

pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

Local Filmmaker Amy Lamb Dies

Local filmmaker Amy Lamb has lost her battle with cancer, passing away on October 26 at the age of 56.

“Amy was an integral part of the film scene in Pittsburgh,” Dawn Keezer, director of **Pittsburgh Film Office** told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*'s John Allison. Amy served on the PFO board. “Her loss is going to be felt. She was like a fairy godmother, adopting

people and giving them a start --- people who have moved on to prominent positions. We lost a really great person, and the entire film industry owes her a huge debt of gratitude.”

She was also a noted photographer, having her images displayed at the **Silver Eye Center for Photography**.

In 1994, she co-founded Lumiere Films (www.lumierefilms.net) with John Rice. The company produces commercials, short films, industrial videos and related projects. Lamb won various awards during her 23-year career, including a Clio and an Emmy (according to her LinkedIn profile).

Lamb worked in various positions, including as a location coordinator for visiting productions such as “The Next Three Days” in 2009. “New York looks like New York and Los Angeles looks like Los Angeles,” she explained to the *Valley Herald* in an article the suburban paper published that year. “But Pittsburgh has so many looks. There's old, there's new. Each neighborhood has its own character.”

Amy is survived by her life partner, Ana Kelly, and five siblings. The local chapter of **Women In Film & Media** (WIFM) has announced that a memorial service is being planned for November 19

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Pittsburgh A&E Group

643 Liberty Avenue Suite 401
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Ph (412) 325-7070
Fx (412) 325-7069

Clear Channel Cans DJs

In a story published on October 27, MediaPost.com's Erik Sass reported that **Clear Channel** “has dismissed a large (but undisclosed) number of DJs from radio stations . . . across the country.”



Clear Channel owns the nation's largest broadcast radio group. The company has six radio stations in the Pittsburgh market. It was unknown at press time if any of them have been affected. “The move is widely seen as a prelude

to implementing more automated or national syndicated programming,” writes Sass.

Among those let go is Jim Reith, the long-time talk show host at WSyr-AM in Syracuse. He had been with the station for nearly three decades. His show has been replaced with conservative commentator Sean Hannity's syndicated program.

The company has insisted that layoffs are not cost-cutting measures --- even though Clear Channel has about \$18 billion in debt.

Alloy, Kelly Merger Finalized

On October 19, the boards of the **Kelly-Strayhorn Theater** and **Dance Alloy Theater** formally announced that they have merged their organizations.

**DANCE ALLOY
THEATER**

Kelly Strayhorn
THEATER

Formed in 1976, the Dance Alloy is a theater company and school specializing in modern dance. Their facility is one of the largest and best equipped dance centers in the state. The Kelly-Strayhorn is a multi-purpose performance space originally built in 1919 as a silent movie theater and renovated in the 1990s. It is named in honor

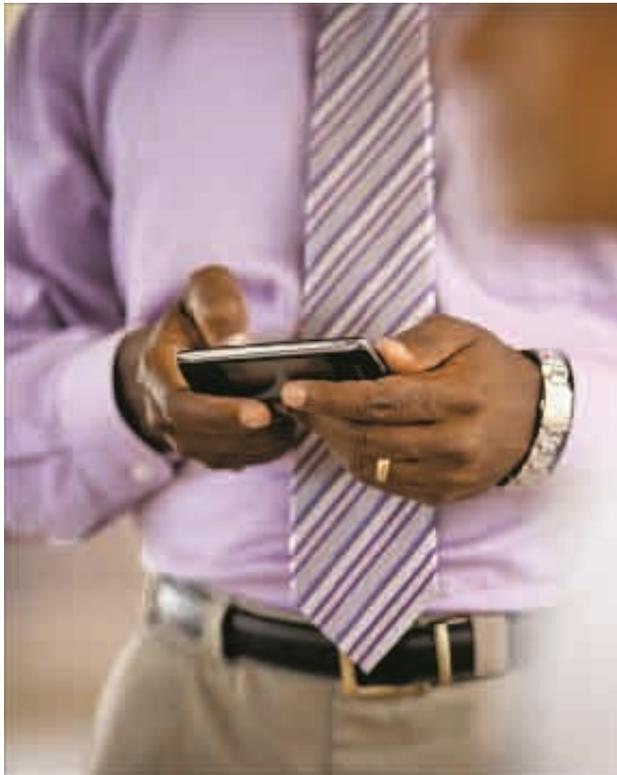
of two legendary Pittsburghers: actor/choreographer Gene Kelly (1912-1996) and composer Billy Strayhorn (1915-1967). *Pittsburgh Applause* reported earlier this year that a merger was being negotiated. [See <http://www.james-richards.com/PittsburghApplauseJune2011.pdf> page 3 - Ed.]

