

# pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

## “Dark Knight” Starts Shooting

The stage is set as “The Dark Knight” begins filming.

Director Christopher Nolan’s third entry in his adaptation of the classic comic book is shooting key scenes in Pittsburgh, one of a group of locations being used across the globe. Filming began earlier this year in India.

At a July 28 press conference, star Christian Bale admits that he has never been to Pittsburgh before

but told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*’s Mandy Hofmockel that he’s “had friends who filmed here before, and all had good experiences.” Nolan told the press that Pittsburgh’s architecture was a key selling point in choosing the city.

Roads and buildings will be closed in Downtown, Lawrenceville and Oakland with shootings scheduled Wednesdays through Sundays to minimize disruptions. But the results are expected to benefit Pittsburgh’s economy. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*’s Barbara Vancheri quotes Mayor Luke Ravenstahl: “For every one dollar that’s invested in film production, our city sees approximately \$118 in direct spending.”

According to a joint press release issued with the city, the **Pittsburgh Film Office** (PFO) reports that production will begin in Oakland before moving to other locations including Downtown. One important scene will be filmed at Heinz Field on August 6 for a fictional football game. Downtown streets being affected are those in the Smithfield Street vicinity where fake snow will be used to create winter scenes. Updated street closings are being posted online by the **Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership** at [www.downtownpittsburgh.com](http://www.downtownpittsburgh.com)

“The Dark Knight Rises” --- which is also being called “Magnus Rex” --- is scheduled for a July 2012 release. Crew and casting information is available at the PSO’s web site at [www.pghfilm.org](http://www.pghfilm.org)

### Inside This Issue

The August Wilson Center admits to large debt **Page 2**

Eric Shiner is named director of Warhol Museum **Page 4**

A local web show goes national on Syfy.com **Page 9**

WQED and Pittsburgh Zoo launch new partnership **Page 12**

### Pittsburgh A&E Group

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## deRoy Gruber Dies

Considered one of the shining lights in Pittsburgh’s arts community, Aaronel deRoy Gruber died July 6 at the age of 92.

Gruber explored various media in a career that spanned seven decades, including photography and sculpture to even fashion design. She exhibited at world-class galleries in New York and Boston as well as Pittsburgh.

Among her creations is 21-foot long by 18-foot tall sculpture called Steelcityspace. Completed in 1977 and for years on display at the City-county Building, it will become a key part of Mellon Park’s developing sculpture garden.

## Center's Huge Debt

As they requested operating funds from the **Allegheny Regional Asset District** (ARAD), the application by the **August Wilson Center for African American Culture** includes a stunning figure: \$9 million in debt.



August Wilson  
Center for  
African American  
Culture

"We've had our fair share of challenges," the center's Andre Guess told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Marylynn Pitz. "The operating

cost of this facility is \$750,000 a year. That's a hard pill to swallow." It is currently working with **Dollar Bank** and other lenders to restructure a line of credit so that it will be allowed to receive a major grant. Should the grant and outstanding pledged contributions come through, it will cut the debt by more than a third.

Guess also tells Pitz that the center is looking for a donor to contribute \$1 million for the naming rights to its theatre. That, too, will reduce the debt.

## Trust Fails To Block Strip Club Expansion

An attempt to block the expansion of a strip club in the Pittsburgh Cultural District has failed.

On July 21, an Allegheny Common Pleas judge ruled that the **Pittsburgh**



**Cultural Trust** (PCT) and the city's school district could not prove irreparable harm should the exotic club **Blush** expand to Penn Avenue as planned. Blush is just a few steps away from the Pittsburgh High School for Creative & Performing Arts (CAPA) and its approximately 800 teenage students.

Blush claims on its web site to have "the area's most beautiful dancers" along with "nationally known feature acts" who are

"totally nude with a full service bar." The club also offers private dances, VIP rooms and even an amateur night each month. *Playboy* cover model Bree Olson appeared during the last weekend in July. Blush's owner, Albert Bortz, says that he was to make the club more of an entertainment complex.

