

pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

Corbett Budget: Arts Groups Spared

Non-profit arts groups in Pittsburgh and across the state are breathing a sigh of relief: there are no major cuts to their funding in Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett's proposed budget.

State support for organizations like the **Pennsylvania Council on the Arts** (PCA) is being frozen at current levels. Some organizations are even hoping that the loss of state funds will be temporary. "We believe that when this recession-driven crisis passes," Kathleen Pavelko of public station **WITF**

told the *Harrisburg Patriot-News*' David Dunkle, "the case we can make for funding will be heard."

Instead, education and the **Department of Community & Economic Development** (DCED) are taking the brunt of the proposed cuts. State universities would see their support cut in half; DCED would lose about a third of its funding. In a press release, the DCED's Alan Walker calls the cuts reflective recent changes at the agency. "The DCED of old was a maze of separate programs . . . This proposal reduces the number of programs down from 127 to 56, [primarily those] most focused on real economic growth and return on investment."

The budget also keeps the state's film tax credit in place. Film companies that spend at least 60% of their budget in Pennsylvania can receive a 25% credit. The program is a major lure for the industry; New Jersey recently ended its credit. "We were getting calls five seconds after" the continuation was announced, the **Pittsburgh Film Office's** (PFO) Jessica Conner told KDKA-TV. "I think that everyone was kind of waiting to hear." It clears the way for more films coming to Pittsburgh, possibly including the next "Batman" movie which could be hitting town as early as May. It is estimated that the credit is responsible for over \$1 billion in economic activity and over 10,000 jobs.

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Pittsburgh A&E Group

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New Films Hiring

Two movies are in town looking for crews. These are the film version of the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* and the original screenplay "Still I Rise."

Published in 1999, *Perks* is an epistolary novel written by American novelist Stephen Chbosky about a Pittsburgh teenager as he deals with issues like drugs, suicide and sexual orientation.

"Still" is a drama about two women trying to transform a struggling school; it was written

by and is being directed by Daniel Barnz, who helmed the current film "Beastly".

According to the **Pittsburgh Film Office** (PFO) web site, those interested in crew positions for "Perks" should email their resume to POBAWF@gmail.com and those wanting to crew "Still" should contact blueproductions2011@gmail.com.

At press time, there was no final word on who will be handling extras or speaking parts in either film.

Another Embarrassment Rocks NPR

Controversies continue to roil **National Public Radio** over the last few weeks, leading to the resignation of its CEO and a vote in the House of Representatives to cut off all funding.



Launched in 1971, National Public Radio (NPR) is a privately and publicly funded non-profit membership media organization that provides programming to nearly 800 public radio stations including WDUQ-FM, WQED-FM and WYEP-FM in Pittsburgh. Some of their shows are among radio's most popular, commercial and noncommercial alike.

The latest scandal to hit the network came in early March when conservative activist James O'Keefe videotaped a fake meeting he had set-up with outgoing NPR Foundation executive Ronald Schiller. The video shows Schiller meeting with what he thought were members of a Muslim philanthropic group interested in making a sizable donation to NPR. He is seen making provocative comments including claims that the Tea Party is racist. Another executive, Betsy Liley, also took part. The video can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xd9OYJMX9t4>

This came just a few months after NPR abruptly fired commentator Juan Williams after making statements on the Fox News Channel that appear to have been taken out of context without any management review.

Once the video became public, NPR immediately issued a statement disavowing the executives' comments. Schiller sped up his departure and Liley was placed on administrative leave. But conservatives spoke out claiming that NPR has a liberal bias and should be cut off from federal support.

Not everyone is convinced of a bias at NPR. Brent Lang, of the industry web site TheWrap.com, quoted a journalism professor on March 10 that the network's reporters "are apostles of the church of objectivity." *New York Times* columnist David Carr reported on March 14 that other forms of traditional media, NPR isn't losing audience but gaining: listenership is 58% since 2000. Even Andrew Breitbart, an activist that helped O'Keefe with the tape, conceded

to Lang that there is no stated bias in any of NPR's news programming but argued that the network's bias is in its "tone."

"It's ironic that while some people are maneuvering to defund public broadcasting that so many of those same people started their day listening to NPR," the conservative newspaper *The Hill* quotes Rep. Earl Blumenuer (D-Ore.)

Nevertheless, CEO Vivian Schiller (no relation to Ronald) has resigned and the House voted to strip all federal funding, although most observers feel the vote was mostly symbolic. The latest crisis has raised concerns about who will now run NPR and if Schiller's successor can do a better job of handling these kinds of situations.

DUQ Fans' Jazz Fight

Hoping to keep jazz alive on WDUQ after its acquisition, local jazz aficionados are turning to **Facebook**.



Losing the jazz programming "shoots a hole in the soul of Pittsburgh," local musician Nelson Harrison explained to the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Adrian McCoy. "You knock WDUQ off and we have nothing." One of the station's sustaining members, Shirley Tucker, told McCoy that she'll pull her support if the current program mix is discontinued.

The station insists that it will remain an outlet for jazz, especially

local jazz. Nevertheless, fans remain concerned. One has started a page of Facebook called Save Our WDUQ, but *Pittsburgh Applause* editor James A. Richards has his doubts the page will have the desired result. "There is a myth out there, especially after the events in the Middle East, that Facebook is more powerful than it is," he explains. "Statistically, most web users are not Facebook members, and only a quarter of Facebook members are in the US."