The merger will especially benefit the Dance Alloy, which has no endowment. "We have been re-considering our strategic plan over the past few years as we coped with the effects of the recession," Cabot Earle, the Alloy's former vice president, told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Mark Kanny. The merger seemed to be the best way to secure the Alloy's future.

The Kelly-Strayhorn will now manage the Dance Alloy's daily operations including the school. The dance company remains on hiatus but eventually it will use the Kelly-Strayhorn stage for performances.

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Benedum To Refurbish Seating

This January, the largest theater in the Pittsburgh Cultural District will go dark as part of an important project: fixing its nearly 2,900 seats.



The Benedum Center, operated

by the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust** (PCT), will undergo a three-week, \$450,000 effort to remove, disassemble and refurbish each and every seat. "We'll go row by row," PCT's Jacob Bacharach told Marylynne Pitz of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Some seats will be replaced and as will some center stanchions and brackets.

In other news, ParkPGH, Pittsburgh's first comprehensive smart

parking system --- a project of the PCT --- has won an award and is being expanded.

Introduced in December 2010, ParkPGH provides real-time information via the internet and portable devices on the nine garages located inside the Pittsburgh Cultural District. It is updated every minute.

The program has won the Smart Solutions Spotlight Award by the **Intelligent Transportation Society of America** (ITS), the nation's largest association focused on encouraging transportation innovation. The Trust is expanding it to predict the availability of parking at each garage throughout the day. This enhancement was made possible by a professor at **Carnegie Mellon University**.

ITS' Scott Belcher is quoted by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Joe Smydo: "Think of the fuel savings. Think of the emissions savings. Think of the improved quality of life." The garages in the district account for about a quarter of all downtown parking spaces. To learn more about ParkPGH, visit www.parkpgh.org

Pledge Drive Goes Well

Despite the feelings of the region's jazz fans, **Essential Public Media** (EPM), the new owners of WDUQ-FM (now WESA-FM) have had a successful first pledge drive.



According to an article by Adrian McCoy of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the effort raised some \$243,800 in pledges from nearly 2300 members. This brought EPM just short of its \$250,000 goal.

The drive had a slow start, reports the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Jason Cato, and had raised only about \$100,000 by October 19. Lee Ferraro, general manager of **WYEP-FM** and co-owner of EPM explained to Cato that "membership campaigns end strong. They don't always start strong." That proved to be true, when the campaign concluded a week later.

CBS Grows Local News

In a move that will likely expand to the company's other stations, **CBS Corporation's** WCBS-TV is launching a 24-hour digital news channel in New York City.



CBS Corporation owns two television and four radio stations in Pittsburgh. WCBS' new channel will compete directly with rival WNBC's Nonstop channel. WNBC is part of **NBC-Universal**, which is primarily owned by **Comcast**. Comcast operates Pittsburgh's cable television franchise. CBS' Peter Dunn told the *New York Daily News* that the channel will be programmed with a "wheel" format with hourly updates.

Eventually all CBS stations, including KDKA-TV, will have such a local subchannel. This would put KDKA in competition with **Cox Communications'** WPXI-TV, which operates the Pittsburgh Cable News Channel.

In other news, KDKA-TV has announced the traffic reporter Jim Lokay is leaving to take a job with an ABC affiliate in Boston. His last airdate was October 14.



Unions: Talks Breakdown With Labels

In early October, negotiations broke down between the **American Federation of Television & Radio Artists** (AFTRA) and the major record labels over a new recording contract.

AFTRA has several hundred members in the Pittsburgh area and maintains a



full-time office in downtown Pittsburgh. Nationally, the union represented over 70,000 artists, broadcasters and actors. The national board voted unanimously on October 1 to give the negotiating committee power "to take all actions necessary, up to and including proceeding to a strike authorization vote . . . to secure an

agreement with the major record labels."

