28 — 6 to 7 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Nancy Bryan: I Am Magic, Part II

Sept. 28 — 7 to 10 p.m.

Montana of 300 Returns to BT for Third Round



THURSDAY, OCT. 4

Illinois hit-maker Montana of 300 will make his third appearance at Basement Transmissions on October 4th, and there's little doubt that the city of Erie will embrace the drill rapper's charismatic stage presence and thought-provoking lyrics with open arms. Before gracing us with his presence (along with his 300 team), hometown emcees will share the mic to represent the 814. William Weyes, who has been making his mark and partnering up with Pittsburgh produc-

er Big Jerm, is relentlessly out to prove what our city has to offer. The smooth sounds of P Money\$, who recently released his third project titled *Perfection and Quality*, plans to carry his set with hits from his latest work.

Other Erie lyricists such as TayJer, Ducky, and Drippy Cloud\$ will spark up the night as trio Coast2Coast. DJ Vanni will sustain the mood throughout the venue while also introducing his artist, Tri-City sensation Jai Kelli, to the Erie scene.

I'm sure that Montana will be

very pleased with such openers setting the tone for the evening. If you haven't been to any of the returning artist's shows, this is your chance to indulge in some high-energy and intense fun. The 300 lieutenant is nothing short of excellent and he effortlessly slays every time with classic freestyles and unforgettable bangers.

Photographer David Desin will be in the building capturing moments from the night for you to hold onto until the next showcase. Hosted by DJ Echo and DJ Vanni himself, this event promises to be an extravagant time that will have the town talking hours after the curtains close. Montana is familiar with taking things up a notch, but now that he has established a fan base here, there may be some surprises coming and a powerful performance that will have you craving more. — Charles Brown

Doors, 6 p.m. // 145 W. 11th St. // All Ages // \$20, \$50 VIP Meet & Greet // For more info, visit theentertainmentcollectiveattecshows.com

Josh Shapiro Joins Erie Dems

THURSDAY, OCT. 4

Josh Shapiro, who currently serves as Pennsylvania's 50th Attorney General will be featured at Erie Democratic Party's 2018 Fall Dinner.

Shapiro, who was elected as Attorney General in 2016, had served in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives where he represented the 153rd legislative district and previously held position as member and Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Commissioners, north of Philadelphia.

"Shapiro is a big name in the Pennsylvania Democratic Party," Jim Wertz, Erie County Democratic Party chairman, said. "We think he has a bright future ahead of him. Those are the kind of elected officials that can really excite the party and really keep people excited about the future."

In addition to Shapiro, John Fetterman, candidate for Lt. Governor of Pennsylvania, will be in attendance alongside a host of local elected officials.

The dinner will be held at the Boston Store in downtown Erie on Oct. 4 from 6 to 9 p.m. Cocktails begin at 6 p.m. with dinner at 7.

The cost is \$40 per person to attend. If attending with a party, tickets for a table of eight are \$300. Tickets are available at ErieDems.com. Checks can be mailed and made payable to the Erie County Democratic Party. — Hannah McDonald

6 to 9 p.m. // 100 Boston Store Plaza // \$40 per person // eriedems.com



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

A Celebration of Life & Work on Our Waterways

Ongoing through Oct. 1
Erie Maritime Museum, 150 E. Front St. flagshipniagara.org.

Works by Rebecca Allan and Andrew Shirley

Oct. 2 — 7 to 9 p.m.
Opening reception time above, ongoing through Oct. 21.
Allegheny College, 520 N. Main St., Meadville, PA 16335
sites.allegheny.edu.

Tyanna Buie: Recollections

Opens Oct. 5
Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

Greg Zbach: Recent Photographs

Ongoing through Oct. 9
Glass Growers Gallery, 10 E. Fifth St. glassgrowersgallery.com.

Gary Spinosa: Divine Instinct

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

Donna Nicholas: The Space Between

Ongoing through March 10, 2019

Erie Art Museum, 411 State St. erieartmuseum.org.

James McMurray: Faces and Paces

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

THEATER

Hello Dolly!

Sept. 26, 27, 28, 29 — 7:30 p.m. & Sept. 30 — 2 p.m.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. erieplayhouse.org.

SWEAT

Sept. 27 — 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Climate Change Inc., 314 E. 11th St. bit.ly/SweatErie.

One Act Roulette

Sept. 27, Oct. 4, 5, 6 — 7:30 to 9 p.m. & Oct. 7 — 2:30 to 4 p.m.
In this show, the audience decides what scenes will be performed, based on randomly assigned prompts, numbered in an envelope.
Diebold Center for the Performing Arts, 217 Meadville St., Edinboro, PA 16444 edinboro.edu.

Trojan Women

Sept. 27, 28, 29, Oct. 4, 5, 6 — 8 p.m. & Oct. 7 — 2 p.m.

Gannon's Schuster Theatre, 620 Sassafras St. gannon.edu.

The Canterbury Feast

Sept. 28, Oct. 5 — 7 p.m. & Sept. 29, Oct. 6 — 5:30 p.m. & Sept. 30 — 2:30 p.m.
Station Dinner Theatre, 4940 Peach St. canterburyfeast.com.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?

Sept. 28, 29 — 7:30 p.m.
PACA, 1505 State St., paca1505.com.

Hamlet

Sept. 28, 29, Oct. 5, 6 — 7:30 p.m. & Sept. 30, Oct. 7 — 3 p.m.
All An Act Theatre, 652 W. 17th St. allanact.net.

Shakespeare Uncollared

Oct. 2 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Erie Playhouse is hosting free performance of Shakespeare-themed music, slam poetry, and scenes by Gannon's Schuster Theater and All An Act Theater Productions.
Erie Playhouse, 13 W. 10th St. facebook.com.