Among the points the judge made was that Blush existed at its location before CAPA was built, and that the school district chose a site next to a strip club.

Meanwhile, a group of law firms have pledged over \$1 million to the PCT to help it fill budget gaps left by drops in foundation and government support. The group has promised to pay \$250,000 a year for the next five years.

## Squonk Gets Voted Off TV

It seems America may have talent, but little taste for the eccentric.



Local troupe **Squonk Opera** was voted off of the popular TV series "America's Got Talent" during the July 13 telecast with judge Piers Morgan calling their act "what I imagine hell is like."

Squonk Opera began in the 1990s in, of all places, a junk yard. Since then, composer Jackie Dempsey and artist Steve O'Hearn have worked with a regular ensemble to create post-industrial performances with original music, design and staging.

Last year's "America's Got Talent" runner-up was 11-year-old Pittsburgh singer Jackie Evancho, who has since become a national draw and will appear in concert at the Benedum Center this fall.

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## New DUQ Hopes To Double Audience

The new owners of WDUQ-FM have a plan --- to double the station's audience with its new, news format.



“We think the potential is there, if not to double the listenership, then to go over 200,000 to 225,000 listeners per week,” **WYEP-FM** General Manager Lee Ferraro told the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review's* Jason Cato. WYEP is co-owner of **Essential Public Media** (EPM), which bought WDUQ from **Duquesne University** and dropped the jazz format July 1.

As a jazz station, Cato reports, WDUQ averaged roughly 145,000 listeners each week. But with the success of the news & information format at other public stations across the country, EPM thinks the station's audience could grow considerably, perhaps to 300,000.

Meanwhile, a group of former WDUQ staffers have launched a new online Pittsburgh channel scheduled to launch this month through **PubRadio**.

Established in 1991, PubRadio is a free service provided for public radio personnel throughout the country operating a listserve [A listserve is an electronic mailing list that allows for widespread distribu-

tion of information to many email addresses. Listserves have been used for at least 20 years since the web's formative days as a broad communication tool – ed. James A. Richards]. PubRadio is now expanding into online programming, the first being PubJazz to be located at [www.pghjazzchannel.net](http://www.pghjazzchannel.net).

Chuck Leavens, one of those former staffers, told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Adrian McCoy that the goal is “preserving the incredible jazz history and legacy”. He calls the collaborative project as “a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

The site suggest using Quicktime, iTunes, Winamp, Realplayer or VLC on the computer and recommends the Streams player for iPhone.

## Eric Shiner Named New Warhol Director

Eric C. Shiner has been named as director of the Andy Warhol Museum, part of the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**.

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| OF PITTSBURGH

The 39-year-old New Castle native has an extensive experience as a curator, professor, writer and even translator primarily with New York City institutions. He has worked at the Warhol since 2008 and has been functioning as acting director since January.

“In Eric Shiner, Carnegie Museums has appointed a director who is at once scholarly and refined, yet populist and welcoming,” Carnegie CEO John Wetenhall

says in a press release. “Since joining the Warhol, Eric has distinguished himself not only for his knowledge and connoisseurship of the art of Andy Warhol, but for his passion about the cultural outreach that Warhol's world extends to audiences of all kinds.”

Meanwhile, the Carnegie Museum of Art has announced that it has acquired two masterworks by Bakewell, Page & Bakewell. The 19<sup>th</sup> century Pittsburgh firm had created china for President James Monroe, the nation's fifth president who served from 1817 to 1825. The items are two cut glass decanters engraved with the Great Seal of the United States and part of a 340-piece set commissioned for the White House.

## Bogut Honored

Pittsburgh radio legend Jack Bogut is being regarded as just that --- a legend --- with his upcoming induction into the **Broadcasters Hall of Fame**.

Begun in 1982 as the Radio Hall of Fame and renamed in 1990 to include television, the organization memorializes the Golden Age of broadcasting and to promote furtherance of the art of broadcasting. To be eligible for induction, a candidate must have made a significant contribution to the industry.