The core issues are health care, pensions and the transparency of accounting. The current deal expires December 31. No new meetings have been scheduled.

Meanwhile, AFTRA has joined the **American Federation of Musicians** (AFM) --- which also has a chapter in Pittsburgh --- to condemn **Sirius Radio XM Inc.** for proposing a "blatantly anti-artist and anti-union" deal.

Begun in 1990, Sirius XM operates a network of satellite radio stations. According to The-Wrap.com, Sirius XM wants a "direct license" deal to direct 100% of royalties to the major

record labels, forcing artists to file a claim with the labels to get paid. Currently, Sirius XM pays 50% to the labels, 45% to the organization **SoundExchange** (which then distributes to artists) and 5% to the unions' joint intellectual property fund. AFM president Ray Hair claims that Sirius XM's proposal will make it harder for artists to "earn a fair living creating and investing in the music everyone wants to hear."

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Music Seminar Being Held

An array of music and media professionals are gathering at **Carnegie-Mellon University** on November 19 to discuss issues facing the local music community.

Called Each One Teach One, the program is being presented by local broadcaster and artist Kevin Amos. It will cover topics to help aspiring and current professionals in how to make a living from their creativity. These include digital music services and legal issues.

For more information, call Kevin Amos at (412) 506-0206.

Images

Photos Celebrating Pittsburgh's Arts/Entertainment History & Community



Jim Richards, the publisher of Pittsburgh Applause, is once again staging his exhibit of rare photos depicting downtown Pittsburgh during the winter holidays in a space at One Oxford Centre starting on Light-Up Night, November 18. This image, from the Carnegie Library, is a 1913 photo of what is believed to be the city's first municipal Christmas Tree.

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

- TUE 1** The musical “Million Dollar Quartet” bows at the **Benedum Center** with its retelling of an important moment in music history.
- WED 2** The Yonder Mountain Band uses traditional instruments to perform a cool blend of bluegrass and rock at **Stage AE**.
- FRI 4** The Three Rivers Film Festival celebrates 30 remarkable years bringing Pittsburgh the best in world cinema.
- FRI 4** Meanwhile, over at the **August Wilson Center** the Black Dance Festival showcases the best in African-American choreographers.
- SAT 5** Kids can learn “How People Make Things” with a fun new exhibit at the **Children’s Museum**.
- SAT 5** Folk legend Arlo Guthrie shines at the **Byham Theater**.
- SUN 6** Swedish filmmaker Mattais Klum shares stories and footage of his adventures at the **Byham Theater**.
- MON 7** A local actor appears at the **New Hazlett** to read selections from Randy Pausch’s best-selling book *The Last Lecture*.
- TUE 8** Starting tonight at the **Kelly-Strayhorn** is the My People Film Series, showing documentaries of African-American gay, lesbian and bisexual people.
- WED 9** Get a preview of Irish artist’s Jeanette Doyle exhibit at the **Andy Warhol Museum** with a special installation.
- THU 10** The play “Red” opens at the **O’Reilly Theater** telling the life and work of artist Mark Rothko.
- THU 10** Patti LuPone joins the Pittsburgh Symphony at **Heinz Hall** for a night of show tunes.
- THU 12** The **Carnegie Museum of Art** presents the first American solo exhibit of Irish artist Cathy Wilkes.
- THU 12** TV star Luke Macfarlane headlines a local production of the play “Sam Bendrix At The Bon Soir” at **City Theatre**.
- THU 12** Tommy Davidson leads some funny guys at the **Byham Theater**.
- WED 16** Aaron “AWOLNATION” Bruno mixes rock, soul and hip-hop music at **Stage AE**.
- FRI 18** It’s Light-Up Night — that quintessential Pittsburgh way of welcoming the holiday season.
- SAT 19** Speaking of the holidays, the **Jimmy Stewart Museum** begins their annual weekly screenings of the film “It’s A Wonderful Life”.
- TUE 22** The family musical “How The Grinch Stole Christmas” delights at the **Benedum Center**.
- THU 24** Make the most of your Thanksgiving by visiting **PNC Park** for the annual Turkey Trot.
- FRI 25** The band Five Fingers Death Punch lights up **Stage AE** with their old school heavy metal.
- WED 30** A trio of Catholic priests from Northern Ireland are at the **Byham Theater** to perform uplifting holiday tunes under the very original name The Priests.



