

pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

Theater Company Fires Co-Founder

In a move that stunned many observers, the board of the **Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theater** (PICT) suddenly fired its artistic director and co-founder Andrew Paul on February 27.

Founded in 1996, the PICT web site describes its mission as “committed to the creation of high quality, professional thought-provoking theatre of substance.” Paul’s name has already been replaced on the staff page.

The board cited his move to Nevada two years ago when his wife got a job in Las Vegas. “We made the decision that we need to have a full-time artistic director here in Pittsburgh,” Chairman Eugene O’Sullivan explained to Alice Carter of the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. “Andrew doesn’t give enough attention to running an arts organization.”

“It was out of the blue,” Paul told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*’s Sharon Eberson. “I was given zero notice.” [He was fired over the phone – Ed.] “The board has had concerns about this from Day 1 when my wife got this job, but the company has been doing fine. Artistically, we’ve been thriving . . .”

The company’s new season begins in April. The result, board member Richard E. Rauh tells Carter “is a mess.” Paul was to direct three of the plays.

O’Sullivan made clear to Eberson that the board “has been discussing this right along” with intensity building last fall to make a decision.

Actor-director Alan Stanford has been brought in as Interim Artistic Director. Stephanie Riso, who co-founded the company with Paul, remains as Operations Director. At press time, she had not issued a statement on her colleague’s dismissal.

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“Perks” Wins Spirit

The locally-made film version of the novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* was named Best First Feature at this year’s Independent Spirit Awards.

Begun in 1984, the awards are presented annually by the **Film Independent**, a non-profit organization dedicated to independent film and independent filmmakers. The novel, written by Pittsburgh

native Stephen Chbosky, is the coming-of-age story of a shy high school freshman trying to make new friends. Chbosky wrote the screenplay and directed the film.

For more information, visit <http://www.spiritawards.com>



Comcast Bans Gun Ads

Insisting that the decision has nothing to do with the current gun control debate, **Comcast** has announced that it will no longer sell ad time on its local cable systems to gun makers or retailers.



In Pittsburgh, Comcast operates the city's cable television franchise. The company is also spending a reported \$17 billion to buy out **General Electric's** shares of NBC-Universal. That deal is expected to be completed sometime this month.

Advertising Age's Katy Bachman reports that Comcast is simply adopting a long-standing NBC policy. That policy, updated in

2012, states that the network "does not accept advertisements for weapons or fireworks. Commercials that include weapons or fireworks as props will be approved on a case-by-case basis."

Unfortunately, the network is making a different kind of history. Dominic Patten, writing on the web site Deadline Hollywood, states that NBC is expected to finish the crucial February sweeps period in fifth place among adults ages 18 to 49. He explains: "With ratings juggernaut 'The Voice' not back until March 25, freshman 'Revolution' still off and no more NFL football, the entire NBC schedule is struggling mightily."

Big Buy

At press time, the industry web site TVNewsCheck.com reported that **Sinclair Broadcast Group** (which owns two television stations in Pittsburgh) is acquiring 18 stations from the privately-held **Barrington Broadcasting Group**.



Sinclair has also entered into management agreements with Barrington's remaining stations. This effectively takes the struggling Barrington out of the television business.

Federal regulations require Sinclair to sell two stations, one in Illinois and the other in New York State.



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Shiner Shines In NYC

Pittsburgh makes yet another splash on the international art scene this spring as the Andy Warhol Museum's Eric Shiner is curating part of this year's Armory Show.

CARNEGIE | MUSEUMS
| OF PITTSBURGH

The Andy Warhol Museum, part of the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**, is the largest museum in America dedicated to a single artist, pop icon and Pittsburgh native Andy Warhol (1928-1987). Begun in 1994, the Armory Show is one of the world's largest contemporary art fairs held annual in New York City. The event's name is in honor of a famous 1913 art show that introduced modern art to the United States.

A press release explains that the Warhol will have "a large presence" including prints of Andy Warhol taken in 1964 as part of a special portfolio of works. An exhibit will also be dedicated to the artist's "Andy Warhol's TV" series. This year's fair is scheduled for March 7 to 10. For more information, visit <http://www.thearmoryshow.com>

In other news, Kilolo Luckett has been hired on as the Warhol's new director of development.