Launched in February, the page has only a few hundred members. In any event, it can be seen at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-Our-WDUQ/147834095277265>

Public Media Supporters Rally

Supporters of public broadcasting across the country are stepping up efforts to keep the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting** (CPB) from being defunded --- something that will affect stations around the country, including WQED.



Created in 1967, the CPB promotes the growth and development of

public media in communities throughout America. But the Republican-controlled House of Representatives has vowed to cut off all funding.

A number of organizations are trying to use the internet to pressure lawmakers, including the liberal group **MoveOn.org** (see <http://civic.moveon.org/publicbroadcasting>).

Members of the **Writers Guild of America** (WGA) descended on Washington on March 15 to deliver over 1 million signatures on a petition calling on congress to save public media. They joined a coalition of groups --- including the unions **American Federation of Television & Radio Artists** (AFTRA) and **National Association of Broadcast Employees & Technicians** (NABET) --- in a press conference supporting public broadcasting.

WQED Multimedia's quarterly directors' meeting began not with a discussion of programming or the next pledge drive, but with the possible loss of federal funding. Federal support amounts to 12% of the station's annual budget. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Maria Sciuillo quotes chairman Richard Stover warning the attendees that should money from Washington cease, "we will have to take a look at the programming and educational services that we

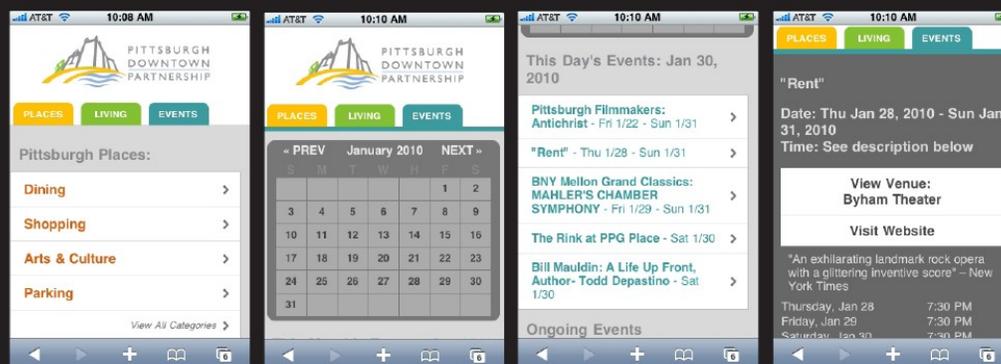
provide to the community and strategically align it with available funding." The station has sent an appeal to the public, which can be read online at <http://www.wqed.org/pressroom/releases/wqed-board-of-directors-discuss-proposed-reduction-in-federal-funding>

New Club To Open

A new nightclub, called **Carson Street Live**, is opening at Station Square. Comprising three different rooms with a 15,000-square-foot ground floor, it will be offering event space and theme nights. More information is available at www.carsonstreetlive.com

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www.DowntownPittsburgh.com/events/suggest

CBS Expands Online, Buys Clicker

While rogue celebrity Charlie Sheen has been getting most of the attention, CBS has been expanding its online presence with the purchase of **Clicker.com**.



In Pittsburgh, **CBS Corporation** owns two television and four radio stations.

Clicker.com organizes video available online while offering extra features like personalized viewing guides. The acquisition is seen as part of CEO Leslie Moonves' efforts to expand into new media. As part of the acquisition, Clicker.com founder Jim Lanzone is taking over CBS' interactive division.

"In just over a year, Jim has created one of the leading navigation and discovery tools for video programming on the internet," Moonves said in a company press release. "Clicker's products and proprietary technologies add firepower to our existing portfolio of entertainment properties and if we can help Clicker grow to its full potential in the years ahead, the strategic value could be tremendous."

CBS is pushing full steam ahead with the web: Clicker joins a new media family that includes Bnet.com, CBS.com, CBSmoneywatch.com, CBSnews.com, CBSsports.com, Chow.com, Cnet.com, Gamespot.com, Last.fm, Maxpreps.com, Metacritic.com, TechRepublic.com, TheInsider.com, TV.com, UrbanBaby.com and XDnet.com. In addition, CBSnews.com has been named the 2010 Top Media Web Site based on actual web performance

in a program operated by Gomez, a company that specializes in web optimization. Gomez is a division of **Compuware**. (CBS has also announced that foreign editor Ingrid Ciprian-Matthews has been promoted to vice president of the news division).

The company is also planning to create online hubs in markets where --- like Pittsburgh --- CBS owns its television and radio affiliates to combine the strengths and resources of these properties. "We think we can replace the Yellow Pages, replace the newspaper," Mooves is quoted by MediaPost.com. "When you get up in the morning, you should be able to turn on that local CBS web site and get everything you need --- everything that would be provided by your newspaper."