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National/World A&E News Round-Up

Glorious Bolshoi Theater Reopens

Guests to the October 28 grand re-opening of the newly re-stored Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow had nothing but praise for the glittering revival --- which included gold leaf, damask, sable and a harkening back to the glory days of Imperial Russia.

Completed in 1825, the Bolshoi Theatre hosts classical performances and is home to the world famous **Bolshoi Ballet**. After the Russian revolution, the new Soviet regime used the theatre for political gatherings as well as performances. They had removed all czarist-related images on the walls and in the fabrics that many considered mutilation. The restoration returns all of the classical elements, strengthens the foundation (which was of wood) and introduces improved systems.

There were a number of serious delays and cost over-runs. These were due in part to neglect and cheap renovations of the campus during the Soviet era, its age and what Russia's culture minister told Tom Parfitt of *The Guardian* were mistakes in the current effort: contractors were chosen "because they were inexpensive rather than high quality."

While VIPs were inside the Bolshoi, thousands of people could watch the proceeding on large video screens outside the theater. Video reports on opening night can be seen at <http://rt.com/news/theater-bolshoi-reopening-955/>

The News At News

At a contentious meeting on October 21, Rupert Murdoch and his two sons James and Lachlan were re-elected to the **News Corporation** board of directors.

News Corporation's properties include 20th Century Fox, the *Wall Street Journal* and the Fox Television Network. But they also own tabloids in London, most notably the recently shuttered *News of the World*, which closed amid a scandal involving illegal phone tapping.

The results were a foregone conclusion since the Murdoch family and their closest allies own a majority of the stock. But there was a strong protest vote: more than a third of shares were against the two sons. Moreover, protesters appeared outside the Fox lot in Los Angeles where the meeting was being held. Outsiders are now speculating that it is no longer a certainty that James or Lachlan will eventually succeed their father.

Adding to the Murdochs' headaches is a call by one of the company's largest shareholders for News --- Kevin Holt of the investment management company **Invesco** --- to divest itself of all its newspapers around the globe. "It's a digital world now," he told the London *Telegraph*. He denies that the phone hacking scandal is a major reason for his going public with this opinion. "We [Invesco] don't own [News] stock because of the UK newspaper print business. We own it despite the UK newspapers."

Rupert Murdoch, the son of a newspaper man, built his empire on newspapers and is said to have

a personal, almost romantic connection to them. It is unlikely that News will divest them --- at least during his lifetime.

Meanwhile, after a difficult negotiation, Fox has struck a new deal with the principal voice actors of "The Simpsons" to take the series into a 25th --- and probably final --- season.

In The Money

Despite a struggling economy, the **Metropolitan Opera** has raised an astonishing \$182 million in donations. That is 50% more than the previous year and the Met has balanced its budget (thanks mostly to its HD movie theater transmissions).

"I believe it is an endorsement in general of the artistic result that we are achieving here," general manager Peter Gelb is quoted by the *New York Times*. "We are certainly receiving larger gifts in greater quantities than ever before in the history of the Met."

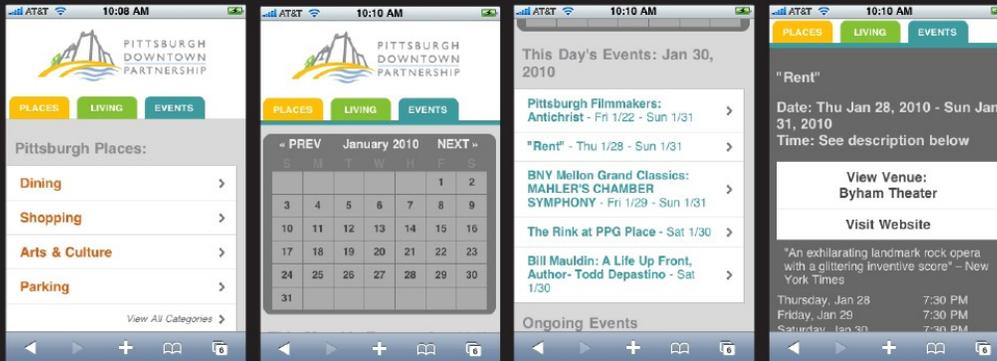
Trying To Undo The Damage

After a very public and costly drubbing by its members and the media, **Netflix** has decided not to spin-off its DVD-by-mail business and keep everything under one roof.

