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Digital 52

pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

State Impasse Costs Pittsburgh A Production

Pittsburgh has lost the opportunity to be the production home for the upcoming cable TV series "American Gods," reports Rob Owen of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

FREMANTLEMEDIA



The series will be an adaptation of the award winning 2001 science fiction novel *American Gods* written by Neil Gaiman. The story centers on a mysterious ex-convict known only as "Shadow" who is pulled into the middle of

the war between Good and Evil. "American Gods" will be co-produced by British firm **Fremantle Media** and air on **Starz Inc.**'s flagship network.

Owen's article says that the recent state budget impasse made it impossible for the producers to get the show's tax credit approved. "The [Pennsylvania] Department of Community and Economic

Development can't legally commit the state to anything because there is no budget," He quotes Dawn Keezer of the **Pittsburgh Film Office**.

At press time, the state still had no budget for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

QED Series Gets National Distribution

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The locally produced television series, "Portrayal & Perception" has been picked up by American Public Television for national distribution.



"Portrayal & Perception" is a production of **WQED Multi-media**, the nonprofit parent organization to Pittsburgh public TV station WQED. The nonprofit **American Public Television** (APT) is the largest syndicator of public television programming in the United States.

to those typically found in commercial media.

"Portrayal & Perception" is WQED's second series to be accepted for national distribution," said WQED's Darryl Ford Williams in a press release. "In 2014, WQED's 'iQ: smartparent' series went national and we are now in production for season four. Both series are in demand because there is nothing else like them available anywhere else."

The series has recently been honored with two Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards.

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The six-episodes offer alternative portrayals of African-American men and boys that are in contrast

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EDMC Settles; Students To Receive Millions

As part of a settlement with various states attorneys general, the Pittsburgh-based **Education Management Corporation** (EDMC) will forgive the loans of thousands of former students, reports the *New York Times'* Stephanie Saul.

EDMC
Education Management Corporation

EDMC is best known for its chain of art schools anchored by the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. The company has been embroiled in complicated legal actions over the past several years stemming from their student recruitment and retention efforts. A formal investigation

began in 2007 which revealed that company recruiters received substantial bonuses for the students they enroll regardless of that student's financial or other abilities.

"EDMC wasn't interested in playing by the rules," Saul quotes Education Secretary Arne Duncan. "The company seemed to care only about revenue at significant cost to students and taxpay- ers."

Roughly 80,000 former students will have their loans forgiven. The cost of this for EDMC will be well over \$100 million. This is in addition to a separate settlement with the federal government for \$95.5 million. From now on,

EDMC is required to be more transparent with students regarding their financial obligations and risks.

The settlement allows EDMC to avoid admitting guilt or facing a trial that would have likely resulted in damages in the billions. An important reason for the settlement, writes Saul, is the company's delicate financial situation: EDMC stock plummeted to around 9¢ a share before being pulled from the market in 2011. The government felt that the company would not be able to pay anything if it lost at trial.

Stations Merge Boards

A complete board of directors for the revived **August Wilson Center for African American Culture** has been selected, reports Michael B. Rose in *The New Pittsburgh Courier*.



Opened in 2009, the gallery, performance and education center struggled financially until a coalition of foundations stepped in last year. The center is named in honor of Pittsburgh native and Pulitzer Prize winning playwright August Wilson (1945-2005).

The new board is an eclectic mix that ranges from businessman James E. Abraham to rapper Jasiri

Oronde Smith (aka Jasiri X). It will succeed the AWC Recovery Committee which has been overseeing the center's revival.

However, the new board and any staff that is hired will need to work closely with the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. Joseph K. Williams, a county judge at recovery committee chairman explained the circumstances to Rose: "The sad part is that we don't own [the facility] anymore, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust in large part is responsible for events and the movement and the facility."

On November 16, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported that the governing boards of public radio stations WYEP and WESA will be merged. The effect will be creating a single non-profit organization.

The article quotes WYEP board president Greg Joseph as explaining that this was the plan ever since **Duquesne University** decided to divorce itself from WDUQ (which became WESA).

Each station will retain its own staffs and programming as well as separate listener memberships.

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“Outsiders” Gets Debut Date

The Pittsburgh-made cable television series “Outsiders” has been given a premiere date: Tuesday, January 26 on **Tribune Media’s** WGN America.

“Outsiders” is the story of a Kentucky family living “off the grid” who will do whatever it takes to defend their way of life.

The series is a joint production of three companies: **Fedora Entertainment** (best known for “The Jim Gaffigan Show”), **Touchy**

Feely Films (co-founded by actor Paul Giamatti) and **Woodridge Productions** (“The Greg Behrendt Show.”) Most of the thirteen episodes’ interiors were shot at **31st Street Studios** with exteriors filmed at various regional locations.

A preview is available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7K0ecPen2c&feature=player_embedded

Silver Eye Announces Competition Winners

The winners of Silver Eye’s 16th annual photography competition have been announced.

Founded in 1979, the **Silver Eye Center for Photography** is the region’s only institution dedicated solely to the understanding, appreciation, education and promotion of photography as an art form.

Brooklyn-based artist Ka-Man Tse uses her photos to draw connection between the Asian Pacific Islander community and LGBT culture. She uses these images to

explore issues of home, identity and isolation as someone who was born in Hong Kong and raised in the United States.

Western Pennsylvania native Aaron Blum explores the mysteries of Appalachia through a series of images that are haunting yet beautiful.