EDMC Loses Students

Trouble continues to follow **Education Management Corporation** (EDMC), the locally-based chain of for-profit schools that include the Art Institute of Pittsburgh.

EDMC
Education Management Corporation

The company has faced charges of student loan fraud [see *Pittsburgh Applause*, June 2011 at <http://www.james-richards.com/PittsburghApplauseJune2011.pdf> - Ed.] for nearly two years. Now, reports Ann Belser of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, EDMC has seen its enrollment drop a whopping 16.3% and its stock has fallen to a mere \$3.98 a share.

According to Belser's article, a conference call led by CEO Ed-

ward West conceded that the situation was causing the company to raise cash. This includes selling real estate and leasing it back, a program that will eventually include the Art Institute's downtown building.

The current situation began with a lawsuit filed by a former employee which contends that the company fraudulently obtained student loans and other federal financial aid by using aggressive recruiting tactics and tying recruiter compensation to the number of new student enrollments. EDMC has denied the claims.

A year ago the company began laying off staff [see *Pittsburgh Applause*, February 2012, at <http://www.james-richards.com/PittsburghApplauseFebru->

Book News

News on a trio of local authors:

Larry Ivkovich has published the fantasy-adventure novella *Reunion at Olan*. This is the story of a security chief preparing for a peace conference when her plans are disrupted by a team of terrorists who mix technology with magic.

The 2010 Deepwater Horizon Disaster is the backdrop to P. C. Zick's novel *In Trails in the Sand*. The story follows an environmental writer reporting on the disaster's affects and uncovers a shocking secret that could destroy her family.

Author Michel Sauret has self-published *Amidst Traffic*, a collection of short stories about strangers interconnecting. The *Northside Chronicle's* Megan Trimble reports that the award winning army journalist "uses his writing to challenge existentialism and encourage people to discuss differing beliefs."

[ary2012.pdf](#) - Ed.]. Compounding the matter for EDMC is a congressional investigation into the tactics employed by for-profit colleges that has led to regulatory changes.

In his conference call, West says that the company's recent moves "will see new student trends that are less negative" as 2013 progresses.

NOTE: At press time Ann Belser published a new article reporting that EDMC is freezing tuition rates through 2015. Details at <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/business/news/edmc-freezes-tuition-through-2015-677392/>

KDKA May Go Mobile

With the growing popularity of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, **CBS Corporation** is exploring how to make its stations easily available through them.



In Pittsburgh, CBS Corporation owns two television and four radio stations, notably KDKA. Andrew Dodson of the web site TVNewsCheck.com reports that the company has been testing Syncbak in two markets.

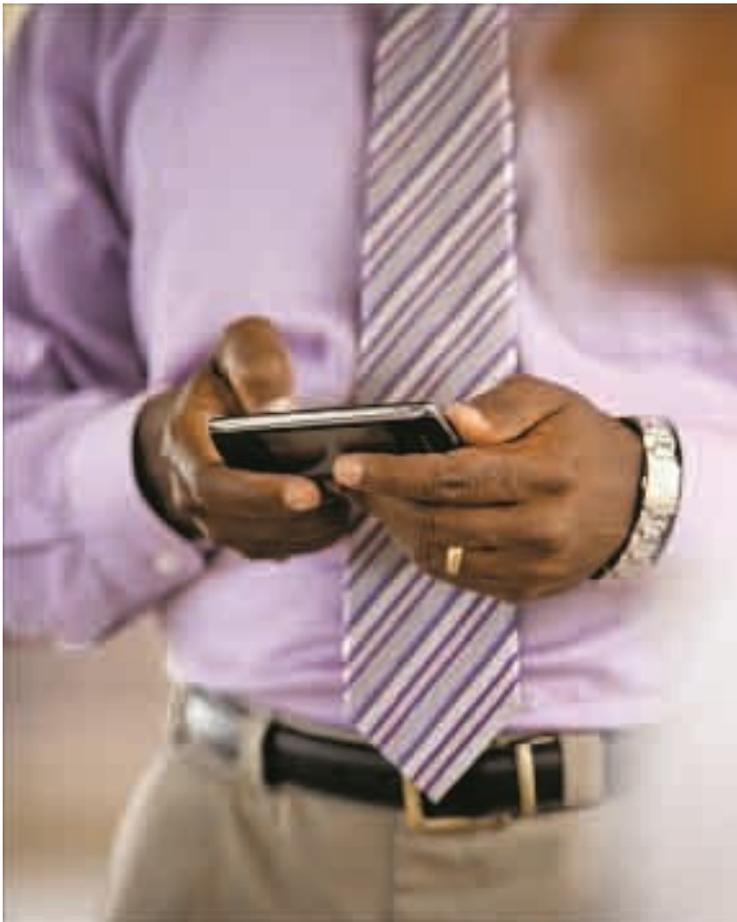
Syncbak is software developed by a company called **2BrightSparks** which allows backing up and synchronizing files to different media or an outside computer server. According to Dodson, CBS has been trying it out in New York and Los Angeles to stream programming “while restricting reception to mobile devices within the stations’ markets.”

