

pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

Wiz Khalifa Cited For Possession

Pittsburgh rap star Cameron Thomaz --- aka Wiz Khalifa --- has been cited for misdemeanor marijuana possession in Nashville while there for a concert.

The celebrity web site TMZ reported that police entered the rapper's room at a Holiday Inn on April 21 after another guest complained of marijuana smoke. Khalifa allegedly threw a joint out a window which was later recovered by officers. The newspaper

Tennessean claims that he and friend Lonnie Howard were sharing the joint when police arrived. At first, the two denied having any marijuana but eventually that they did as well as rolling paper.

He has been open about using marijuana in the past, even allowing himself to be taped. The video can be seen at <http://www.hiphopstan.com/wiz-khalifa-daytoday-smoking-marijuana/> His new CD is called "Rolling Papers". Khalifa was arrested in late 2010 after authorities found pot on his tour bus.

In early March he was among those attending the SmokeOut in San Bernadino, California. *Rolling Stone's* Steve Baltin calls the SmokeOut "part political rally, part concert" and is hip-hop group Cypress Hill's "pro-pot event, [where] those with a medical marijuana license can get a bracelet that gives them access to a tent where they can legally consume."

Khalifa and Howard are scheduled to appear at Davidson County Courthouse on May 14. Neither is expected to face any jail time.

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Needles Wins "Race"

On the May 30 broadcast of "RuPaul's Drag Race," Pittsburgh drag performer Aaron Coady was named "America's Next Drag Superstar".

"RuPaul's Drag Race" is a reality series where drag performers compete in a multi-week contest to win a title and \$100,000. It airs on **Viacom's** Logo cable channel. A few hours after the broadcast, Coady tweeted "this crown belongs to everyone who believe in me . . . we are all queens!! There's a new standard of beauty and talent!"

Coady performs drag as "Sharon Needles," a character he describes on his web site (www.sharonneedles.com) as "a

bad girl" and high school dropout who earned her diploma "on the street" and is now "a stupid genius" and "underground celebrity."

However, Sharon has also been the subject of some controversy, including a posting on Facebook in February that some have read as racist. She defended herself in an interview by insisting that her character uses shocking images and language as part of the act. Nevertheless, Sharon also has her defenders. On the web site TVovermind.com, columnist Mark O. Estes praised her "knack for the odd and unusual, as well as her charm and unabashed, yet positive, take on life itself".

[See related article on page 7
—Ed.]

Hedgpeth Leaves SAG-AFTRA

Kim Roberts Hedgpeth has decided to step down as the Co-National Director of the newly formed **Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television & Radio Artists** (SAG-AFTRA)



SAG-AFTRA has hundreds of members in the Pittsburgh area and maintains a full-time office downtown. It was formed earlier this year as two long-standing performer unions merged.

“It was with great pride and enormous satisfaction that I joined union members, colleagues and staff on March 30th to celebrate the overwhelming vote in favor of

the merger of AFTRA and SAG,” Hedgpeth said in a press release. “Having achieved this important goal, for which many of us worked tirelessly for so many years, now is the right moment to begin a new chapter in life. I am grateful for the love, respect and support of our staff and leadership team.” Her departure leaves David White as the sole executive director.

Some are reading this news as a sign that the SAG portion of the merged union will be dominate. In an April 16 article, the *Hollywood Reporter's* Jonathan Handel pointed out that “almost every top-level department is run by a former SAG staffer or by co-equal SAG and AFTRA veterans” Before the merger, White was

SAG’s executive director and Hedgpeth was AFTRA’s.

In other SAG-AFTRA news, the union has sent a special notice to members regarding work in music videos because there is no industry-wide standard or agreement from the music labels that these videos are covered work.

The union’s national board will consider a recommendation to implement a Do Not Work notice. If implemented, members will not be allowed to accept employment as performers in videos not produced under a SAG-AFTRA contract. Members with questions can call the Pittsburgh office at (412) 281-6767 or email the Randall Himes at the national office at randall.himes@sagaftra.org

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Bat Fever Rising

With production well under way in the area for “Out of the Furnace,” actor Christian Bale’s other Pittsburgh-made film (at least in part) is generating plenty of excitement. Even the **Pittsburgh Film Office** (PFO) has a clock ticking down on its home page at <http://www.pghfilm.org/> for “The Dark Knight Rising” hitting theaters.