The Laramie Project

Oct. 5, 6, — 8 p.m..
Dramashop, 1001 State St. #210 dramashop.org.

Aida

Oct. 6 — 12:55 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo Performing Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St. miac.mercyhurst.edu.

COMEDY

Juston McKinney

Sept. 27 — 7 p.m. & Sept. 28, 29 — 6:45 p.m. or 9:30 p.m.
Jr's Last Laugh, 1402 State St. jrslastlaugh.com.

Backroom Misfits

Sept. 28 — 7 to 9:30 p.m.
Basement Transmissions, 145 W. 11 St. facebook.com.

Greg Morton

Oct. 4 — 7 p.m. & Oct. 5, 6 — 6:45 p.m. or 9:30 p.m.
A veteran of the Comedy Festival in Montreal and a YouTube hit, Greg Morton will be live in Erie.
Jr's Last Laugh, 1402 State St. jrslastlaugh.com.

Hunks

Oct. 9, 10 — 7 p.m.
Jr's Last Laugh, 1402 State St. jrslastlaugh.com.

SPORTS

Race of Champions Weekend

Sept. 27, 28, 29
Lake Erie Speedway, 10700 Delmas Dr., North East, PA 16428 lakeeriestracking.com.

Glow Erie Fun Run

Sept. 29 — 6 p.m.
Whispering Woods Golf Club, 7214 Grubb Rd. eriesports-commission.com.

Erie Otters vs. Kingston Frontenacs

Sept. 29 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. ottershockey.com.

Downtown Erie Ping Pong Open

Oct. 1, 8 — 5:30 to 9 p.m.
The Brewerie at Union Station, 123 W. 14th St.

Erie Otters vs. Sudbury Wolves

Oct. 5 — 7 p.m.
Erie Insurance Arena, 809 French St. ottershockey.com.

Presque Isle Poker Pedal

Oct. 6 — 9 a.m.
Beach 1 Pavilion at PI State Park, 1 Peninsula Dr. discoverpi.com.

Gannon Homecoming

Oct. 6 — noon to 3 p.m.
Gannon Knights take on Seton Hill University for

homecoming football game.
McConnell Family Stadium, W. 4th St. gannon.edu.

Erie Otters vs. Saginaw Spirit

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

COMMUNITY

New to Medicare?

Sept. 26 — 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
Lifeworks Erie, 406 Peach St. lifeworkserie.org.

Goodell Gardens Farmers Market

Sept. 26 — 3 to 6 p.m.
Goodell Gardens & Homestead, 221 Waterford St., Edinboro, PA 16412 goodellgardens.org.

Trump, Trade and the International System

Sept. 27 — 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.
The first in the semester-long Al Stone Lecture series, EU Professor Gerry Gendlin will present "Trump, Trade and the International System."
Diebold Center for the Performing Arts, 217 Meadville St., Edinboro, PA 16444 events.edinboro.edu.

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OCTOBER 2018 SCHEDULE

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 vs. Sudbury Wolves 7pm	6 vs. Saginaw Spirit 7pm
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17 vs. Niagara IceDogs 7pm	18	19	20 vs. Ottawa 67's 7pm
21 vs. Windsor Spitfires 4pm	22	23	24	25	26	27 vs. North Bay Battalion 7pm
28 vs. Mississauga Steelheads 4pm	29	30	31			



GAMES HELD AT: 809 FRENCH ST. ERIE, PA 16501
www.ottershockey.com // 814.455.7779

Getting Erie's 40 Under 40 Experience



FRIDAY, OCT. 5

Since 2013, Erie's 40 Under 40 has been one of the Erie Reader's flagship offerings, equaled only by the Best of Erie awards. The driving force behind Erie's 40 Under 40 is to recognize the talented young individuals in our community who are making our city a better place. There are all kinds of innovators, entrepreneurs, and creative people who continue to breathe new life into our region. With Erie's 40 Under 40 Experience, the public will have a chance unlike any other to witness all of this in action. The event is hosted as a joint effort by The Erie Reader and Young Erie Professionals, and is presented by the Erie Community Foundation. Held on the second floor of Lovell Place, the space will be transformed into a "cocktail chic" atmosphere that promises to not only be an unparalleled networking opportunity — something that Young Erie Professionals have honed to a science — but a celebration of local music, art, and one of the best gatherings of local food and drink all year. Guests will get to sample food from local favorites like 1201 Kitchen, Bolero, Lavery Brewing Co., the Sheraton Bayfront Grille, Molly Brannigan's, Cork 1794, Skunk & Goat Tavern, Room 33, Virgil's Plate, U Pick Six, and more. On hand will also be beer, wine, and alcohol from The Brewerrie at Union Station, Cart/Horse Distilling, Erie Beer featuring Fat Head's Brewery, Five & 20 Spirits and Brewing, Lavery Brewing Co., Luminary Distilling, and Voodoo Brewery. There will also

Lovell Place will play host to the Erie Reader and Young Erie Professionals' 40 Under 40 Experience on Oct. 5, a cocktail-chic event featuring the best of local food, drink, and entertainment.

be a special group of musicians made up entirely of past honorees (including Matt Boland, Eric Brewer, Charles Brown, Tavon Markov, Zack Orr, Jess Royer, and Brooke Surgener). DJ Jonny Evans will be closing out the evening as well. There will be live tattooing from Jess Scutella and Leslie Fiolek Hess,

The event promises to be a celebration of local music, art, and one of the best gatherings of local food and drink all year.

with Heather Cash painting live, and photographer Jennifer Dworek giving a makeover to a lucky winner. There will also be a special silent auction thanks to many area donors, and each attendee will receive a commemorative glass snifter. Prior 40 Under 40 honorees may remember yearly get-togethers, but this event will be something wholly new, a grand to-do bringing together so many aspects of what makes Erie innovative and unique. — Nick Warren