The original plan was to break into two services, Netflix for online streaming and Qwikster for DVDs. "We underestimated the appeal of the single web site and single service," a spokesman is quoted by the *New York Times*.

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Industrialist Gives Big

Few people outside the steel industry knew who Bill Dietrich was. But since his death on October 6, he has become very popular in the nonprofit world.

A Pittsburgh native and **University of Pittsburgh** graduate, William S. Dietrich II (1938-2011) was a successful industrialist who built his company into becoming the largest manufacturer of steel framing materials in America before selling it to the conglomerate **Worthington Industries**. He became a philanthropist, even making sizable donations to Pitt and **Carnegie Mellon University** just weeks before he died.

His estate is donating \$18 million to the **Pittsburgh Foundation**, and \$5 million each to the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**, the **Laurel Highlands Council of the Boys Scouts of America**, the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust**, the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** and **Chatham University**.

The Cultural Trust's Kevin McMahon is quoted in a *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article written by Eleanor Chute and Taryn Luna as saying that the donation "is going to be an enormous boost to our ability to continue to provide the highest quality programming to our region."

Tom Cruise Talks Movies, Pittsburgh

In an interview with *Empire*, actor Tom Cruise talks about playing the lead role in "One Shot," a film version of Lee Child's bestselling novel being made in Pittsburgh.

Begun in 1989, *Empire* is a British film magazine published monthly by **Bauer Consumer Media**.

One Shot is part of a series of novels centered on former Marine Jack Reacher, who has become a drifter traveling the United States and often investigates mysteries and crimes. "Reacher is such a great character," Cruise told *Empire's* Phil de Semlyen. "He doesn't have a cell phone, he doesn't have email. He's off the grid. He pays for things in cash. People look at things through the prism of the colors of their life, but Jack Reacher does things the way we want to sometimes. In that sense he's sort of a Dirty Harry, a James Bond, a Josey Wales." Read the full article at <http://www.empireonline.com/news/story.asp?NID=32309>

Cox Communications' WPXI-TV has posted videos about Cruise's visit to the station: <http://www.wpxi.com/video/29604491/index.html> and at <http://www.wpxi.com/video/29604491/index.html>

ToonSeum Names New Gallery

Pittsburgh's museum of comic and cartoon art, **The ToonSeum**, has announced that its newly expanded gallery is being named in honor of Pittsburgh native Lou Scheimer.



Born in 1928, Lou Scheimer is one of the founders of Filmation, a pioneer in television animation. He was won both an Emmy Award and a Grammy Award. He retired in 1994.

Now owned by **Classic Media**, Filmation began in 1962 and produced such iconic cartoon series such as "Fat Albert & The Cosby Kids", "Superfriends" and the animated version of "Star Trek."

The company was known in the industry for its use of "limited animation," a process that does not redraw entire frames but variably reuses common parts between frames. It also uses fewer frames per second than traditional cartoons. This process saves time and money, but critics feel that it lowers the quality of the production.

Lou and his family are expected to appear at the official christening on Saturday, November 12 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.toonseum.com



Trombino Closing

In a press release posted on their web site, **Trombino Music Centers** has announced the closing of its flagship Trombino Piano Galerie in the Pittsburgh Cultural District.

The press release (which can be read at www.trombino.com) quotes co-owners Robert and Norma Jean Trombino: "It is with heavy hearts that we are turning the page on one of the most exquisite chapters of our lives." The store has been downtown since 1984. The couple describes the decision as part of their "semi-retirement" that will not affect the company's suburban locations.

Trombino's downtown center is best known as a local retailer of **Steinway & Sons**, which has been producing hand-made pianos since 1853 and for hosting dozens of piano recitals year round. The Steinway dealership will be assumed by another retailer.

"It's time to ease up a little," the 85-year-old Robert Trombino told Bob Karlovits of the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. "I've been working since I was 13 and we'd like to get to our house in Florida a little more."

The store is expected to close in December.

Donna Awards

The winners of this year's Donna Awards have been announced by the Pittsburgh New Works Festival.



Established in 1990, the Pittsburgh New Works Festival pro-

duces original one-act plays utilizing the resources of Pittsburgh-area theatre companies. The award is named in honor of founder Donna Rae.