Much of the attention is focused on co-star Anne Hathaway, who portrays Catwoman. She told the *New York Daily News* that she had to “physically transform” to fit into her tight-fitting costume. Photos of her have been hitting various web sites all through April. A fan has created a site just to showcase some of them at <http://annehathawaycatwoman-pics.blogspot.com/>

Most are praising the pics, or more specifically, how a buff Hathaway fills out the suit. But not everyone is favorably impressed. A blogger on the Huffington Post, Will Brooker, saying that the costume abandons “any pretence at realism and treat her as nothing but a stereotypical pin-up, another variant on Lara Croft.”

Meanwhile, the PFO still has contact information for “Furnace” crew positions at <http://www.pghfilm.org/hotline.jsp?pagelId=2161392240601287511676525>



Film Winner Announced Soon

Local filmmakers are waiting with baited breath as the **Steeltown Entertainment Project** prepares to announce this year’s winner of the Steeltown Film Factory contest.



The contest provides a local filmmaker the resources to turn his 13-page script into a short movie. Nearly 200 people submitted scripts. Participants have shared them publicly in two crowded events.

An impressive panel of professionals have been reviewing and judging each candidate’s work. These include screenwriter Peter Ackerman (“Ice Age”), local documentary filmmaker Tony Buba (“Struggles In Steel”), actor David Conrad (TV’s “The Ghost Whisperer”) and Faith Dickinson of **Women In Film & Media**.

The winner will be announced on May 12 at **Carnegie Mellon University**. For more information, visit www.steeltown.org

IATSE Makes Deal With Producers

A tentative deal has been reached between the **Alliance of Motion Picture & Television Producers** (AMPTP) and key locals of the **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees** (IATSE).

Formed in 1983, IATSE represents technicians, artisans and craftspeople in film, television and live theatre. The union has about 50,000 members nationally and several hundred in the Pittsburgh area.

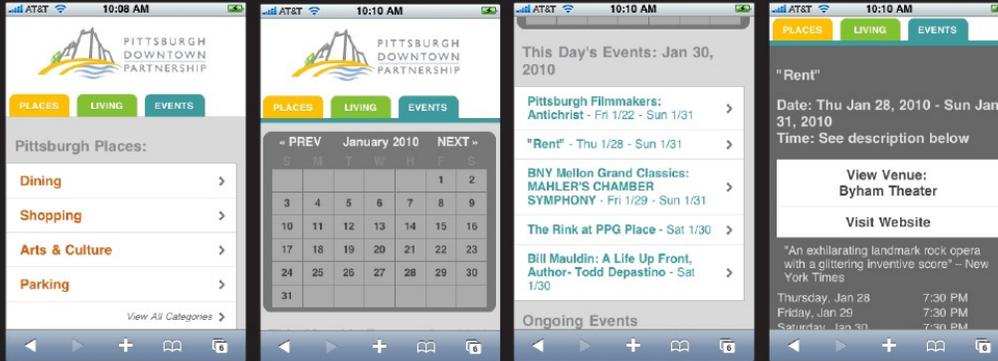
Failure to reach a deal could have impacted many Hollywood productions. The union’s president, Matthew Loeb, says that the agreement will resolve the anticipated funding shortfall in IATSE’s pension and health plans.

In a statement, AMPTP said “We understand how important health and pension benefits are to Hollywood crew members and their families and the risk posed by the projected shortfall in funding those benefits. We worked diligently with IATSE to resolve the funding crisis and keep these plans financially sound and a vital resource for participants.” In return, the union made concessions most notably expanding the 30-mile “studio zone” in Los Angeles.

The new three-year master contract will go in force on August 1 if it is ratified as expected.

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RAD Names Officers

The board of the **Allegheny County Regional Asset District** (RAD) has announced a new slate of officers --- and that a seat remains vacant.

RAD uses half of the 1% county sales tax to support civic, cultural and recreational activities. Revenue for the first quarter of the year totals \$22 million.