Bogut and other honorees will be inducted at a ceremony in Akron in November.

# CBS Wins New Media Award

**CBS Corporation's** efforts at utilizing new media has garnered it a 2011 Meffys Award for Best Mobile Web Site.



In Pittsburgh, CBS Corporation owns two television and four radio stations. The Meffys are the most established and coveted global awards in the mobile media industry. This year's winners were announced at an event in London on July 7.

"We're thrilled to be given this recognition," CBS Mobile's Rob Gelick says in a press release. "The CBS.com mobile site provides a rich, anytime-anywhere companion to our broadcast

lineup and offers video clips, photo galleries, behind-the-scenes info, trivia, polling and sharing to social networks."

CBS Corporation and **Netflix** have also announced a new two-year, non-exclusive international licensing agreement that will enable certain CBS shows to be streamed instantly to Netflix subscribers in Canada and Latin America. CBS also announced a new non-exclusive streaming agreement with **Amazon.com**.

And in what may be the most fun new media news, CBS has launched an official "Star Trek" app to provide fans of the iconic TV franchise with fun, interactive features including a screen that

mimics the computer consoles seen on the "Star Trek" series.

In other news, CBS has reached a tentative agreement with the **International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers** (IBEW) that covers roughly 2,800 technicians. The contract includes a 2.5% pay increase and more flexible working conditions. IBEW members are expected to ratify the agree-

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## ARAD News

More than 100 groups are requesting grants from the **Allegheny Regional Asset District** for 2012.

The Allegheny Regional Asset District (ARAD) is a special purpose area-wide unit of local government that was support and finance regional assets in the areas of libraries, parks and recreation, cultural, sports and civic facilities and programs. ARAD receives one-half of the proceeds from the 1% county sales tax.

Sales tax revenue has been rising and, ARAD chief David Donahoe told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Bill Zlatos that he expects an increase in capital projects. For more information, visit [www.radworkshere.org](http://www.radworkshere.org).

## Images

Photos Celebrating Pittsburgh's  
Arts/Entertainment History & Community



*A couple of guests at the July 8 Roaring 20s Bash really got into the spirit with period costumes. The event, held at the Allegheny Elks Lodge, starred the Pittsburgh Banjo Club to help local author and arts entrepreneur James A. Richards (publisher of Pittsburgh Applause) and his projects. Richards and his friend, Lisa Marie Bruno are pictured at right. Bruno has extensive experience in wardrobe for film, TV and stage — although the couple provided their own outfits.*

To have an image considered, email Jim Richards at [jim@james-richards.com](mailto:jim@james-richards.com)