If the test goes well, the service will be expanded to other markets including Pittsburgh. “Syncbak gives us mobile TV without having to plug in an antenna or adapter” CBS’ Robert Seidel explained to Dodson. “It can run on 3G, 4G or Wi-Fi --- all of which are very reliable to get live TV when on the go.”

Homeless Mosaic

A mosaic created by local artist James Simon is waiting for a home, reports the *Northside Chronicle*’s Kelsey Shea.

The mosaic is to provide a positive welcome to the historic Troy Hill neighborhood. The site for the piece was supposed to be finished in 2011. The site, a green space beyond a parking lot, is the choice but safety issues have complicated an otherwise simple plan. Citizens groups are working with their city council representative on a solution.



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Pittsburgh TV Show May Not Film Here

Even though its set in Pittsburgh, the pilot for the TV series “Hatfields & McCoys” probably won’t be filmed here, reports the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s* Rob Owen.

The series, if picked-up, would be about the modern feud between the contemporary descendents of the famous families. The blame for the loss is falling on the limits in Pennsylvania’s tax credit program.

The program provides tax incentives to film and television companies who produce most of their project in Pennsylvania, with a total annual cap of \$100 million.

“We’ve lost seven feature films in the last couple of months, all from major studios” because of the cap, Dawn Keezer of the **Pittsburgh Film Office** explained to Owen. “The region has topped \$100 million in quantifiable, audited economic impact for each of the past three years . . . now we are at a complete standstill” and have lost other productions.



School District Seeks To Save Art Program

An online petition has begun to restore cuts made to the **Mars Area School District** arts program, reports the *Cranberry Eagle*.

The Mars Area School District is a public school district in rural Butler County serving the communities around the town Mars. The district includes five schools.

Peter Black, a science teacher is quoted by the paper as saying that “teachers, parents and art students feel the cuts will prevent students planning on a career in the arts from completing a professional portfolio and decrease their

chances of being accepted into the colleges of their choice.”

“These cuts left elementary buildings without art instructors and cut instructional time in the high school by 20%, as these teachers were now required to provide one day of art education to those buildings without art teachers,” the petition explains.

At press time, more than 400 people had signed the online petition, which is available at <http://www.change.org/petitions/mars-area-school-district-school-board-restore-mars-area-school-district-art-program>

Images

Photos Celebrating Pittsburgh’s Arts/Entertainment History & Community



This is an undated photo of acclaimed pianist Van Cliburn (1934-2013) who died of cancer on February 27. He first played Pittsburgh in 1955 when he was just 21. He also appeared many times on “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood”. Source: The Van Cliburn Foundation

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



March is Women's History Month so be sure to check out our special feature section.

FRI
1

The classic novel *The Great Gatsby* hits the stage in a youth production at the **New Hazlett Theater**.

SAT
2

The Pittsburgh Symphony's new concertmaster, Noah Bendix-Balgey visits the

Carnegie Music Hall for a night of magnificent violin playing.

SUN
3

The Indigo Girls brighten the **Byham Theater** with their infectious folk-rock.

TUE
5

The musical "Priscilla Queen of the Desert" pulls up to the **Benedum**

Center for its wild tale of drag queens on a road trip.