7 p.m. to 10 p.m. // Lovell Place, Second Floor, 153 E 13th St // \$75 general admission // eriepa.com/40-under-40-experience

A 'Sacrificiously' Big Show



FRIDAY, OCT. 5

Thirty years ago, Supersuckers were formed. Three decades later, the band is still going strong with a new album and a special night all lined up. The trio is fronted by bassist Eddie Spaghetti — whose last appearance in town was a 2011 solo show at the Crooked i — and joined by guitarist Marty Chandler and drummer Chris Chango. Forging a riotous blend of rock'n'roll, punk, and country music, they've staked out a claim for themselves in the areas of — in their own words — "liquor, women,

drugs, and killing." Their current tour boasts a "big show" with several stand-out sections. After an opening set from This American Song, Supersuckers will give fans a special country set along with songs from the band's latest album *Suck It*, which came out on Sept. 21. Then, they'll proceed to play *The Smoke of Hell* (which features gorgeous cover art by comic artist Daniel Clowes) and *La Mano Cornuda* (which describes the rock gesture "the horned hand") in their entirety. The two albums both come from the band's early days, and were released on the iconic label Sub Pop Records. They predate the group's move to the country-inspired "cowpunk" style with 1997's *Must've Been High*, as well as the track "Born With a Tail," a notable song thanks to the locally cherished band Dirt McGurt. — Nick Warren

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. // 1921 Peach St. // \$10 for member, \$15 for non-members // 21+ // facebook.com/kingsrookclub

Reading Up: Dramashop Tackles Tragedy



FRIDAY, OCT. 5

Laramie, Wyoming, 1998: Matthew Shepard, a gay student at university is brutally tortured, and left to die. Six days later, he does. Not what one would think of as an inspiring start to a piece of mesmerizing theater. A storm of political change involving hate crime laws and definitions of hate crime were to follow over the next several years.

One month later, writer/director Moses Kaufman and members of Tectonic Theater Project in NYC traveled to Laramie, and for a full year interviewed members of the community. With the town still reeling from the tragic event and the notoriety they received from it, the reactions were wide. Hundreds of interviews were conducted and the group's own experiences while there culminated in *The Laramie Project*.

With an ensemble cast portraying dozens of roles, *The Laramie Project*

debuted in 2000 to great controversy and acclaim. Often picketed and condemned, it has stood the test of time and remained relevant in our society. A tragic event that was, at the time, current news is now a part of our cultural history, and the play serves to remind of us this.

Dramashop, not one to shy away from thought-provoking or potentially controversial productions, is staging their own rendition, and the timing is interesting. Now 20 years after Matthew Shepard's murder, how has public opinion changed? How has it stayed the same?

The production features Kathleen Cahill, Michael Haas, Megan Hamm, Kayla McGhee, Chase Miles, Jesse Olszewski, Alyssa Pelinsky, and Adam Rossi all in multiple roles, under Zach Flock's direction. With such a great theater company, Erie is more than capable of bringing justice to this well thought out piece of writing and research. An opportunity to see this production is one to take advantage of. — Marnie Foss

Fridays and Saturdays Oct. 5 - 21, 8 p.m. // Dramashop 1001 State Street, Suite 210 // \$12 regularly, \$20 opening night reception, \$5 Saturday, Oct. 6 // dramashop.org

Magic Beans Sprout at the Rook



heavy, giving a crusher of a performance -- after having played until 4 a.m. at the Bedford-based Domefast the night (er, morning) before. For the past year, they've been touring the country in support of their latest full-length, *Casino Cabaret*, which bloomed

SATURDAY, OCT. 6

Baked to damn fine goodness in the illustrious test kitchens of Colorado's jam-heavy live music scene, Magic Beans have really started bouncing up and blowing minds all over the place.

And they'll pop a buncha sprouts of jazz/funk/soul-heavy improv jam on local grounds when they return to the King's Rook Club on Saturday, Oct. 6.

Word is the last time Beans were about Erie earlier this year, they brought it on

this March. So if you fancy yourself a bean-stalker, the fellows have plenty of dates lined up from the Rockies to the Appalachians, until their New Year's Eve appearance with Pigeons Playing Ping Pong at Stage AE.

Exciting to ponder what, this time around, the flavor of Beans may be.

— Ryan Smith

10 p.m. to 2 a.m. // 1921 Peach St. // facebook.com/kingsrookclub

General of Pennsylvania.
Boston Store, 100 Boston
Store Plaza facebook.com.

Fall Harvest Fest

Oct. 5, 6, 7
The three-day fall-themed family event will feature a 5k run, dinner, chair rides, a ski swap and more.

Mt. Pleasant Ski Resort, 14510
Mt. Pleasant Rd., Edinboro,
PA 16412 facebook.com.

Lakewood Book Sale

Oct. 5 — noon to 8 p.m. &
Oct. 6 — 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Lakewood United Methodist
Church, 3856 W. 10th
St. lakewooderie.org.

Oktoberfest

Oct. 5 — 5 to 11 p.m. &
Oct. 6 — 1 to 11 p.m. & Oct.
7 — noon to 6 p.m.
St. Joseph Church, 147
W. 24th St. stjosephbol.org/oktoberfest-2017

Pumpkin Walk

Oct. 5, 6 — 6 to 9 p.m.
Waldameer Park, 220 Penin-
sula Dr. extension.psu.edu.

Erie's 40 Under 40 Experience

Oct. 5 — 7 to 10 p.m.
Lovell Place 2nd Floor, 153 E.
13th St. eriepa.com/40-under-40-experience.