Daniel J. Griffin of **Oxford Development Company** has been named chairman and attorney Stanley J. Parker co-chairman with attorney Dusty Elias Kirk as secretary/treasurer.

In the meantime, the board is seeking nominations from organizations for an at-large member. Under state law, four members are appointed by the county's chief executive, two by Pittsburgh's mayor and one from a list of nominees from area groups. For more information, call (412) 227-1905. The deadline is May 4.

The Pittsburgh A&E Book

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Writers Grant Deadline

A posting on the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC) web site has announced the deadline for the Creative Capital Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grants Program.

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The grants range from \$3,000 to \$50,000 and goes to writers whose works address contemporary visual arts. The program was founded in recognition of both the financially precarious situation of arts writers and their indispensable contribution to a vital artistic culture.

More information is available at

<http://www.pittsburghartscouncil.org/press-room/in-the-news/26/1314>
the deadline is June 6, 2012.

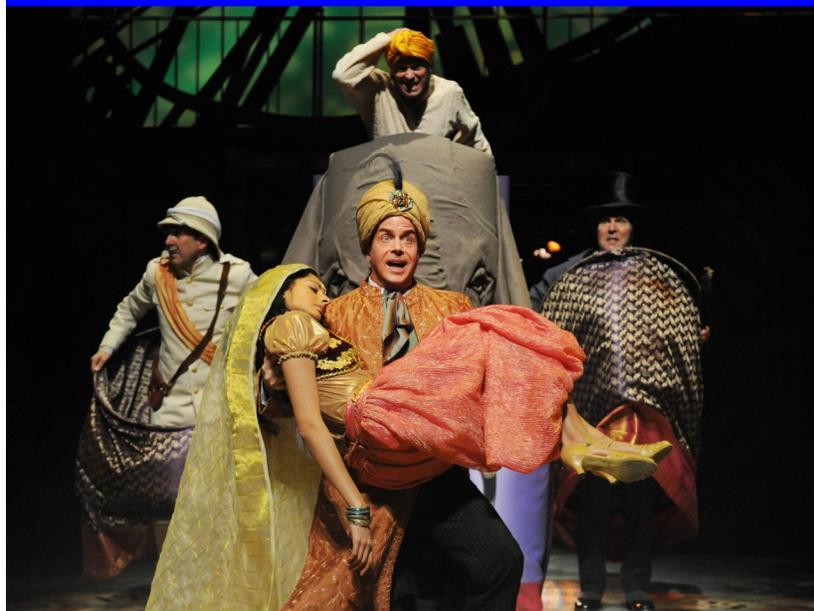
In other GPAC news, staff member and artist Christiane D has been named the organization's Arts Relations Coordinator, acting as a liaison with the arts community.

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Images

Photos Celebrating Pittsburgh's
Arts/Entertainment History & Community



Continuing through May 13 at the O'Reilly Theater is a fun and funny stage version of Jules Verne's classic fantasy novel Around the World in 80 Days. For more information, call (412) 316-8200.