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|---|---|---|
| <p><b>MON</b><br/>1</p> <p>The National Wheelchair Games spin out of control at the <b>Lawrence Convention Center</b>.</p> <p><b>TUE</b><br/>2</p> <p>The <b>Benedum</b> rocks out with the legendary musical “Jesus Christ Superstar”.</p> <p><b>WED</b><br/>3</p> <p>Sample some of the great food created by the restaurants of <b>Station Square</b> in a fundraiser for the Humane Society.</p> <p><b>WED</b><br/>3</p> <p>The very sexy Josh Groban performs pop songs with that amazing, operative voice of his at <b>Consol Energy Center</b>.</p> <p><b>THU</b><br/>4</p> <p>One of Mozart’s best operas, “The Marriage of Figaro” bows big at Pitt’s <b>Bellefield Hall</b>.</p> <p><b>FRI</b><br/>5</p> <p><b>Stage AE</b> stars an impressive weekend of concerts with country music star Trace Adkins.</p> <p><b>SAT</b><br/>6</p> <p>On the next night, <b>Stage AE</b> welcomes lush rockers Death Cab For Cutie.</p> <p><b>SAT</b><br/>6</p> <p>Meanwhile, hometown boy Wiz Khalifa raps at <b>Ampitheatre At Station Square</b>.</p> | <p><b>SUN</b><br/>7</p> <p><b>Stage AE</b> wraps up a hot weekend with jazz fusion group Return To Forever.</p> <p><b>WED</b><br/>10</p> <p>The <b>Ampitheatre At Station Square</b> rocks with Stone Temple Pilots.</p> <p><b>WED</b><br/>10</p> <p>Stars from TV’s “American Idol” perform at <b>Consol Energy Center</b>.</p> <p><b>THU</b><br/>11</p> <p>A variety of scenes and monologues from August Wilson’s unforgettable plays are staged in a mini festival at the <b>August Wilson Center</b>.</p> <p><b>THU</b><br/>11</p> <p>It’s official: there will be football, and to prove it the Pittsburgh Steelers take on the Eagles in a preseason game tonight at <b>Heinz Field</b>.</p> <p><b>FRI</b><br/>19</p> <p>Superstar Britney Spears lets her hair down at the <b>Consol Energy Center</b>.</p> <p><b>SAT</b><br/>20</p> <p>More than 20 four-person teams have a ball at the <b>Heinz Regional History Center</b> for their annual bocce tournament.</p> | <p><b>TUE</b><br/>23</p> <p>Lyle Lovett leads his band at <b>Stage AE</b> for a wonderful evening of multilayered music.</p> <p><b>SAT</b><br/>27</p> <p>The annual Shadyside Arts Festival brightens up <b>Walnut Street</b> with an eclectic collection of creativity.</p> <p><b>SAT</b><br/>27</p> <p>More football: the Steelers are challenged at <b>Heinz Field</b> by the Falcons.</p> <p><b>SUN</b><br/>28</p> <p><b>Phipps Conservatory’s</b> annual festival for all things tomato and garlic happens today. Bring your taste buds — and breath mints!</p> <p><b>TUE</b><br/>30</p> <p>Members of Creedence Clearwater Revival perform some of that legendary band’s most famous songs at <b>Ampitheatre At Station Square</b>.</p> <p><b>WED</b><br/>31</p> <p>Grammy nominated band Incubus performs alternative rock at <b>Stage AE</b>.</p> |
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# National/World A&E News Round-Up

## Singer Amy Winehouse Dies

Grammy Award winning English singer/songwriter Amy Winehouse died on July 23 by undetermined means. She was 27.

Born in North London to a family of Russian-Jewish descent, Winehouse received her first guitar at the age of 13. She continued to develop her talent, becoming known for performing an eclectic mix of musical genres including R&B, soul and jazz with her powerful deep contralto voice. Her 2006 album, "Back to Black" won her five Grammys.

Unfortunately, during the same period she struggled with substance abuse and depression with periods of violent mood swings and heavy drug use. Some theorize that this history may have contributed to her death.

Album sales soared when her passing made news.

### Is That Hacking We Hear?

The scandal at **News Corporation**, owner of the Fox Television Network among other assets worldwide, continues.

CEO Rupert Murdoch and his son James made an appearance at a special UK parliamentary commission looking into reports of illegal phone hacking by one of New Corp's British newspapers (which has seen been shut down). Several people have been arrested. The scandal forced Rupert Murdoch to drop a long-time dream: to buy out the rest of

**British Sky Broadcasting** (BSkyB). News Corp is BSKyB's largest shareholder.

However, members of the commission are unhappy with James Murdoch's testimony and are expected to recall him for more questions. An investigation has also begun in the United States to see if any such hacking occurred here as well.

### Scandal on an Operatic Scale

There are scandals rocking this side of the Atlantic too, as the troubled **New York City Opera** faces more hurdles in its controversial plan to leave its long-time home at Lincoln Center.

The latest involves the unions, who are now claiming that the move violates the terms of a gift by the founders of *Reader's Digest* that makes up the bulk of the company's endowment.