Belle Valley Ladies Auxiliary Craft Show

Oct. 6 — 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Belle Valley Fire Dept., 1514
Norcross Rd. (814) 440-7082

Basic Tree Pruning Class

Oct. 6 — 10 a.m. to noon
Asbury Woods Nature Center,
4105 Asbury Rd. registra-
tiondesk.asburywoods.org.

Massage Therapy Associates Open House

Oct. 6 — noon to 4 p.m.
Massage Therapy Associates,
1612 W. Grandview Blvd. dspath.massagetherapy.com.

Ofrenda: Offering for a Loved One

Oct. 6 — 1 to 4 p.m.
The Village of Healing
and Wellness, 2558 W.
8th St. facebook.com.

Dogtoberfest 2018

Oct. 6 — 5 p.m.
Erie Brewing Co., 6008 Knowl-
edge Pkwy. facebook.com.

2018 Bethany Bash

Oct. 7 — 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Bethany Outreach Center,
254 E. 10th St. bethany-outreachcenter.org.

Designer Purse Bingo

Oct. 7 — 2 to 5 p.m.
Perry Highway Hose Co., 8281 Ol-
iver Rd. blendedspiritsranch.org.

Columbus Day

Oct. 8 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Erie Art Museum, 411 State
St. erieartmuseum.org.

EUP Planetarium:

Think About It

Oct. 9 — noon
Just in time for midterms,
EU Planetarium to host
midday stargazing break.
Edinboro Planetarium, 161
Cooper Science Center, Edin-
boro, PA 16444 edinboro.edu.

Extreme Couponing

Oct. 9 — 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.
LifeWorks Erie, 406 Peach
St. lifeworkserie.org.

Kate Hennessy on Dorothy Day

Oct. 9 — 7 p.m.
Mary D'Angelo Performing
Arts Center, 501 E. 38th St.
miac.mercyhurst.edu.

The American Dream in the U.S., Europe, and Asia

Oct. 9 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society,
3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Active Apples

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

American Elections: Is There a Better Way?

Oct. 10 — 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Jefferson Educational Society,
3207 State St. jeserie.org.

Haunted History Tours

Oct. 10 — 7:30 p.m.
The Brewerrie at Union Station,
123 W. 14th St. brewerrie.com.

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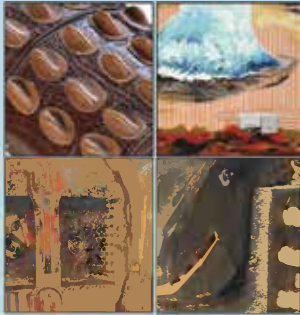
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Peter Koronakos
Brian Pardini
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Fran Schanz
David Seitzinger
Leo Sewell
Alan Wadzinski
Sarah Walko

Music By:

Joseph Allen Popp

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Popluck &
Mason Farms Cider

Contact:

One Black Whisker Gallery
oneblackwhisker@gmail.com
814.450.6632



VISUAL ARTS

This Artist Sees Things

Matt Lebowitz offers up his whole world



Local photographer Matt Lebowitz shows a gift for locating the extraordinary in the ordinary with "The Year in a Life: Things I Saw and Things I Thought" exhibit at the U Frame It Gallery on the corner of West Eighth and Liberty.

come to him and are jotted down in his ever-present notebook. These can be philosophical ("Learning and knowing are two different things"), epigrammatic ("Dog walkers: If you crap on the world — the world will crap on you"), or political ("Yo GOP — try living beyond your mean").

And most of the show conveys that wide-ranging gamut of sentiments. A viewer can be laughing at a photo of Lebowitz and friends being silly one moment and pondering homelessness in Erie the next,

By: **Mary Birdsong**

Walking down an unknown street or being in his own backyard both hold equal possibilities for visual treasure to Matt Lebowitz. In his ongoing show "The Year in a Life: The Things I Saw and the Things I Thought," (through the end of October) he offers us the opportunity to traverse his physical world and the landscape of his mind.

While some artists may gather imagery, feelings, reactions, and philosophy and then distill them into a single image, Lebowitz does the "opposite." He shows us everything, all the details, all the words, his political thoughts and discloses to us how he navigates the same world we do.

We are given small photos of scenes and things making up ordinary life, from the brass plaques announcing a sidewalk's maker to dazzling sunsets and snowy landscapes, all arranged in a rotating display of panels, each for a particular month. There is stark realism and enigmatic abstracts. There are grasshoppers, discarded trash, a crack-er box and lots of plastic cups of beer. By the time you read this he will have added three new months to finish out the show.

The most endearing elements of the exhibit to this reviewer's eye are the ones capturing "ordinary" things: A yel-

low fire hydrant sharing space with a yellow street salt box, a single red and white Christmas tree ornament dangling from filigreed wrought-iron porch trim, tangerines nestled around the page-a-day Zen calendar that inspires many of these photos.

And it's clear Lebowitz is in favor of snow, with many images capturing last winter's insistent, frosty blanket covering just about everything. One standout is a photo in which snow is gathered symmetrically and artfully by the wind on a chain link fence. Equally present, though, are the pleasures of summer, from outdoor concerts and fireworks to lush greenery at its fullest.

Collectively, these images reveal the scaffolding of our lives, all those seemingly insignificant moments we collect and, mostly, discard. The bumper stickers we see on cars as we wait at a red light, the interesting shadows created by nature and humans, the way late-day sun catches on windows or a single brilliantly red autumn leaf in a wet gutter.

"Life is made up of multiple moments, not singular ones," Lebowitz tells me. "An individual photo will have only one effect. This show chronicles more completely how we actually live our lives."

Accompanying these panels of photographs are small adages printed in black and white and placed on a ledge along the wall below the panels. They spring from Lebowitz's mind as they

thanks to his simple photo of the overflow shelter schedule posted on a wall.