As to the evolving and often bizarre Sheen saga, the actor was fired from his hit series "Two and a Half Men" in a chaotic month that included Sheen delivering several online rants, filing a lawsuit, announcing a live show tour and having his home searched by the Los Angeles Police Department. Sheen's family is trying to be supportive. His father, award winning actor Martin Sheen opened up about the situation with London newspaper *The Telegraph*. "I know what hell he's living in," the paper quotes him. "I've had psychotic episodes in public." Like his son, Martin Sheen has had addiction problems as well as mental health issues. "Emotionally [Charlie is still a kid] because when your addicted, you don't grow emotionally."

Hughie's LED Deal

A leader in the LED video screen industry, Lighthouse Technologies, has teamed with **Hughie's Audio-Visual Service** to introduce their new DuoLED to the U.S. market.

Based in Cleveland with operations in Pittsburgh and Columbus, Hughie's provides audio, video, lighting, rigging and staging services to events and festivals big and small including major concerts. Lighthouse Technologies, a division of **Gold Peak Industries**, is headquartered in Hong Kong.

DuoLED is a lightweight mesh product that is transparent, easy to handle and can --- with the flick

of a switch --- transform into a standard display panel. "DuoLED halves the cost of high-end LED video," Lighthouse's Ed Whitaker says in a press release. "For Hughie's, this provides both event and video flexibility. It's a product that offers the best of both worlds." DuoLED produces sharp, lifelike images in either mesh or standard mode.

Hughie's has also announced a new Décor Services Department to provide innovative decorative elements designed to provide a strong visual impact for small and large scale events. Gale McDougall, with thirty years in the decorating industry, has been hired to run it.

Cultural Trust Against Strip Club

Expansion plans of a strip club may endanger a long-planned housing project in the Pittsburgh Cultural District.

The club, called **Blush**, is located on Ninth



Street just a few steps away from the Pittsburgh High School for Creative & Performing Arts, which is part of the city's public school system. The owner, Albert Bortz, wants to expand the club into the building on Penn Avenue that once housed the cooperative art gallery Watercolors.

But the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust** (PCT) is concerned that the larger club could make it harder to proceed with their long planned --- but stalled --- RiverParc condominium project which, if realized, would be right across the street.

Bortz and PCT's Kevin McMahon made their respective cases before a zoning board meeting on March 10. According to the city's regulations, Blush needs a "special exception" to expand into what Bortz envisions as an entertainment complex.

RiverParc was announced in 2006 as a \$500 million project including residential units, a hotel and retail space. It would be part of the PCT's 20-year effort to turn

what was a blighted red light area into what is now the Pittsburgh Cultural District. Although the recession and resulting tightening of credit has stalled RiverParc, officials are still hoping to bring it to reality. But many people, including those in the real estate industry, fear that Blush's growth could not only impact RiverParc but the image of the District. "I don't think we're heading in the right direction if we're expanding [the District] to the way it was before," the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Mark Belko quotes realtor Kathy Wallace.

A decision is expected sometime within the next two months.

New Deal For WGA

Both the East and West branches of the **Writers Guild of America** (WGA) have sent a new three-year contract with the **Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers** (AMPTP) to their members for ratification.

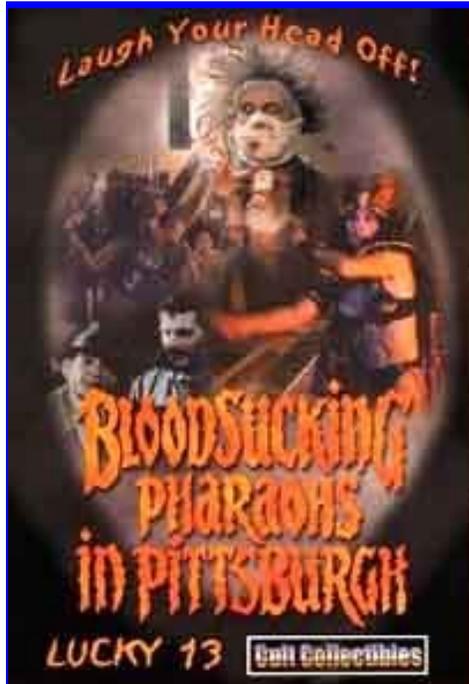


The agreement calls for 2% annual wage increases as well as an increase in pension contributions by employers. Residuals for pay television are being increased by 20%.

The current contract expires in May. Ratification of the new deal is expected before then.

Images

Photos Celebrating Pittsburgh's Arts/Entertainment History & Community



Pittsburgh may be known for classic pieces of cinema like "Night of the Living Dead" and "Silence of the Lambs," but one of the city's other flicks marks its less than illustrious 20th anniversary this year.

Made for just \$250,000 and released in 1991, "Bloodsucking Pharaohs of Pittsburgh" was supposed to be a black comedy about a detective's daughter helping two policemen track a vicious killer. The cast included former porn star Veronica Hart using her real name, Jane Hamilton. Until then, her best known movie was the X-rated "Wanda Whips Wall Street." She also had bit parts in the mainstream films "Boogie Night" (1997) and "Magnolia" (1999).

Apparently the only saving grace were a few effects created by the legendary Tom Savini.

This image comes from IMDB and is apparently the VHS cover.

To have an image considered, email Jim Richards at jim@james-richards.com

Hill House & Kelly-Strayhorn Partner

With its Kaufmann Center completely refurbished, the **Hill House Association** has announced a partnership with the **Kelly-Strayhorn Theater** to produce programming at the Kaufmann's 400-seat Elsie H. Hillman Auditorium.