*The New York Times* reports that a complaint has been filed with the New York State Attorney General's office regarding the move and use of the gift's funds. The unions are also concerned that the move will endanger benefits and job guarantees.

### Making New Suds

They have now been uncanceled: the soaps "All My Children" and "One Life to Live" have found a new home on the web.

The **Walt Disney Company's** ABC Television Network announced earlier this year that they were dropping both shows in favor of cheaper programming. The news stunned fans. They have now been licensed to **Prospect Park**, a production company best

known for the cable series "Royal Pains". The company plans to make the soaps the anchor for a new online network.

However, there remains many unanswered questions including how the network and shows will be financed: will there be advertising, a subscription fee or both? According to the *New York Post*, both shows are expected to retain the same cast, crew and talent and remain the same length. At press time, Prospect Park was still lining up financing for the new network.

### Saddle Suds

Speaking of classic soaps, the Emmy Award winning "Dallas" is getting revived.

Turner Network Television (TNT), part of **Time-Warner** has ordered 13 episodes to be aired next year. Many of the original cast members will be returning, although the focus will now shift to the children of characters JR, Sue Ellen and Bobby Ewing.

"Dallas" is one of television's longest running and most during series. It and "Peyton Place" are they only prime time soaps to have won major Emmy Awards.

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## NBC Changing Online Strategy

It is a question that is getting almost as old as the internet: how does a traditional media company make the most of the web? For **NBC Universal**, the route includes the surprise closing of the company's well-regarded digital studio.



NBC Universal is owned primarily by **Comcast**, which operates Pittsburgh's cable television franchise.

"Going forward we plan to focus our digital efforts and investment on content that's supportive of our on-air programs," *Advertising Age* quotes a company spokeswoman, "providing our audience with ad-

ditional content that further engages them in our shows." She describes it as "a change in strategy."

To that end, the company has reached a new deal with Netflix to provide more programming through the service. It has also launched a new web site at [www.nbcuniversalarchives.com](http://www.nbcuniversalarchives.com) to offer "a lifetime of radio recordings and moving images, capturing over 70 years of the people, places and events that define our society and our world." Customers of the site can purchase copies of recordings like the 1945 radio news report on Franklin Roosevelt's death or clips from "Saturday Night Live."

In other news, Jennifer Salke has been named president of NBC

Entertainment. She has worked for several years at **News Corporation's** 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Television. During her tenure at Fox she played a key role in the development of hit series like "Glee". Comcast has also announced the adoption of "dynamic ads" in video-on-demand programming, which allows ads to be easily changed at almost any time.

## 20s Bash Really Roars

The **Pittsburgh Banjo Club** wailed and the **Allegheny Elks Lodge** rocked on July 8 for The Roaring 20's Bash, a fundraiser for local author and arts entrepreneur James A. Richards.

Richards has been an actively participant and vital asset to Pittsburgh's arts/entertainment community for more than 20 years, working for various organizations and running several independent projects. Among these is *The Pittsburgh A&E Book* professional directory ([www.pittsburghaebook.com](http://www.pittsburghaebook.com)) and the newsletter *Pittsburgh Applause*.

Shortly after the funeral, his father's life insurance policy check was stolen by one of Richards' neighbors, who was caught and arrested. The alleged thief, Robert Paul Moore, committed suicide on June 27.

As of press time, Richards had still not received restitution nearly four months since the theft.

## Locally Made Web Show Goes To Syfy

The locally made online series "The Mercury Men" made its debut on Syfy's web site on July 25.



Director/writer Chris Preksta --- who lives in Whitehall --- launched the show at [www.mercuryseries.com](http://www.mercuryseries.com) before moving over to [www.syfy.com](http://www.syfy.com). Syfy is one of the cable channels of **NBC-Universal**, which is primarily owned by **Comcast** which operates Pittsburgh's cable franchise.