But this is as it should be. This is how lives are pieced together, one image, one moment, one scrap of thought

Collectively, these images reveal the scaffolding of our lives, all those seemingly insignificant moments we collect and, mostly, discard.

knitted into a fabric of our own making. These tapestries contain the good and bad, the sour and the sweet, the fat and the lean. But the radiance of each is based on whether we choose to remember or discard the details. Lebowitz chose to remember.

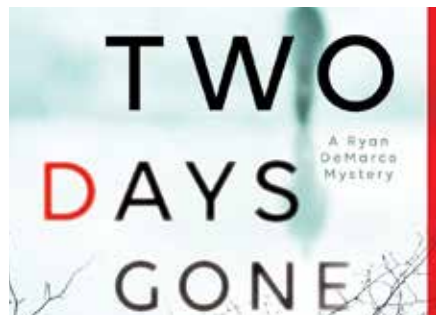
His tapestry is an opulent, bursting one. He has generously shared it with the rest of us. I recommend you see this and ponder the luster of your own. And remember the adage Lebowitz scribbled on May 18, 2018: This miracle of a day deserves documentation.

Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.,
Saturday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. // U Frame It,
731 W. Eighth St. // 456.1313

Mary Birdsong can be reached at
mbirdsong@eriereader.com

Two Days Gone

Randall Silvis' mystery blends fiction with factual area locales



How often do we find a first-rate literary novel that incorporates references to Molly Brannigan's, the Albion tornado, the SeaWolves, the Zone, Cathedral Prep and the old Holiday Inn Downtown? Meet Randall Silvis, an accomplished novelist, screenwriter and playwright from Mercer County whose sixth novel, *Two Days Gone*, tells the intriguing story of Pennsylvania State Police Sergeant Ryan DeMarco's quest to find and exonerate his friend, novelist Thomas Huston, after Huston's family is brutally murdered. Although tasked with bringing Huston in, DeMarco can't accept that his friend is responsible for the gruesome, ritualistic butchering of his wife and children. His deeply introspective search for Huston, driven by little more than intuition, takes him up Interstate 79, from Lake Wilhelm to Erie, and ultimately to Conneaut and Ashtabula County.

Local readers will enjoy reading about familiar territory, but don't let the local setting and references fool you. *Two Days Gone* is not particularly targeted at a local audience. Silvis is simply taking advantage of turf he knows well. But for a reader from this part of Pennsylvania, it's hard to toss aside a story that opens with "In late October, the Arctic Express begins to whisper southeastward across the Canadian plains, driving the surface of Lake Erie into white-tipped breakers that pound the first cold breaths of winter in northwestern Pennsylvania. From now until April, sunny days are few and the spume-strewn beaches of Presque Isle empty...."

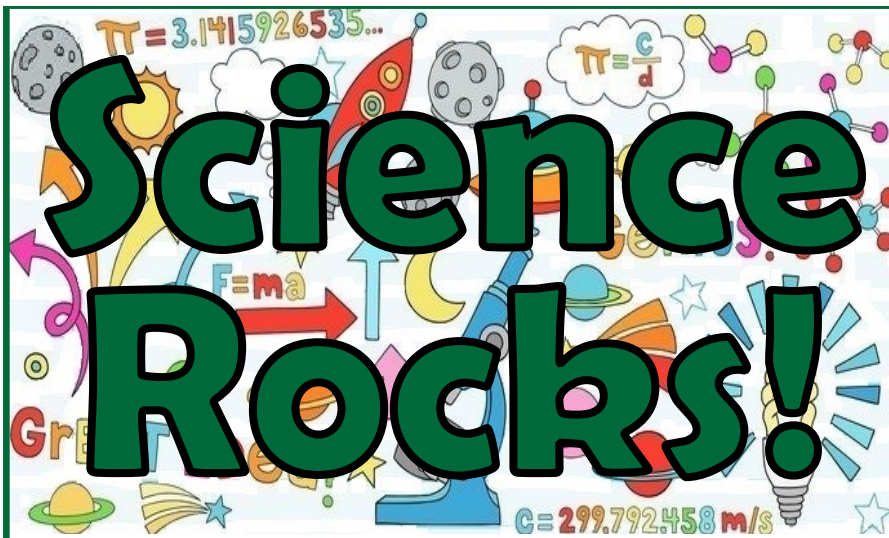
The cover announces *Two Days Gone* as "A Ryan DeMarco Mystery," making clear that Silvis plans a series for his troubled protagonist, as indeed he has done with a second DeMarco mystery just released. DeMarco certainly seems to have the legs for a series. Vulgar and cynical, self-pitying, and at times annoyingly smart-mouthed for no reason, he's

not particularly likable. But he's engaging, largely because of his single-minded dedication to his assignment and his impressive detective work. Like most well-written yet disagreeable protagonists, by the end of the story the reader has come to terms with DeMarco. And engagement is what matters. Don't expect later installments of DeMarco to be cookie-cutter repetitions, with a formulaic plot structure or an un-evolved Ryan DeMarco. Silvis is too imaginative for that. It will be fun to watch DeMarco tool up and down 79 on whatever chase Silvis sends him on.

Two Days Gone continually crosses the sometimes indistinct boundary between literary and genre fiction, and here I see Silvis as a risk taker. This is not pulp fiction, and it probably isn't for everyone. Silvis offers a deep, dark look into some very troubled characters and their malignant motivations. He asks his reader to think hard and to judge his gritty characters and the unattractive world they live in. His writing has an intensity to it that runs the risk of overwhelming someone expecting John Grisham or any of the easy-read serial mysteries that populate genre fiction. This is a different type of writing and it stings a bit. There is nothing particularly uplifting about it.