THU
7

The inspiring story of Thurgood Marshall is the subject of an exuberant play at the **O'Reilly Theater**.

FRI
8

It's not their usual haunt, the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre shines at the **August Wilson**

Center for some captivating dance.

SAT
9

Stage AE braces itself for the ferocious rock of The Apache Ready.

TUE
12

The little girl with the big voice, Jackie Evancho, is at **Heinz Hall** tonight.

WED
13

Local photographers are welcome to the **Andy Warhol Museum** where a pair of art collectors offer some important professional insights.

WED
13

Often compared with our own Wiz guy, hip-hop artist A\$AP Rocky rocks **Stage AE** tonight.

FRI
15

Performance artist Lionel Popkin pops up at the **Kelly-Strayhorn**.

SAT
16

This year's St. Patrick's Day parade actually happens the day before.

SAT
16

Bring your hanky to the **Benedum Center** for the tragic opera "Madama Butterfly".

SAT
16

Icelandic musician Valgeir Sigurosson chooses the **Andy Warhol Museum** for his Pittsburgh debut.

SUN
17



THU
21

Acclaimed composer Mason Bates joins the electro ensemble IonSound at the **Andy Warhol Museum**.

TUE
26

The Broadway sensation "The Book of Mormon" comes to the **Benedum Center**

with its mission of making you laugh as well as think.

THU
28

You'll never forget a night at **Stage AE** with the pop-punk band A Day to Remember.

FRI
29

The multi-media show "Elvis Lives" at **Heinz Hall** recounts the king's life.

SAT
30

St. Patrick's Day may be past, but its spirit remains at **City Theatre** for the play

"Little Gem." It uses Dublin slang and jokes to tell the story of a group of Irish women over the course of a year.

SAT
30

The **Carnegie Museum of Art** dips into its impressive collection of Japanese

woodblock prints for a fascinating new exhibit.

SUN
31

If you saw "American Idiot" last month than you know why Green Day is such a smart

band. Now hear them live at the **Consol Energy Center**.



Don't forget to give Jim your events in a timely fashion to make the best use of the online calendar!



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National/World A&E News Round-Up

Firing, Filing Hits Museo del Barrio

Margarita Aguilar, the executive director of the troubled **Museo del Barrio**, suddenly left the institution on February 15.

Located at the northern end of New York's much vaunted Museum Mile, El Museo del Barrio was founded in 1969 to specialize in Latin American and Caribbean art. The collection contains over 8,000 items. However, both fundraising and attendance has steadily declined since 2008 resulting in layoffs and reduced operating hours.

No specific reason had been given at the time. "We are in the process of seeking a replacement," board chairman Tony Bechara told the *New York Times*' Felicia R. Lee. "That's all I know. We have ended the relationship." But in a separate article later in the month, Lee reports that Aguilar has "filed a claim with New York State human rights officials . . . about her concerns, citing instances when she was told to lose weight and dress better and an environment in which her ability to hire and fire employees was undercut."

Lee also refers to a letter from the museum dated February 14 listing why her employment was terminated. These included "insufficient fundraising" and "dereliction of duty."

"This is beyond belief," Aguilar told Lee. "I was doing my duties from the moment I stepped in to the moment I left."

Getting The Gold

He may have been snubbed for Best Director, but actor/director Ben Affleck got the last laugh when his film, "Argo," won Best Picture at this year's Academy Awards.

Daniel Day-Lewis won Best Actor for his starring role in "Lincoln"; Jennifer Lawrence was named Best Actress for "Silver Linings Playbook" and Ang Lee won Best Director for "Life of Pi." Chris Terrio won Best Adapted Screenplay for "Argo" and Quentin Tarantino won Best Original Screenplay for "Django Unchained."

For a complete list of nominees and winners, visit <http://oscar.go.com/nominees>

Not So Wild These Days

The adult entertainment company behind the controversially "Girls Gone Wild" and "Guys Gone Wild" videos has filed for bankruptcy, reports Tim Kenneally on TheWrap.com.