According to the official show web site, "The Mercury Men" is set in 1975 Pittsburgh and centers on Edward Borman, "a lowly government office drone, finds himself trapped, when the deadly men of Mercury seize his office building as a staging ground for their nefarious plot. Aided by Jack Yaeger, a daring aerospace engineer from a mysterious organization known as The League, Edward must stop the invaders and their doomsday device, the Gravity Engine." A total of ten episodes have been produced so far.

# PSO Names New Concertmaster

Noah Bendix-Balgley has been named concertmaster for the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO) to succeed the retiring Andres Cardenes as the symphony continues to face serious financial challenges.



A native of Asheville, North Carolina and just 27-years-old, violinist Bendix-Balgley has won international prizes at competitions in Brussels, Paris and Fermo, Italy. "Noah is a confident, natural leader and an excellent fit for this orchestra," PSO President Larry Tamburri said in a press release. "He joins the tradition of exemplary concertmasters

of the PSO and is a truly exciting choice." **WQED Multimedia** has posted an interview with the new hire on YouTube, which can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7T11TebTZY>

The appointment comes as reductions in state funding and fair ticket sales are hitting the PSO hard. According to a report published on July 19 by the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Bill Zlatos, the orchestra has lost about \$3 million since 2009. Ticket prices may rise as a result. "My expectation is it's going to take approximately three years to get back into a balanced budget," Tamburri told Zlatos. He doesn't know when tickets will rise or by how much. The biggest quandary facing the PSO is the cut in state funds, which went from \$2.5 million in

the 2008-09 season to just \$1 million the following year.

Meanwhile, the PSO and WQED have announced that support from the **Bayer Corporation** will allow the well-regarded "Pittsburgh Symphony Radio" series to be available to public radio stations 52 weeks a year. Taped by WQED and hosted by Jim Cunningham, the program is distributed by **Public Radio International**.

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## New Group To Fight Creative Theft

A new effort is being made by the creative community to combat content theft.



That effort is being made by a coalition of unions and corporations including those with strong Pittsburgh ties: the **American Federation of Television & Radio Artists (AFTRA)**, **CBS Corporation**, **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)**, **NBC Universal** and the **Screen Actors Guild (SAG)** among many others. Together they have formed **Creative America**, a new organization to provide a unified voice for the millions of people across the country that make their living through their creativity – be it film, music or some other form.

According to a Creative America press release, global theft of movies and television shows has already cost more than 140,000 jobs in the US. One of the organization's first goals is the passage of legislation that it believes will significantly impact theft. Called the Protect IP Act, the proposed law would authorize the US Justice Department to combat foreign trafficking in stolen intellectual property.

"People need to understand that this isn't a victimless crime," the press release quotes a craft service owner. "When movies and TV get stolen, it hurts me and everyone I work with." More information is available online at [www.creativeamerica.org](http://www.creativeamerica.org)

## IATSE, In New Deal

A new three-year agreement has been reached between the **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)** and **Freemantle Media North America (FMNA)**.

IATSE has a full chapter in Pittsburgh with hundreds of



members working on various film and television projects. They work in areas as diverse as scenic painting and animal wrangling. FMNA is a division of **Freemantle Media**, a British production company owned by **RTL Group** which is itself controlled by the

German conglomerate **Bertelsmann**.

The agreement covers programs produced for network and basic cable, including "American Idol" and "America's Got Talent."

"We are pleased to enter into this long-term relationship," IATSE's Matthew Loeb said in a press release. "This new enhanced agreement underlines our commitment to working with **Freemantle Media North America** on some of the biggest programming brands on television." The contract establishes parameters across all programs.

## AFTRA Keeps Reardon

Roberta Reardon has been re-elected as national president for the **American Federation of Television & Radio Artists (AFTRA)**.



AFTRA members work as actors, broadcasters, sing-

ers, dancers, announcers, disc jockeys and other entertainers. It has hundreds of members in southwestern Pennsylvania and operates a full office in downtown Pittsburgh. AFTRA is currently in merger talks with the **Screen Actors Guild (SAG)**.