The story is not without its shortcomings. The average reader may scratch his head over phrases like "the susurrus breath" and questions like "did he calm himself with its sibilance?" And the many early scenes in Huston's point of view tend to be tedious, consisting largely of the near nonsensical ramblings of a man who is obviously disturbed. Although I sensed that Silvis was merely challenging the reader by suggesting that perhaps Huston was mad enough to murder his family, I caught myself skim-reading them after a while. But the final seventy-five pages were legitimate page turners with enough turns and switchbacks to satisfy any avid mystery buff. At four out of five stars for *Two Days Gone*, Randall Silvis is worth becoming acquainted with. — Richard Perhacs

Sourcebooks Landmark; 379 pages; \$15.99 (soft cover) // Richard Perhacs practices law in Erie. He holds a Master of Fine Arts in Popular Fiction. He can be reached with comments and suggestions for reviews at richardperhacs@gmail.com.



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MOVIE REVIEWS

"Stick Around!": *The Predator* Works Better as Comedy than Action

★★

John McTiernan's 1987 film *Predator* is really the most ingenious idea for a film: an action movie that suddenly gets hijacked by a slasher flick halfway through. Thirty years later, dozens of filmmakers have tried to emulate that premise but *Predator* still stands as one of the greatest action/horror hybrids ever made. To his credit, director Shane Black (*Iron Man 3*, *The Nice Guys*) doesn't try to copy McTiernan's original in his new sequel *The Predator*. Instead, he almost turns the film into a kind of screwball comedy.



20TH CENTURY FOX

This new film begins with the lovable alien hunter crash landing on Earth after being pursued by other, stronger Predators. This Predator and his pursuers must then track down a young boy who has accidentally stumbled onto some of their technology and only a motley crew of ex-soldiers stands in the path of the extraterrestrial killing machines.

The film is filled with Shane Black's trademark witty dialogue and zingy one-liners, most of which are really funny. All the characters are also surprisingly well-developed and sympathetic and there are even a few clever callbacks to lines and scenes from the original movie. Ironically, the film's biggest weakness is its action scenes which are clumsy and poorly edited with characters that seem to appear like magic several times (it seems there may have been some studio meddling during the editing process). The funny character interactions briefly elevate the film during the first half, but once the (admittedly delightfully gruesome) killings start, *The Predator* shows you how truly mediocre it can really be. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: Shane Black // Written by: Shane Black, Fred Dekker // Starring: Boyd Holbrook, Trevante Rhodes, Jacob Tremblay, Keegan-Michael Key, Olivia Munn, Sterling K. Brown, Thomas Jane, Alfie Allen, Augusto Aguilera and Jake Busey // 107 minutes

Trigger Warning: *Assassination Nation* is the Darkest Film of the Year

★★★

These are strange times we live in. The concept of privacy is becoming more and more obscured, the political landscape is becoming more black and white, and the internet has exacerbated the mistrust and paranoia that has already existed. The world seems overdue for a good satire and *Assassination Nation* is that satire we need right now. I don't think I'm being hyperbolic when I say that this film is a giant middle finger pointed directly at modern society.

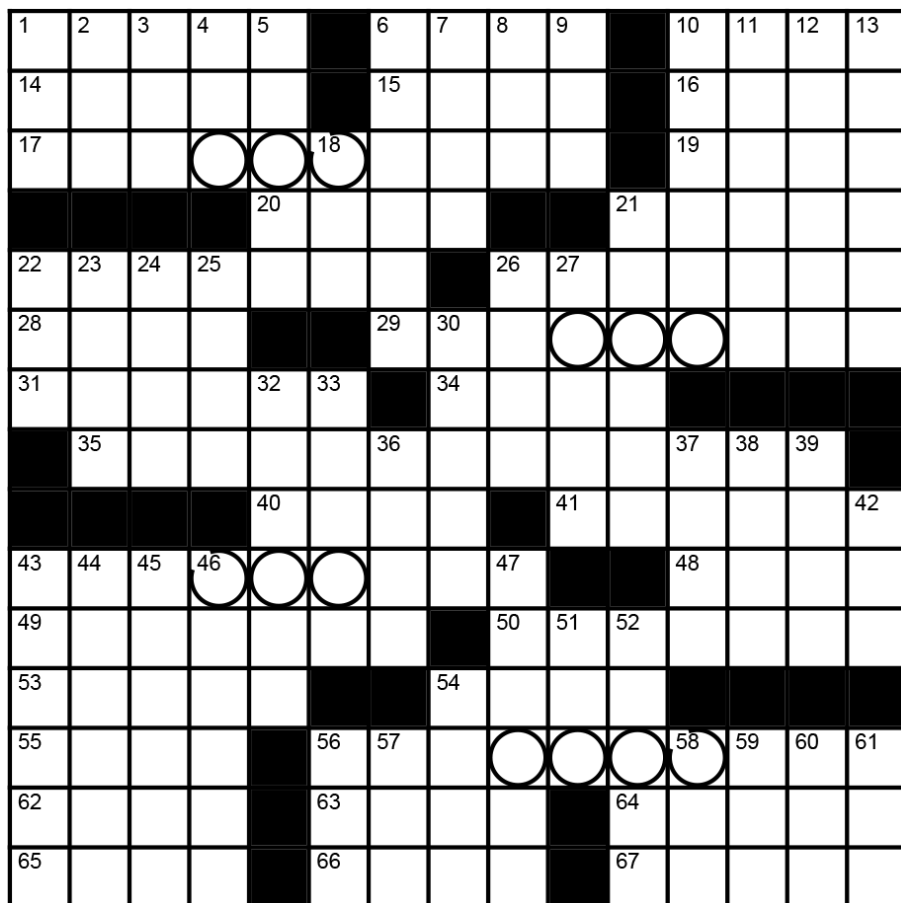


NEON / REFINERY 29

When a mysterious hacker begins posting the private details of denizens in a small town, the people become racked with paranoia that they may be next. As fear grips the town, a teenage girl (Odessa Young) and her three friends suddenly find themselves the target of all the town's hatred. Before things get sorted out, the community will be ruined, lives will be destroyed, and many, many people will die.