GGW Brands is claiming over \$16 million in debt in its Chapter 11 filing. But in a statement to TheWrap.com, the company insists that they remain "strong as a company and strong financially" and that re-structuring allows GGW to address "its frivolous and burdensome legal affairs." Keanneally theorizes that those affairs are a reference to founder Joe Francis' own legal and financial troubles.

But is he really the owner? The company attorney told Keanneally that "Mr. Francis is not an officer, owner or employee of any of the

entities that filed for bankruptcy."

More History Lost

The war may be officially over, but Iraq is still suffering from its related chaos. Martin Bailey posted on TheArtNewspaper.com that four hundred fragments of bricks from a gate in the ancient city of Babylon have been stolen.

"These came from the Nebuchadnezzar Museum, at the entrance to the city founded in 575BCE," Bailey writes. "The blue-glazed bricks have golden images of bulls, lions and dragons. Excavated from 1900 onwards by German archaeologists, many of the bricks with images were taken to the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. Part of the structure was reconstructed by Saddam Hussein with modern replicas."

A criminal investigation is underway.

The Bi Guy

In his new memoir, legendary music producer Clive Davis makes a surprising admission: he's bisexual.

Throughout his fifty year career, Davis has played key roles in the careers of artists from Aretha Franklin to Rod Stewart and Kelly Clarkson. He has won five Grammy Awards and a member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. In the book *The Sound Track of My Life*, the twice married (and twice divorced) 80-year-old Davis admits that he's had sexual experiences with men and has been in a relationship with a man since 2004.

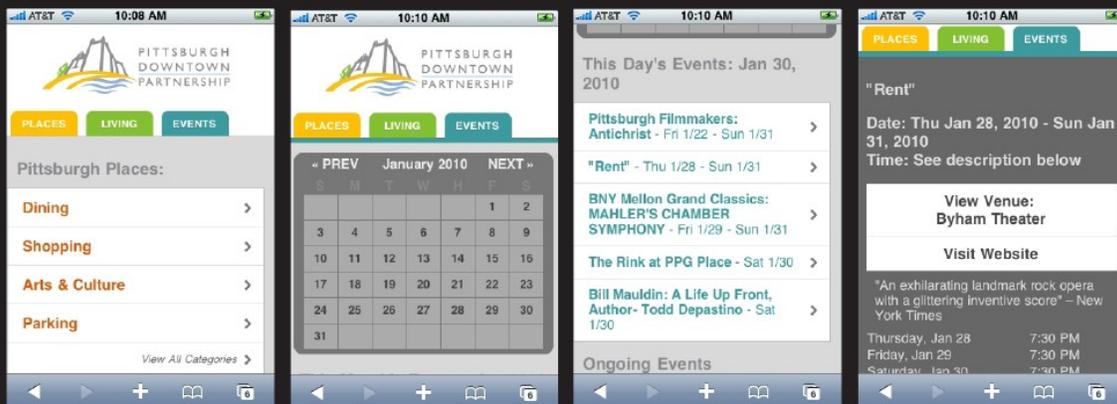
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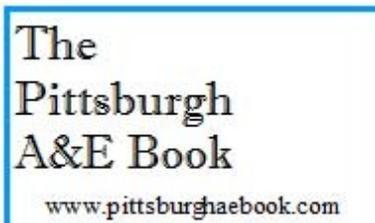
New Online Kids Shows

A new online partnership was launched last month between public broadcaster **QED Pittsburgh** and the non-profit **SLB Radio Productions** to broadcast engaging children's programming at <http://www.iqkidsradio.org>

SLB is best known for its weekly public radio program "Saturday Light Brigade," which blends music, interviews and games broadcast from the **Children's Museum of Pittsburgh**.



A press release describes the service, called iQ Kids Radio, as "a family-friendly commercial-free streaming radio service that provides a safe, entertaining, and fun way to learn, listen, laugh and much more." Programming is available every Saturday and primary funding is being provided by the volunteer organization **Junior League of Pittsburgh**.



Museum Remains Open During Renovations

The Greensburg Historic Architectural Review Board has approved the expansion and renovation plans of the **Westmoreland Museum of American Art**.

Established in 1959, the Westmoreland Museum of American Art is devoted to American art with a concentration of southwestern Pennsylvania art. It is the outgrowth of a bequest made by a local art lover.