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

- TUE 1** The folks of JFilm are at the **SouthSide Works** to screen the winners of their first annual short film competition.
- WED 2** The all-male a capella choir Straight No Chaser delivers some fancy curves at the **Benedum Center**.
- THU 3** The Suckers are at **Stage AE** with the signature indie rock featuring flourish of chamber pop.
- SAT 5** The Grammy Award winning quintet Mannhattans are at the **Kelly-Strayhorn** for a night of classic R&B.
- SAT 6** Stretch those muscles for this year's Pittsburgh Marathon.
- WED 9** Greek singer/songwriter Yanni serenades swooning fans at the **Benedum** with his new age tunes.
- WED 9** As always, George Clinton and his band deliver amazing funk and soul at **Stage AE**.
- FRI 11** This year's Silk Screen Asian Film Festival offers some of the best Asian movies around. Be sure to check out our special feature section.
- FRI 11** The Beach Boys are at the **Benedum** as part of their 50th anniversary tour spreading the gospel of sun, surf and summer loving.
- SUN 13** Two more classic groups — the Four Tops and the Temptations are also performing at the **Benedum**.
- TUE 15** The **Benedum** continues to be a happening place this May with the Blue Man Group mixing theater, music, art and face
- THU 17** Singer/songwriter Damien Juardo performs his melodic folk-pop at the **Andy Warhol Museum**.
- FRI 18** The First Voices program at the **August Wilson Center** showcases new works by African-American artist in various ventures.
- SUN 20** The Pittsburgh Jewish Music Festival is back and we have a special feature section with the entire schedule.
- SUN 20** The legendary Glen Campbell stops by the **Byham** as part of his farewell tour.
- TUE 22** The band Primus performs their irreverent, quirky rock music at **Stage AE**.
- THU 24** Noel Coward's witty play "Private Lives" opens at the **O'Reilly Theater** with its bright, funny tale of love, romance — and divorce.
- FRI 25** The terrific Ben Folds joins the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra at **Heinz Hall** for a night of eclectic music.
- THU 29** Gavin DeGraw is at **Stage AE** with his passionate and emotionally resonate pop-rock.
- FRI 30** The sizzling Red Hot Chili Peppers spice up the **Consol Energy Center** with their unique blend of funk, hip-hop and rock.

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National/World A&E News Round-Up

NEA To Reduce PBS Grants

On April 25, the **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA) announced that they will be awarding 928 grants totaling over \$77 million, but it's their grants to media that is getting the most attention: **Public Broadcasting Service** (PBS) programs will see their support reduced.

According to an article by the *New York Times*'s Elizabeth Jensen, some of PBS' most popular shows will get less money, including "Live From Lincoln Center" and "Great Performances".

In their announcement, the NEA explained that their grants reflect the growth of new media. Nevertheless, Jensen quotes PBS' Paula Kerger as calling the decision "disappointing" adding that "for us, this is a huge impact and we have to scramble and try and fill the gap."

Too Gay Or Not Gay Enough?

Has the country's gay culture gone mainstream? That's the issue since **Viacom's** Logo channel announced a new slate of programs earlier this year.

Launched in 2005, Logo is an advertiser-supported cable channel targeting the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. It is part of the company's MTV Networks division. In a press release dated February 21, 2012, the channel announced new programs such as "Eden's World" about a six-year-old beauty pageant contestant and a

trashy countdown show called "Scandalicious".

But since the announcement, people in and out of the LGBT community have been asking: is Logo no longer going to be gay? "The truth is, we're doing it to grow our gay base," Logo's Lisa Sherman told *Advertising Age's* Thomas Pardee. The model seems to be **NBC-Universal's** Bravo, which specializes in programming that appeal to both gay and straight audiences.

Logo has been struggling in the ratings since its debut. Currently it's most popular show is "RuPaul's Drag Race," which garnered 481,000 viewers for its season premier --- compared with the season premier of Bravo's "The Real Housewives of Atlanta" which had 3.9 million.

Nevertheless, Sherman says that the network won't abandon its base. "We do agree that we will be bringing in more gay viewers as well as their friends and allies, but we've always been about focusing on our core audience. We need to show them programming that speaks to their interests and sensibilities if we're going to stay relevant to them."

[See related article page 1—Ed.]

The Revolution Is Over

Talk about the soap fans' revenge: **Walt Disney Company's** ABC has canceled "The Revolution," one of the shows it canceled a long running serial for.

The web site Deadline announced on April 11 that the low-rated

lifestyle show will end in July and that the renewed soap "General Hospital" has been renewed. "The Revolution" will be temporarily replaced by a special hour of "Good Morning America" until Katie Couric's new talk show is ready in the fall.

Missing The Train?

A quandary facing is facing the residents of Santa Monica, CA, reports *TheArtNewspaper.com*.

The respected **Bergamot Station Arts Center** and its resident galleries are threatened by the city's plans to make way for an expansion of the region's light rail system. "We're being put out of business basically," Tom Patchett, the owner of **Track 16**, tells the online paper. "We're being kicked out because they need this property, but we're not being relocated within a similar community. If we go elsewhere, we can't do what we're doing now."