The style of this film is absolutely bonkers! With swirling, upside-down tracking shots and triple split-screen sequences, it almost feels like a Brian De Palma movie on steroids. Also, the film's tone is all over the place, alternating from sarcastic humor to serious character moments to shocking violence sometimes within the same scene. For me, the insane tone didn't always work to the film's benefit. When it works, it's highly effective, but sometimes it falls flat. Obviously, *Assassination Nation* will be polarizing (that's the point), but if a bleak, misanthropic depiction of all of humanity's worst qualities sounds like a fun time at the movies to you, check it out. — Forest Taylor

Directed by: Sam Levinson // Written by: Sam Levinson // Starring: Odessa Young, Suki Waterhouse, Hari Nef, Abra, Bill Skarsgard, Joel McHale, Bella Thorne, Anika Noni Rose and Colman Domingo // 110 minutes



Across

- 1. They may be technical
- 6. Look inside?
- 10. AOL and MSN
- 14. Navel formation?
- 15. Lose vibrancy
- 16. Cheese ____
- 17. Longtime slogan of Little Caesars
- 19. Morales of "La Bam-ba"
- 20. ____ land
- 21. "Since you didn't hear me the first time ..."
- 22. Bad look
- 26. 1909 Matisse masterpiece
- 28. Flower girl?
- 29. Proprietor of a sort
- 31. Scored between 90 and 100, say
- 34. Gram or dram
- 35. Message on a JumboTron intended to amp up fans ... or a direction for solving 17-, 29-, 43- or 56-Across
- 40. 1970s-'80s sitcom locale
- 41. Become lenient
- 43. Swimming equipment that may be anti-leak or anti-fog
- 48. Face cream additive
- 49. Salon supply
- 50. Briefly
- 53. Arm bones

- 54. Nickel or dime
- 55. South American monkey
- 56. Tool that can extract nails
- 62. " ____ hardly wait!"
- 63. Musical with the song "The Gods Love Nubia"
- 64. It may be dramatic
- 65. Like a busybody
- 66. To a smaller degree
- 67. Potbelly or Franklin, e.g.

Down

- 1. Snappy dresser
- 2. Response on un questionnaire
- 3. Snack brand featured on "Mad Men"
- 4. ____ Lemon, "30 Rock" character
- 5. Bobby who co-founded the Black Panthers
- 6. Unsolved cases, in TV lingo
- 7. La ____ (term signifying Latino pride)
- 8. Woodworker's tool
- 9. Vote of support
- 10. Arctic fishing tool
- 11. "Valley of the Dolls" author
- 12. What odes do
- 13. Mini-burger
- 18. Fork over

- 21. "Same here!"
- 22. Joule fraction
- 23. "Va-va-va- ____!"
- 24. Suffix with fashion
- 25. Job for a plumber
- 26. With no help
- 27. Mimic's ability
- 30. Bactrian camel's pair
- 32. Enya's genre
- 33. Help desk sign
- 36. Spoken
- 37. " ____ Mommy kissing ..."
- 38. With no help
- 39. ____ effort
- 42. One of the Kennedys
- 43. Confined
- 44. It may be spotted in a pet store
- 45. Utah mountains
- 46. Opposite of dense
- 47. Great Plains tribes-people
- 51. Biomedical research org.
- 52. Diarist Nin
- 54. Poor dating prospects
- 56. Low- ____
- 57. "Bald-faced" thing
- 58. Star of the short-lived reality show "I Pity the Fool"
- 59. Part of a stock exchange?
- 60. Stationery item: Abbr.
- 61. Marble ____



Answers to last puzzle



MUSIC REVIEWS

Joyce Manor

Million Dollars to Kill Me
Epitaph Records



The biggest highlight of *A Million Dollars to Kill Me* is getting to witness a band at their peak.



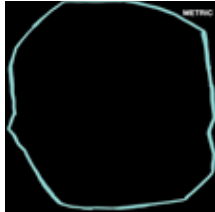
Joyce Manor hit a high mark with the huge pop hooks of 2016's *Cody*, and even if they never quite hit that sweet spot again, the band's fifth LP (clocking in at a brisk 24 minutes) furthers the pop-punk band's strides in songwriting. Here, fans can expect a little bit of everything from the Torrence City, Calif. quartet — new tricks (the vocal play of standout "Silly Games"), acoustic bliss ("I'm Not the One," "Wildflowers"), and more of the vintage charm that made *Cody* so successful ("Think I'm Still In Love With You"). As always, the band tosses in a few heavy hitters that really solidify the release in their catalog. "Baby, I've been lonely my whole life," sings frontman Barry Johnson against a Johnny Marr-esque chorus on "Big Lie," and later, on "Up the Punks," he's forced to ask whether "anyone is out there" on a gritty throwback reminiscent of their debut. *A Million Dollars to Kill Me* may not be as lovelorn as its emo predecessor, but the band's ability to convey twice as many emotions in half the time is what continues to set them apart. — Aaron Mook

Metric

Art of Doubt
Metric Music International



Some bands just refuse to fade away. Toronto's Metric, led by the relentlessly relevant Emily Haines, is one of