A museum press release explains that the institution is working with a New York architect and a Pittsburgh landscaping firm "to create a new museum experience with an architecturally significant new wing, renovation of the existing building and a complete re-design of the grounds."

The expanded facility "will include new galleries, classrooms, studios, and public gathering spaces with the most current technology for new and traditional museum goers. The transparent design of the new building creates a sense of openness, inviting the community to gather."

During the renovation, the museum will continue to stage exhibits. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Mary Thomas reports that during the two-year project "the museum's displays, educational presentations and other activities will continue" at various locations throughout Greensburg.

SAG-AFTRA News

The national board of **SAG-AFTRA** held a video meeting between members in New York and Los Angeles on February 2 to approve negotiating plans.



Formed through a merger in 2012, SAG-AFTRA is a union representing over 160,000 film and television performers. The union has hundreds of members in the Pittsburgh and Cleveland areas and maintains a full-time office in downtown Pittsburgh.

The board approved a package of proposals for new contract negotiations with the producers of television commercials. A report was also presented about the merger of the two union's retirement and health plans. Right now they remain separate but efforts are being made to meld them into one entity.



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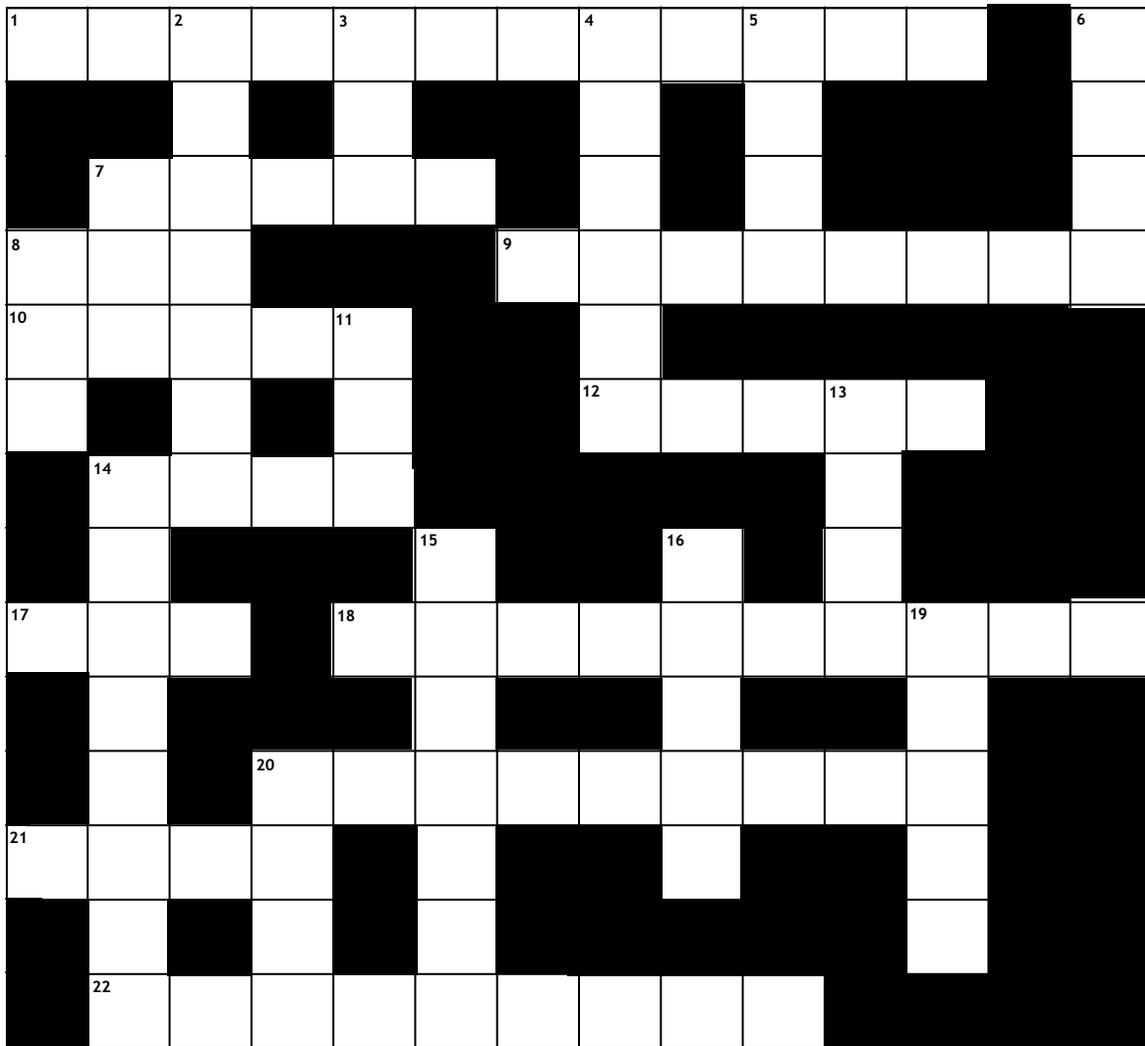