The full list is available at <http://www.pittsburghnewworks.org/2011-donna-award-winners/>

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Garden Theater Seeks Historic Status

The entities behind the Garden Theater Block development are applying to have it incorporated into the Mexican War Streets Historical District.

Built in 1915, the Garden Theater is an art deco movie theater that was built to screen silent movies. It later converted to screening talkies but a period of sad decline began in the 1970s when the Gar-

den became known for porn movies. It closed in 2007.

Expanding the district would result in valuable tax credits for the developers, reports Kelsey Shea of the *Northside Chronicle*. It and the surrounding buildings are being converted by the Urban Redevelopment Authority and **Zukin Realy** into a multiuse facility.

People News In Brief

Christopher Hahn has signed a new contract as general manager of the **Pittsburgh Opera**. Han joined the company in 2000 and the agreement extends his period through 2016. He told the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review's* Mark Kanny that he is especially looking forward to "celebrating the company's 75th anniversary season in two years. We have some exciting things planned."

The Pittsburgh chapter of **Women in Film & Media** has announced their new board of directors. The ten-member board is led by chair Jodi Klebick and vice chair Lesley Gannon. More information is available at www.wifmpit.com

Martin G. McGuinn, the retired CEO of **Mellon financial Corporation**, has been named chairman of the Carnegie Museum of Art, part of the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**. In a press release, outgoing chairman William E. Hunt calls McGuinn "a seasoned and tireless leader" who will be "a great asset to the board."

Comcast, which operates Pittsburgh cable television franchise and holds a controlling interest in **NBC-Universal** (NBCU), has announced that Dave Cassaro is no longer president of cable advertising for NBCU. MediaPost.com has speculated that Linda Yaccarino --- who recently left **Time-Warner's** Turner Entertainment Networks --- may be taking over the position.

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Pittsburgh Applause Editorial

A Few Thoughts On Amy Lamb

By James A. Richards

Local filmmaker Amy Lamb never directed a Hollywood blockbuster. She never became a nationally known TV star. She will never have a star on the fabled Hollywood Walk of Fame. But in her own way, this lady was very important.

Amy died on October 26, another victim of cancer.

I only met her once, very briefly, many years ago. But the people who knew her well often speak of her talent, her energy and her support for novices. They also speak of her professionalism.

Too many people see the glamorous side of arts/entertainment.

They think there is nothing to it, that it is all about connections and creativity. Few see the grunt work involved or realize that actual, professional skills are required.

I encounter this problem every day. (Currently with a north side bar whose owner hasn't accepted the reality that the moment he began hosting performances is the moment he entered show business).

But Amy understood. She developed the skills and encouraged others to do the same. These skills allowed her to found her own company and win awards and reached the stage where she could give valuable, even sage, advice.

A memorial service is being planned for November 19. That,

by coincidence, is also Light-Up Weekend in Pittsburgh, the official start of the holiday season. That sounds right to me. For many people, Amy brightened their lives and their careers. Maybe she will never have a star embedded in cement, but she will be a star those she inspired and empowered.

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

They may be edited for publication.

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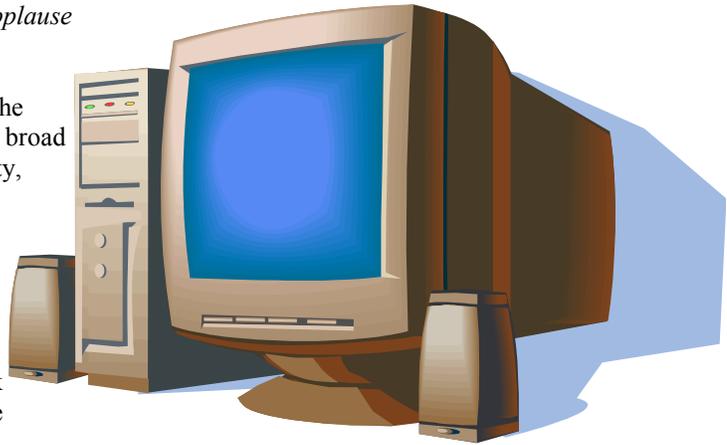
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But Jim needs a collection of advertisers willing and able to commit to at least six months of advertising. For more information, contact him at jim@james-richards.com

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