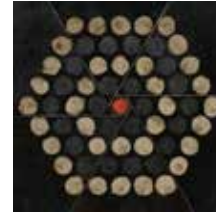
those rare bands who have been able to reinvent themselves just enough album by album, each time rich with credibility, grace, and intelligence. The quartet, at the very least, deserves to be every American's 10th-favorite-band (though they happen to be this reviewer's 14th favorite, according to Last.fm). Fervently relished by fans yet forgotten here in the states, their catalog offers enough variety and relative consistency to be worthy of canonization for any aging indie kid. *Art of Doubt* continues to take a turn, a further uptick in dance-rock stylings, inching further away from the synth-reliant sounds of 2012's *Synthetica* (and its two accompanying releases), planting this release more in the territory of 2009's *Fantasies*. The vaguely disco beats and anthemic instrumental swells are working overtime, all in conjunction with Haines' breathy vocals and biting lyrics that Broken Social Scene fans will know well. For longtime followers of the band, this album must be heard. For newcomers to the group, it's a fair point of entry to a band whose output is nothing short of amazing. — Nick Warren

Thrice

Palms
Epitaph Records



Major/Minor (2011) felt like a turning point for Thrice. Their final album before a five year hiatus, the album polar-



ized listeners and critics, with some calling it the band's best work yet and others finding little to latch onto amongst the record's ever-present Christian themes and distorted foray into grunge revival. Now, exactly one comeback album later (and one that successfully condensed Thrice's eclectic catalog into a cohesive document at that), the band's ninth studio album, *Palms*, feels like a bit of a side-step. A common complaint surrounding the aforementioned comeback album, 2016's *To Be Everything is To Be Nothing*, was that some of the songs were too straightforward, veering into alt-rock territory at times. Granted, the band has been more rock-oriented in the latter half of their career — making them perhaps the only band that can simultaneously emulate Foo Fighters and Radiohead — but they do employ some new tricks here that make for the album's most memorable moments (the vintage synths lining opener "Only Us," the mathy, Minus the Bear-esque riffs of "Just Breathe"). Unfortunately, the highs of *Palms'* A-side just aren't enough to carry the filler of the album's back half. — Aaron Mook

Fred Thomas

Aftering
Polyvinyl

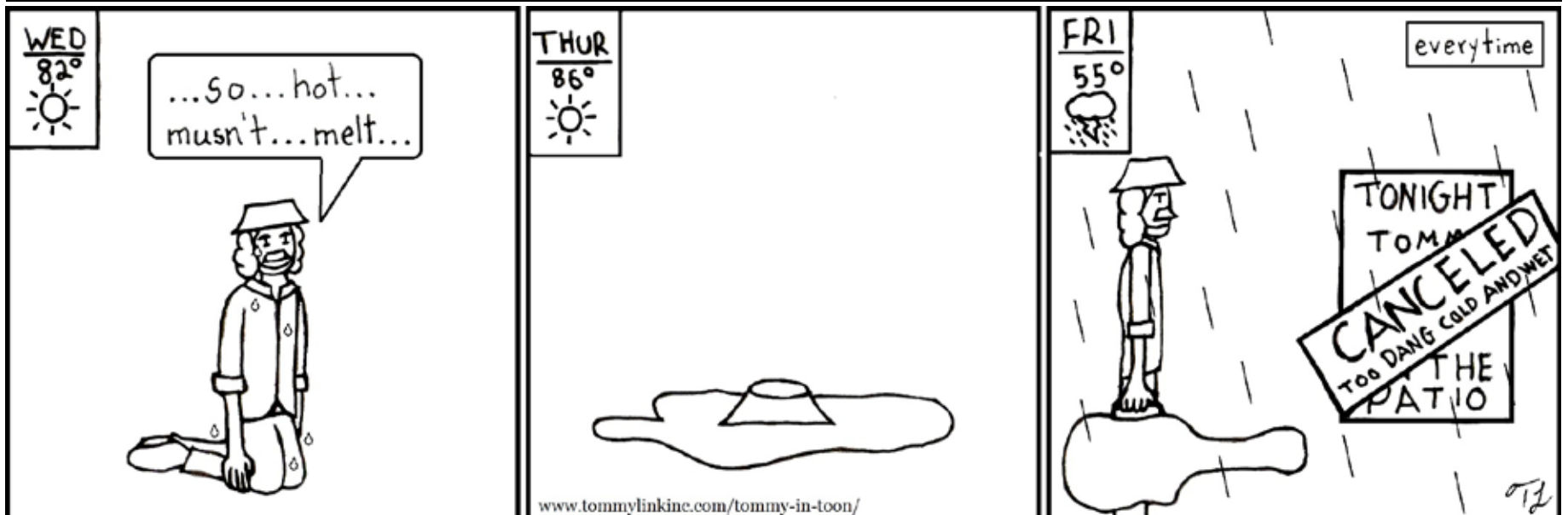


If you ever want to give someone a great recommendation, remember two first names: Fred Thomas. Even



though the Ann Arbor songwriter may have a name that easily escapes one's memory, his music is one that leaves an indelible impression. Toiling for years in well-known obscurity, Thomas has a been a bit of a songwriters' songwriter, recognized for his incredible lyricism and illustrative imagery. 2000s-era indie pop fans will know Thomas as the bandleader of Saturday Looks Good to Me. After the dissolution of the band, Thomas went on to record a flurry of albums on his own, finally reaching a watershed moment with 2015's *All Are Saved*. If you're a fan of insightful, self-aware indie filled with darkness and humor, do yourself a favor and listen to that album right away. Filled with epic ballads like "House Show, Late December," and "Slow Waves," the new tracks lean on Thomas' spoken-word-like delivery. There are brighter pop moments like "Altar" featuring Anna Burch (a duet harkening back to his SLGTM days), and memorable choruses like the "Good Times Are Gone Again." Continuing that brilliance with 2017's *Changer*, *Aftering* does not disappoint. — Nick Warren

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