The Hill House began in the 1950s as two separate agencies that later merged to provide various community services to the people in the city's Hill District neighborhood. Opened in 1919 as a silent movie house, the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater is today a performance center named after ac-

tors, dancer and director Gene Kelly (1912-1996) and composer/pianist Billy Strayhorn (1915-1967).

"Under the direction of [Kelly-Strayhorn's executive director] Janera Solomon they have completely revived the concept of walking a few blocks to attend the theater," UrbanMediaToday.com quotes Hill House CEO Victor Roque. "That's an urban cultural experience we'd like to replicate in the Hill District."

"They saw what we were doing in our own community [East Liberty]," Kelly-Strayhorn's Joseph Hall told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Marylynn Pitz. "We present local artists and visiting artists. We are bringing the programming that we have started to

the Hill District." Hall will be spearheading that programming.

In addition to the auditorium, the renovated center includes conference rooms, a café and an outdoor courtyard. Programming is expected to include classes, workshop and apprenticeships --- especially in stage production --- as well as performances.

Grammy winning rhythm & blues artist John Legend helped launch the renovated center with a charity concert on March 18.

B'way Shows Coming

Traveling versions of some of Broadway's most recent hit musicals are in the line-up for this year's Broadway Across America series, the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust** has announced.

The schedule includes "Million Dollar Quartet," "Memphis," "Billy Elliot: The Musical," "La Cage Aux Folles," "The Addams Family," "Beauty & the Beast" and "Wicked."

Special productions include versions Dr. Seuss' legendary *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and a new show starring the Blue Man Group.

The series is brought to Pittsburgh in a joint effort with the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra**. For more information, call (412) 456-1390 or by visiting www.pgharts.org

Wilson & Ballet Partner

A multi-year partnership has been announced between the **August Wilson Center** (AWC) and the **Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre** (PBT).



PITTSBURGH BALLET THEATRE

According to a press release, the partnership "seeks to develop and provide world-class artistic content that will enrich the artistic substance of both institutions to the benefit of the Greater Pittsburgh community and beyond. The collaboration will include performances, education & cultivation and workshops & master classes."

Named in honor of Pittsburgh native and Pulitzer Prize winning playwright August Wilson (1945-2005), the center presents programming reflecting the history, culture and art of American-Americans especially those in Western Pennsylvania.

The partnership includes ballet performances in the AWC's 486-seat theater. It could also lead to a variety of joint ventures, reports the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Mark Kanny, including festivals and the co-commissioning of new works.

The PBT's debut performance will be a mixed repertory program in February, 2012.

Pittsburgh Calendar Offers Tickets

Local arts entrepreneur and author James A. Richards has begun new initiatives to increase his revenue to finance his various arts/entertainment projects. One of the key initiatives is adding online ticketing to the PGHevents/Post-Gazette Web Events Calendar.

The calendar that is currently at www.post-gazette.com/events was launched by Richards on January 3, 1999 at www.pghevents.com and quickly became the region's top online event listing. In 2006, an agreement moved PGHevents.com to the Post-Gazette.com. (He also publishes, writes and edits *Pittsburgh Applause*). Today, Post-Gazette.com is the #1 online media site for all of southwestern Pennsylvania with over 3 million unique visits a month.

The first affiliation is with TicketNetwork, which offers tickets to events at over two dozen major venues in Pittsburgh including the Consol Energy Center and Altar Bar as well as various shows at places like Heinz Hall and Benedum Center. Richards will next bring in Brown Paper Tickets.

When a consumer visits Post-Gazette.com/events, he'll notice that some events include a text link that says "click here to order tickets". Clicking the link opens a new window from which he can order tickets to that event.

TicketNetwork is unique in that it not only sells new tickets (like Ticketmaster), it is also a "reseller"--- meaning that they often have tickets to shows that are otherwise sold out.

As to the other ticket services, Ticketmaster/Ticketweb ended its affiliation program last year, and neither ProArts Tickets (operated by the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council**) nor **ShowClix** currently offers one. "As soon as one of these organizations establishes a program," says Richards, "I'll be talking to them."

He is hoping that the commission from online ticketing will help him launch new projects that will benefit the region's arts/entertainment community.

Richards is also posting a funding request on Kickstarter.com to help him bring *Pittsburgh Applause* back into the physical print (as opposed to the current digital-only format) and to finance a tenth anniversary edition of the *Pittsburgh A&E Book* professional directory.

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Clear Channel Buys Thumbplay

Rick Baran has been named executive vice president of **Clear Channel Communications'** radio division.



In Pittsburgh, Clear Channel owns six radio stations including WDVE-FM and WXDX-FM.

Baran will oversee all financial and administrative operations for Clear Channel Radio (CCR) as well as oversee the CCR Strategic Initiative Office and its Business Affairs Division. He'll be reporting directing to CCR's president, John Hogan.

"I'm looking forward to my new role at Clear Channel Radio as the company moves quickly to seize opportunities in the digital radio space," he says in a press release, "while maintaining its strong leadership in [broadcast] radio."

Speaking of digital radio, Clear Channel has acquired **Thumbplay**, an online subscription service that allows users to download music, video and games to their cell phones. Users can manage, store and share their mobile content online and on their wireless devices. Thumbplay has signed licensing deals with some of the world's largest media and entertainment companies during the last two years including all four major record labels.