Santa Monica's plans for the station include a hotel and a new building for the **Santa Monica Museum of Art**. But what happens to the arts center tenants --- who face either the center's end or a hike in rent --- remains to be seen.

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Court Rules: Ads Okay On Public Broadcast Stations

In a 2-1 decision, a federal court in San Francisco has ruled that the long-standing prohibition of political ads on public broadcasting violates the First Amendment.

MediaPost's Wayne Friedman quotes Judge Carlos Brea saying that "public issue and political advertisements pose no threat of commercialization. By definition, such advertisements do not encourage viewers to buy commercial goods and services".

The ruling stemmed from a suit filed by the **Minority Television Project**, owners of public broad-

caster KMTP-TV, after being fined by the FCC for airing commercials. However, the idea that non-commercial TV and radio stations start airing actual commercial, political and non-political, disturbs some. One scholar told Reuters that, if the decision stands, it would "fundamentally change the character of public television and radio."

At press time, there was no indication that any of Pittsburgh's non-profit stations would take advantage of this change.

QED Gets Gleeful

Glee clubs from across the region are asked to help support **WQED Multimedia's** classical radio station.



During the first week in May, glee clubs and choirs will have their specially

recorded performances played on WQED-FM as part of a fundraising drive. Calling it "a very communal experience," CEO Debrah L. Ackin in a press release points out that the station's audience "loves classical music and they love the local arts and culture news and local performances that we tape and air."

Under the title "A Gleeful Week," listeners will enjoy hearing the harmonies of vocalists from Colfax Elementary School, Fox Chapel Area High School among many others including those from professional opera and choral companies. More information is available at <http://www.wqed.org/fm>

Hendricks Buys Store

Despite the huge decline in CD sales, local songwriter/musician Karl Hendricks has invested in a record store.

The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's Scott Mervis reports that Hendricks has purchased Paul's CDs and renamed in **Sound Cat Records**. The store began in the 1970s as Jim's Records and might have closed after owner Paul Olaszewski announced he was leaving the business.

For Hendricks, the purchase may have more to do with nostalgia than anything else. "My parents brought me the first time," he told Mervis. "And after that I started coming on the bus with my friends. That was about 1984."

The store officially opened under its new name April 6. More information can be found at <http://www.soundcatrecords.com/>

New Mystery Owner

One of the region's leading book stores --- and long a supporter of local authors --- has a new owner.

Laurie Stephens, with 35 years' experience, has purchased **Mystery Lovers Bookshop**. The store is an organizer for the annual Festival of Mystery. According to the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Alice Carter, owners Richard Goldman and Mary Alice Gorman spoke to 13 possible buyers before settling on Stephens.

"We needed to find a person who has the whole package" to continue running the store right, Gorman told Carter. Stephens was already planning to relocate to Pittsburgh when she learned of the store being up for sale. Her son-in-law is a musician with the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra**.

Goldman and Gorman are essentially retiring after 22 years running the store.

PGC Gets Presidential

Just before America selects its next chief executive, the **Pittsburgh Glass Center** (PGC) will unveil a new exhibit taking a unique look at America's leaders.



Starting August 3, PGC will display "American Idols," an installation of glass busts of all 43 U.S. presidents created by artist John Moran. According to a press release, "Moran constructs his strange busts and their quirky, somewhat childlike and absurd appearances by meshing sculpted glass heads with an array of other materials." His goal is to create "an arena that removes these people from the mythic stature of the

American president, into a tangible existence, his existence."

An example given is that of our sitting president, portraying Barack Obama as a hip-hop star, dressed in a hoody and t-shirt. (Abraham Lincoln, Mr. Obama's role model, is portrayed as a hipster).