The union has also ratified a new 3 ½-year videogame contract and the board has approved proposals for sound recordings and network television contracts.

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## QED & Zoo Partner

In a unique partnership, **WQED Multimedia** and the **Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium** have announced an innovative new education program.



The program is called iQ Zoo and it is designed to educate children and families about animals, habitats and careers using engaging multimedia content, both at the zoo and online.

A press release issued July 7 explains that zoo visitors can use an internet-connected mobile device

to scan codes at select places to gain access to relevant information provided by the **Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)** regarding the animal on view. This involves animals in three distinct Pittsburgh Zoo habitats: the African Savanna, the Polar Ice Caps and Tropical Forests. The content appearing on the device will be multimedia, including videos, audio clips and pictures as well as text.

Zoos across the nation will be able to participate, thanks to funding from the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting** among other supporters. There is also a complimentary web site at [www.iqzoo.org](http://www.iqzoo.org)

## Weather Changes

There have been some very visible staffing changes at **Cox Enterprise's** Pittsburgh station, WPXI-TV.



Long-time meteorologist Julie Bologna left the station as of July 13 citing a work schedule that conflicted with her family's needs. In article by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Maria Sciallo, Bologna said that the station did try to accommodate her but it simply didn't work out.

She has been replaced by Steven Cropper, who was with **Hearst Corporation's** WTAE-TV until April.

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# Pittsburgh Applause Editorial

## A Very Public Thank You

By James A. Richards

In lieu of my usual editorial, I just want to write a very public thank you to the Pittsburgh Banjo Club and the Allegheny Elks Lodge for graciously volunteering for a fundraiser to help me during a challenging time.

My father passed away late last year. Since his death came on December 19, just before the chaotic Christmas holidays, it was decided not to rush the funeral plans. He was interred near other relatives in a Milwaukee mausoleum on January 8.

Shortly thereafter, we learned of a small company life insurance policy to be shared by sister and me. She got her check, but mine mys-

teriously failed to show up. The insurance company discovered that someone else had deposited the check at a PNC Bank ATM, falsely claiming I had endorsed it. The deposit was so suspicious that PNC did not clear the check and began its own internal investigation. I called the police and they soon determined that a neighbor in my building had gotten hold of the check and gave it to a friend to deposit. The alleged thief committed suicide in June.

On July 8, the Pittsburgh Banjo Club played their terrific ragtime tunes for The Roaring 20s Bash at the Allegheny Elks Lodge. Both the club and lodge provided services for free and the club even made a donation.

As of this writing, restitution still has not been made on the stolen money and I welcome any additional support Pittsburgh's arts/entertainment community can provide.

Letters to the editor are welcome via email to [jim@james-richards.com](mailto:jim@james-richards.com)

They may be edited for publication.

# Linked



Join the *Pittsburgh Applause* group on [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com).

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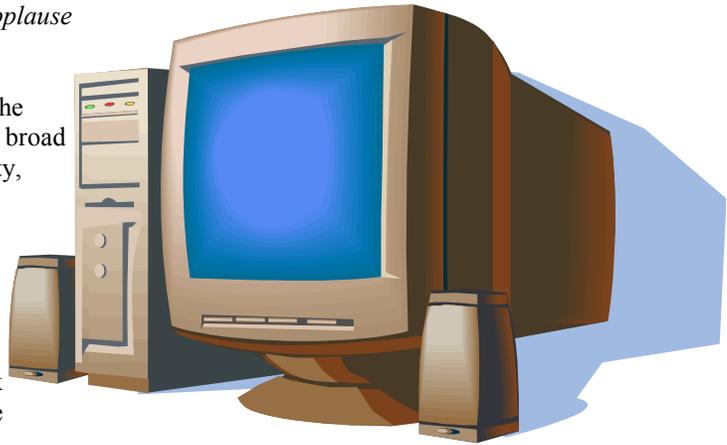
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Jim hopes to eventually bring *Pittsburgh Applause* back to the real world!

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