According to MediaPost.com, the plans call for combining Thumbplay with Clear Channel's interactive media social networking platform iHeartRadio.

"Thumbplay will be our technology platform," Clear Channel's Rob Pittman told *Advertising Age*, "and it speeds us about a year faster than if we had tried to build that ourselves." One research firm

has estimated that Clear Channel earns over \$175 million annually in digital revenue.

Khalifa Rides High

March was an exciting month for a young man named Cameron Thomaz --- better known as Wiz Khalifa.

The 23-year-old Pittsburgh rapper has landed on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine as part of their "hot list," he has won an mtvU Woodie Award at this year's South by Southwest Music Conference in Austin, Texas, and his major-label debut, "Rolling Papers," was released on March 29.

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For more information, visit <http://s2.webstarts.com/mustardseedproductions1> or connect with Lisa on LinkedIn or friend her on Facebook!

- FRI 1** April is National Poetry Month, and you will find various events in the calendar
- SAT 2** The play "Amish Project" at **City Theatre** interweaves stories of seven characters dealing with the aftermath of a rural school shooting.
- SUN 3** Gee, who knew that students at the University of Pittsburgh would be proud of staging "Bad Hamlet"?
- TUE 5** The darkly funny musical "Next To Normal" opens at the **Benedum Center** with its tale of a suburban family trying to survive an overly medicated world.
- THU 7** Head over to **PNC Park** as the Pittsburgh Pirates open their 2011 season by taking on the Colorado Rockies.
- FRI 8** The Texas foursome Explosions In The Sky blow up **Stage AE** with their powerful and passionate instrumental rock music.
- FRI 8** Clowns and acrobats shine during the latest installment of the Shrine Circus at **CONSOL Energy Center**
- SAT 9** **Silver Eye Center For Photography** is giving a seminar for artists on using the InDesign desktop publishing program.
- MON 11** One of the world's premier string groups, the Takacs Quartet, shines at the **Carnegie Music Hall**.
- THU 14** Tap into your inner Pinocchio at **Heinz Hall** where the Pittsburgh Symphony performs some of those wonderful Disney movie tunes.
- FRI 15** The Pittsburgh Ballet slips on their tights to salute the legendary George Balanchine at the **Benedum Center**.
- SAT 16** Dance over to the **Lawrence Convention Center** for the Handmade Arcade and all of those cool, one-of-a-kind creations.
- SUN 17** Relive the 70s at the **Carnegie Music Hall** with drummer Tony Allen and his Afrobeat Orchestra.
- TUE 19** Three possible daddies and one crazy mom make **Heinz Hall** the fun place with the hit "Mamma Mia" Broadway musical
- THU 21** A very dark, grown-up version of "The Wizard Of Oz" comes out from behind the curtain at the **Henry Heymann Theatre**.
- THU 21** Singer and songwriter Ellis Paul brings his pop-friendly folk music to the **Pittsburgh Center For the Arts**.
- FRI 22** A trio of blue collar funny men take over the **CONSOL Energy Center**.
- SAT 23** The trio Low reach new highs at the **Andy Warhol Museum** by performing their distinctly minimalist hypnotic rock.
- SAT 23** If you are now interested in music, there is always the **Benedum Center** where Jerry Seinfeld will surely offer up some laughs.
- THU 28** Country music superstar Wynona Judd joins the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra for a concert at **Heinz Hall** of some of her biggest hits.
- FRI 29** A pair of legendary 60s artists, David Crosby and Graham Nash, perform classic their folk-rock songs at **Carnegie Library Of Homestead**.
- SAT 30** The Boston quartet Guster blows a wild wind at **Stage AE** with their poetic style of alternative rock.

The calendar is introducing online ticketing through TicketNetwork and, soon, Brown Paper Tickets. For more information, see the article on page 7 of *Pittsburgh Applause*.

CMU Renames Directing Program

One of **Carnegie-Mellon University's** (CMU) more famous graduates ---writer/producer John Wells --- is being honored by his alma mater by naming its School of Drama's directing program after him.



Wells graduated from CMU in 1979 and is best known for the Emmy winning TV series "ER" and "The West Wing." He recently made a major donation to the university. The amount is being kept private, but is considerable and called "transformational".

"My education at Carnegie Mellon has been a central component of my success," Wells said in a press release. "The quality of the education, the interaction with the extraordinary faculty and the classical foundation I received I'm still using every day of my professional life. I'm honored to have been a graduate of Carnegie Mellon."

According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Sharon Eberson, Wells' gift funds a perpetual fellowship for up to six students. It also finances The John Wells Visiting Professorship in Directing and offers money for activities like symposia.

More information is available online at <http://www.drama.cmu.edu/110>

New Actors Deal Made

Changes have been announced in a key collective bargaining agreement between the advertising industry and the **American Federation of Radio & Television Artists** (AFTRA) and the **Screen Actors Guild** (SAG).

Both unions have members in the Pittsburgh area and AFTRA operates a full-time office downtown.