The exhibit will remain on display until November 10 --- only four days after the next presidential

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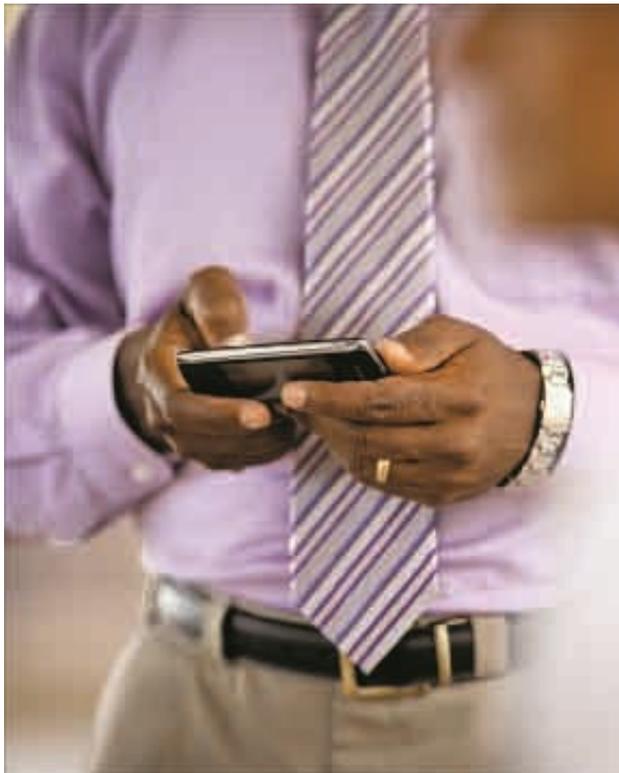
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Green CAPA

The roof of the Pittsburgh High School for the Creative & Performing Arts may be turned into a green oasis, reports Diana Nelson Jones of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

A \$10,000 grant has been provided by the **Western Pennsylvania Conservancy** (WPC) to see if the school, part of the **Pittsburgh Public Schools** (PPS) system, can structurally handle what will essentially be a garden with a small classroom. It is part of a larger program of the WPC and **Grable Foundation** to connect urban kids with natural environments.

The PPS' facilities division is reviewing the building and the designs created by **MTR Landscape Architects**.



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Pittsburgh Applause Editorial

No Ads On Public Broadcasting

By James A. Richards

Like so many people, I was very disturbed by a recent court ruling in California.

In April, a federal court in San Francisco ruled that advertising --- especially political advertising --- cannot be barred from public television and radio stations. It was the result of a filing by a non-profit broadcaster who had been fined by the Federal Communication Commission for selling ads. [See page 8]

This is a bad idea. The purpose of public broadcasting is to provide communities big and small around the country with entertainment and education that is not influenced by advertisers or political parties.

This is why (in my opinion), “The PBS News Hour” is the best newscast on television.

Granted some insist that organizations like National Public Radio have an “agenda” (not me) and others feel that in this age of multiple cable channels that public TV has no place anymore. (Note: CBS tried with a PBS-style channel called CBS Cable which flopped after a year; the A&E cable network also started out with PBS-style programming. Today it is most famous for reality shows like “Dog the Bounty Hunter”).

A few supporters of public broadcasting may also point out that stations may have no other choice but to accept ads to stay alive. I disagree. Selling commercial time

defeats the very purpose of *public* and I am sure that other ways can be found to keep these stations functioning as valuable assets.

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

They may be edited for publication.

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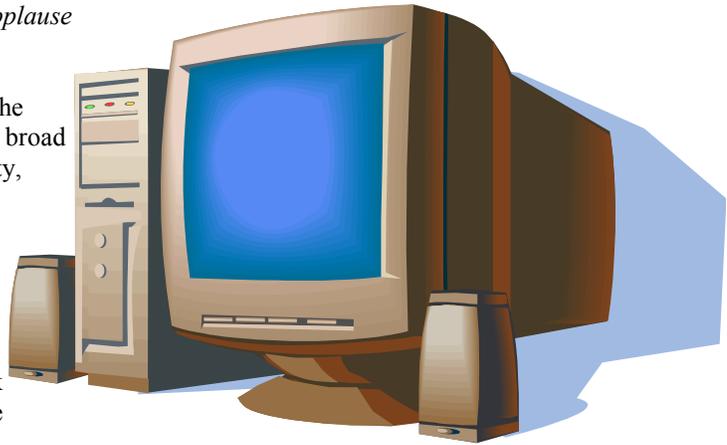
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Jim hopes to eventually bring *Pittsburgh Applause* back to the real world!

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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