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1. Legendary playwright
7. Riddle me this: the
Gorshin whose last
role was George
[Burns]
8. Droop
9. Where every actor hopes to
end up.
10. What all actors hope to
become
12. The Pittsburgh Opera
often performs
his work.
14. A performance by one
17. Stage signal
18. Theater for the acne set
20. Storefront company
21. First name of 16-Down
22. Second half of an East
Liberty theater

Down

2. Local musicals man
3. Biblical wrong
4. Unscripted comedy
5. Lobby beverage
6. South Side stage
7. Overweight
8. Fast plane letters
11. Letters of popularity
13. A performance by two
14. Pittsburgh Playwright’s
guy
15. Where “The Chief” rules
every year.
16. First half of an East
Liberty theater
19. Actor’s rep
20. Lobby beverage



**Look for the solution
in next month’s issue**

Pittsburgh Applause Editorial

Remember What “Based On” Means

By James A. Richards

People in the media world like to think of themselves as smart, savvy and sophisticated. So do a great many other people. But like all human beings, they can often just be silly.

Leading up to this year’s Academy Awards was a ridiculous debate about the historic accuracy of some of the nominees, including “Lincoln,” “Argo” and especially “Zero Dark Thirty.”

Film and television have their strengths when it comes to storytelling, but they also have limitations. These typically involve budgets, location availability and time. They also need to create a cohesive story that is entertaining. But that doesn’t mean that a pro-

duction needs to be accurate in every detail to properly tell its story.

This situation is not merely an example of reporters looking for something to write about (although that was clearly happening). It is also an example of how media illiterate most Americans are. Nearly all of us have TVs, computers and mobile devices to keep us connected and informed but that doesn’t mean we all understand what we are receiving and what it means. This has allowed all sorts of questionable individuals to have various levels of influence.

I often point to the film “Catch Me If You Can” as a good example. In the film, Leonardo DiCapri plays the protagonist as an only

child. But in real life, the young man he portrayed grew up with siblings. Obviously a creative decision was made to enhance the character’s feelings of isolation and the trauma of his parents’ divorce.

Remember: the words “based on” and “inspired” mean just what they say.

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They may be edited for publication.

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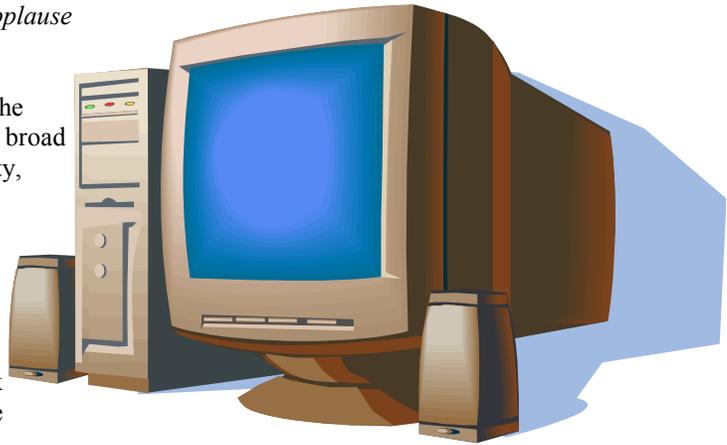
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