The agreement covers performers who appear on the internet and other new media outlets. It covers minimum fees, what constitutes a session and how the recorded performance can be used. Details, including the base pay, can be found at <http://www.aftra.com/764FCDD74D314367AD06D7FF0B6E72AF.htm>

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Regional Enterprise Tower Crisis

The future of the Regional Enterprise Tower remains in doubt.

In a series of articles, the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* has been reporting on the recent exodus of tenants and imminent foreclosure on the historic structure.

Completed in 1953, the building was originally designed to be a showpiece of the **Aluminum Company of America** (ALCOA) and was the first skyscraper in the world with an all-aluminum facade. Because of an innovative heating and cooling system, there are no pipes, radiators or air conditioning units in the walls. It was cutting edge example of design and engineering sixty years ago. When ALCOA moved to its new

headquarters on the city's north side, ownership was assumed by the regional planning agency **Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission** (SPC). Since then, the building has been the home to many non-profit organizations since the 1990s. Among these was ProArts, a predecessor to the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC).

But since 2010, key tenants have been leaving. These include **Visit Pittsburgh** (the former Greater Pittsburgh Convention & Visitors Bureau), **Riverlife** and the **Allegheny County Conference on Community Development**. Today, the vacancy is at 18% compared with the 12% average in downtown. (ProArts/GPAC moved out years ago).

"The idea was that all the non-profits would be around each other; a center of ideas." James Lamb of the **Ireland Institute of Pittsburgh** told the *Tribune-Review*'s Bobby Kerlick. "It used to be I could take the elevator to take to the **Pittsburgh Regional Alliance**. Now they've moved."

When ALCOA donated the building to SPC the company included a \$5 million endowment to aid in maintenance. But the *Tribune-Review*'s Bob Bauder and Thomas Olson quote Charlie Camp, a Beaver County commissioner, as saying that the stock market decline significantly reduced the endowment's income at the same time the recession affected revenue among the non-profit tenants.

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Elizabeth Taylor Dies At 79

Acclaimed actress, humanitarian and Oscar winner Elizabeth Taylor died on the morning of March 23. She was 79.

The Wrap.com has collected and published the many statements from celebrities. Barbra Streisand described her as a funny and generous person while US Senator Barbara Boxer praised Taylor's "bold and passionate leader in the struggle against HIV/AIDS" while her friend and co-star Mickey Rooney called her death "a great personal loss."

During his Pittsburgh concert, Sir Elton John paid tribute to his friend dedicating a performance of the song "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me"

The Wrap.com has posted a collection of clips of Taylor's more famous film roles at <http://www.thewrap.com/movies/article/national-velvet-cleopatra-elizabeth-taylor-5-greatest-film-roles-25750>

Yanking At That Tangle Web
As so many predicted, Julie Taymor is out as the director of "Spider-Man: Turn Off The Dark".

The Broadway musical has been a troubled production from the start. It has already broken all records for the number of preview performances as the composers and producers deal with creative problems, cast injuries and budget overruns. The US Department of Labor has issued over \$12,000 in fines for safety violations.

Friends of Taylor told the *New York Times*' Patrick Healy that Taymor was pushed out not only by the musical's producers, but her creative partners Paul "Bono" Hewson and David "The Edge" Evans. "Julie's an extremely sensitive person and she has always felt like a mother to her plays, a mother to her characters," Jeffrey Horowitz, artistic director of **New York's Theater for a New Audience**, told Healy "This is like a mother being taken away from her family. She loves that family. She wants that family."

Philip William McKinley, who helmed the hit Hugh Jackman musical "The Boy from Oz" has been named her replacement. The opening is now set for June 14 --- the sixth time it has been rescheduled.

Helsinki Tops The World
Finland's historic capital, Helsinki, has been named World Design Capital 2012 by the **International Council of Societies of Industrial Design** (ICSID)

Founded in 1962, the Canada-based ICSID promotes better design around the world and has over 150,000 global members in fifty countries.

Located near the Baltic Sea with nearly 600,000 people, Helsinki is Finland's largest city and a center for education, culture and research as well as politics. It has an impressive mixture of architecture, from neoclassical buildings to examples of contemporary functionalism. On their web site, the ICSID praised Helsinki as a city that "has for decades been a

pivotal enabler to building an open city"

A series of events including exhibitions and conferences are being planned, reports TheArt-Newspaper.com.

The A's Grade B

Some of Hollywood's biggest, A-list stars are becoming more vocal in encouraging President Barack Obama to support same-sex marriage for the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual (GLBT) community. Anne Hathaway, Martin Sheen and Ellen DeGeneres are among those who have signed an open letter calling on Obama legalize full marriage equality.

Obama has authorized the extension of some federal benefits to same-sex couples, pushed for and signed a repeal of the notorious "Don't Ask Don't Tell" law and spoken repeatedly on tolerance and acceptance. The only major disagreement the president has with these celebrity supporters is that he supports civil unions rather than actual marriage, and has even gone so far as declare the Defense Of Marriage Act unconstitutional and indefensible. Barack Obama may well be the most GLBT-friendly president in American history.

Despite this, actors Matt Damon and Jane Lynch have even publically criticized the president, with Lynch calling him "a disappointment" on GLBT rights.

ACA Event

The **American Cable Association** has announced that Rep. Greg Walden (R-Or.), chairman of the House Communications & Technology Subcommittee, will be the keynote speaker at their annual summit in Washington this month.



CONNECTING HOMETOWN AMERICA

Based in Pittsburgh, the American Cable Association (ACA) is a trade organization representing nearly 900 smaller and medium-sized independent cable companies who provide broadband services for more than 7.6 million cable subscribers primarily located in rural and smaller suburban markets.

“Chairman Walden, as a small businessman and former radio station owner, has a keen understanding of the needs of the independent cable community and its longstanding support for communications policies that promote choice and competition in hometown America,” ACA President and CEO Matthew M. Polka said in a press release.

Hundreds of ACA members are planning to attend the 18th annual summit, which takes place April 11 to 13 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. The summit offers smaller, independent cable operators an opportunity to exchange public policy views with Obama Administration officials, key players from Capitol Hill and the Federal Communications Commission, among others. More information is available at <http://www.americancable.org/node/2119>

Former Brewery May Become Film Studio

Will one of Pittsburgh’s most historic buildings be converted into a film studio?

Iron City Brewing Company --- also known as the Pittsburgh Brewing Company --- began in 1861 by a young German immigrant and was one of the first American breweries to produce a lager. The company grew so fast that just five years later, its iconic facility in Lawrenceville was constructed. This handsome brick building was the brewer’s home until 2009 when production was moved 40 miles away in Latrobe.

A pair of entrepreneurs, Michael Yom and Robert Mason, has taken out an option to buy the 500,000-square-foot brewery with the intent of converting for film production. According to the *Pittsburgh Business Times*’ Tim Schooley, the two men expect to host two films this summer to help leverage their plan to secure financing and create stages, offices and support facilities.

This means the city would have two full-size production centers, the other being the **31st Street Studios** (formerly Mogul Mind) in the Strip District. There is also **Island Studios** in McKees Rocks.

Complicating matters may be Iron City itself. There was to be a master plan for the structure developed with the community through the nonprofit **Lawrenceville Corporation**. But when the brewer stated they want to demolish part of the historic campus, Lawrenceville Corporation pulled its support. In a press release, the organization’s executive director,

Matthew Galluzzo explains: “As the community development organization in Lawrenceville, it is our mission to preserve authenticity, support high quality design and engage in visionary and participatory planning.”

By all accounts, Yom and Mason would keep all the campus’ buildings. “The Iron City Brewery is a landmark for the city,” Mason told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*’s Rick Willis. “We’d like to give it the place it deserves.”

“The proposed plans for the Iron City Studios had nothing to do with the Lawrenceville Corporation’s decision to withdraw from the [brewery] planning process,” Lawrenceville Corporation’s Patrick Bowman told *Pittsburgh Applause* in an email. “The proposed plans for a film studio will be evaluated on its own merits and how it complies with existing neighborhood plans.”

Star Hunt

The new local record label **Jams Avenue Music Group** has moved its “Headliners: Stars Of Tomorrow” program to Station Square at the Hard Rock Café.

After being at Mr. Smalls and Club Café, “Headliners” is a regular new talent showcase for hip-hop, rap, rhythm & blues, and pop artists. For more information, call Andre R. carter at (412) 728-6320 or email him at andre@jamsavenue.com

Glass Center Goes Into New Downtown Hotel

As part of a new collaborative program, the **Pittsburgh Glass Center** has installed an exhibit by artist Arthur “Billy” Guilford in the lobby bar of downtown’s newest hotel, the Fairmont Pittsburgh.

Established in 2001, the Pittsburgh Glass Center is a school, gallery



and state-of-the-art studio dedicated to teaching, creating and promoting glass art.

On display are a variety of hand-crafted blown glass pieces at the bar, called Andy’s. The exhibit seeks to compliment the hotel, which features a contemporary “art and industry” design theme.

Local glass and steel can be found in design details throughout the hotel in and in works by local artists like the light fixtures in the lobby. Guilford’s pieces range from transparent, long-neck bottles to black & white carved sculptural vessels.

“We are happy to partner with the Pittsburgh Glass Center on this initiative and support the local arts community,” Len Czarnecki, the hotel’s general manager, said in a press release. “We already feature local artwork throughout the hotel and Andy’s will be a wonderful venue for these vibrant and contemporary pieces.”

The exhibit will remain in place through the end of June. For more information, call (412) 365-2145.

New Faces

Creative communications agency and production company **Apple Box Studios** has named Michael Kadrie as their new art director.

A graduate of Duquesne University, Kadrie will oversee all of Apple Box’s creative projects from initiation to completion, making sure the quality is at the level the company and its clients expect.

Local audio/visual company **MediaQuest** has announced Bob Topich as their new director of sales. MediaQuest provides the most up-to-date, professional equipment in the A/V industry for projects ranging from conferences to large stage productions.

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City Theatre Writer Wins Award

New York-based writer Cori Thomas has won the M. Elizabeth Osborn New Play Award for her play, "When January Feels Like Summer."

The award is issued by the **American Theatre Critics Association** to recognize the work of an author who has not yet achieved national stature and comes with a \$1,000 prize.

"When January Feels Like Summer" made its world debut last year at **City Theatre**. The play is a dark comedy about the Ameri-

can Dream in the 21st century. It is set in a diverse neighborhood whose residents struggle with issues of identity and assimilation during an unusually warm winter.

Founded in 1974, the American Theatre Critics Association (ATCA) is the only national association of professional theatre critics. Their members work for newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and on-line services across the United States. The Osborn Award was established in 1993 to honor *American Theatre* play editor M. Elizabeth Osborn

Opals Announced

The local chapter of **Women In Film & Media** (WIFM) has announced the recipients of this year's Opal Awards. They include Kim Moses, producer of TV's "The Ghost Whisperer," casting director Nancy Mosser and producer/actress Adrienne Wehr. Television journalist Marilyn Brooks will receive the Patti Burns Award.

WIFM will hold its ceremony at the New Hazlett Theater on April 30. To register (tickets start at \$55), visit <https://www.123signup.com/register?id=vpycb>

Real Life Dates Set

The dates have been announced for this year's Real Life Music Camp and Real Life Skate Camp.

Produced by singer/songwriter Liz Berlin, the Real Life Music Camp is a project at **Mr. Smalls** that offers aspiring young artists ages 14 to 18 with valuable knowledge, experience and resources for making a career in the music industry. Happening concurrently is the Real Life Skate Camp, a one-week intensive for skate, in-line and freestyle bikers.

More information can be found online at www.creativelifesupport.com

Pics For The Troops

Photo studio **Moods Image** is offering free family portraits to mothers and fathers serving overseas beginning in April. The images will be provided on a CD given to the family at no charge. For more information, call John at (412) 922-5621.

Brew House Is Reborn

It looks like the **Brew House Association** is coming back.

Founded in 1991, the Brew House is a collective made up of artists who took up residence in a former brewery on the city's south side. But the organization has had issues being, well, organized. Various building code violations forced the artists to move out and the exhibit and performance space to close. Even their web site is offline.

But *Pittsburgh City Paper's* Bill O'Driscoll reported on March 3 that the organization has raised enough money to make needed repairs on the first floor, and the city is preparing to issue the group's first official occupancy permit. More efforts are being made to resuscitate the rest of the facility and the organization's programs.

Pittsburgh Applause Editorial

NPR: Running The Asylum

By James A. Richards

Research is showing that characteristics like sexual orientation originate in our genes. But I am becoming convinced that idiocy is a chosen lifestyle.

The most obvious example is actor Charlie Sheen. But now there is National Public Radio (NPR).

First, there was the idiotic response to comments made by Juan Williams, who was fired. Then there was the videotape of the idiotic Ron Schiller, who made such stupid comments in a meeting that should never have taken place that one wonders which NPR idiot hired him in the first place.

NPR has a specific code of conduct for its journalists (visit <http://www.npr.org/about/aboutnpr/ethics>) and has won numerous awards. A survey of the network's listeners conducted by Mediamark Research reveals that 37% consider themselves liberal, 28% conservative and 25% centrist.

Like all news organizations --- including prestigious outlets such as the *New York Times*, CBS News, the *Wall Street Journal* and the BBC --- NPR has its share of controversies and critics. But the repeated claims of bias have gotten truly idiotic. The only bias at NPR is in the heads of the extreme left and extreme right. (For the record, some liberals have claimed that NPR relies too much on commentators from conservative think tanks and that the network took a position in support of

the 2003 US invasion of Iraq rather than remain neutral).

Then there is James O'Keefe, the young man behind the taping fiasco. Not only is this guy no journalist, he is a dangerous loose cannon and the conservative movement would be wise to distance themselves from him. Unfortunately, some of them have embraced idiocy as well.

NPR needs to choose an alternative lifestyle, one that remains unbiased but is less stupid. Idiocy has run its course.

Letters to the editor are welcome via email to jim@james-richards.com

They may be edited for publication.

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As a member of this group, you'll be able to connected with your A&E peers in Pittsburgh!

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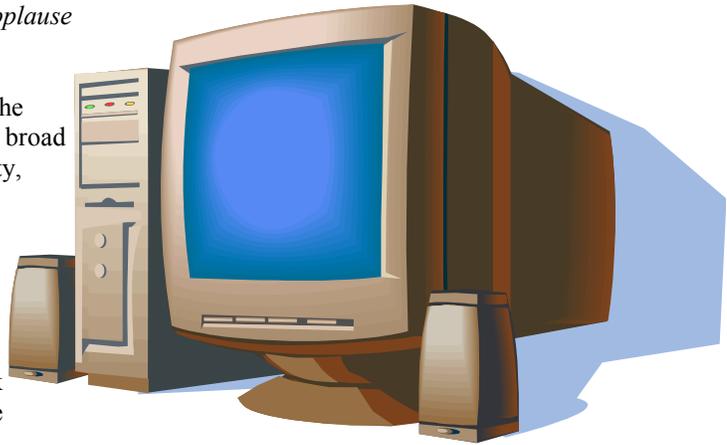
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Each ad should be built to size and be in a JPG format. All ads must be pre-paid, with the check payable to the Pittsburgh A&E Group. For more information, contact Jim Richards



Jim hopes to eventually bring Pittsburgh Applause back to the real world!

The goal is to produce 10,000 full-color print copies each month distributed primarily through Crazy Mocha coffee shops.

But Jim needs a collection of advertisers willing and able to commit to at least six months of advertising. For more information, contact him at jim@james-richards.com

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