Their works go in display at Silver Eye on January 29. Details are available at <http://silvereye.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/PR-Announcement.pdf>

Rapper Jasiri X Gets USA Fellowship

Pittsburgh rapper, community activist and web media personality Jasiri X has been named a United States Artists Fellow, reports Robin Scher on Art-News.com.

Jasiri Oronde Smith --- better known as Jasiri X --- has won multiple Pittsburgh Hip Hop Association Awards for his songs that often have a challenging political point of view, such as his controversial song/video “What if the Tea Party was Black?” Many of these videos are available online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/jasirix>

Founded in 2005, **United States Artists** (USA) is a nonprofit philanthropic organization that supports living American artistes by award grants known as USA Fellowships. A collection of foundations, corporations and individuals provide its funding. The organization has no connection to the United States government.

Jasiri X will receive \$50,000 from USA which encourages all recipients to “use the money to further their practice and pursue unrealized opportunities.”

To see the full list, visit <http://www.artnews.com/2015/11/10/united-states-artists-name-2015-fellows-including-paul-pfeiffer-mickalene-thomas-dawoud-bey/>



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Layoffs, Changes At Trib Media

Erik Sass reports on Mediapost.com that the *Pittsburgh Tribune Review* is undergoing major changes that include a merger and massive layoffs.

The *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* began in 1811 as the *Greensburg Gazette* serving the rural communities in Westmoreland, Indiana and Fayette counties. After a strike in 1992 resulting in the merging of the *Pittsburgh Press* and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, owner Richard Mellon Scaife (1932-2014) of the Mellon banking dynasty expanded it into Allegheny County under its current name. Scaife and the paper became known nationwide in the 1990s for its controversial articles about President Bill Clinton that many consider dubious. Eventually **Trib Total Media** owned

seven dailies and two dozen weeklies, among other assets.

Sass reports that Trib Total Media is cutting its workforce by 14%, some through buy-outs. The company will also be folding two of its smaller dailies into the *Tribune -Review* and is selling two other local newspapers. Trib Total Media had already sold eight other small papers.

“The digital landscape has dramatically altered how consumers get their news,” Trib Media CEO Jennifer Bertetto told Sass. “It is critical that we evolve as a company to deliver the news where, when, and how our readers would like to receive it.” The most important example of this strategy is the firm’s recent investment in **Newsmax Media**. Founded in

1998, Newsmax is a conservative media firm whose outlets include its controversial namesake magazine.

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Upcoming Network Events

A pair of local A&E organizations have announced separate networking events coming up in December.

The **Steeltown Entertainment Project** is holding one on Sunday, December 6 at Marty's Market in the city's Strip District. Founded in 2003, the Steeltown Entertainment Project is a nonprofit organization that seeks to strengthen the region's film and television industry.



The event at Marty's Market is described as "a great networking opportunity for people who are looking to get experience on set as well as for independent filmmakers who want to find crew members." Marty's Market is located at 2301 Smallman Street. Interested people can register by clicking <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07ebpjh37s88716b89&osEq=&c=&ch=>

A few days later, on Wednesday December 9 at 6:00 p.m., the local branch of **Women in Film & Media** (WIFM) will be holding their holiday mixer at Fredo's in the suburb of Dormont.



Also known as Women in Film & Television, WIFM strives to advance the careers of women in visual media. Men are welcome as members, too. There will be drinks, snacks and raffles with various prizes. WIFM members may attend for free and guests for a nominal \$5 charge. To register, visit <https://s01.123signup.com/servlet/SignUp?P=15333901911429089900&PG=1533390182300>

Slim TV

Local musician and singer Slim Forsythe has announced that his web series "Live from Nied's Hotel" will have an episode air twice this month on WQED-TV.

Slim Forsythe has become a regional icon performing country music in the style of legendary singer/songwriter Hank Williams (1923-1953). He tapes performances at **Nied's Hotel** on Butler Street in Lawrenceville and uploads them to YouTube.

The special will air Thursday, December 10 at 8:00 p.m. and again on Monday, December 14 at 7:30 p.m. There will be a screening party at Nied's Hotel for the December 10 broadcast. To learn more about Slim's online videos click <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjJGcYGSf9boRK6T2vFV58A>

Images

Celebrate Pittsburgh's arts & entertainment history and community.



The Pittsburgh Ballet's annual production of "The Nutcracker" returns .

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

ShowClix Names New COO

Brian Arnone has been named the new chief operating officer for **ShowClix**, the Pittsburgh-based ticketing firm.



Arnone was recently a vice president at **Ticketfly**, which has recently announced its acquisition by music streaming service **Pandora Internet Radio**. "I couldn't be more excited to be joining this

team," he commented in a press release. "We have the product and the people to help event organizers grow their businesses. Selling tickets is only the tip of the iceberg, and ShowClix gets that. The industry is going to be excited about the features and services we'll be announcing."

ShowClix has also announced the appointment of Greg Topalian to the company's board. Topalian is best known for founding the popular New York Comic Con fan convention in 2006.

More “Star Trek” Coming

To give heft to its online platform, **CBS Corporation** is turning to an iconic media brand: “Star Trek.”



In Pittsburgh, CBS Corporation owns two television and three radio stations most notably KDKA-TV. “Star Trek” was a Desilu (and later Paramount Studios) production that ran on NBC from 1966 to 1969. It led to fifty years of films and other series. CBS gained ownership of the franchise through its ownership of Paramount Studios.

A sixth “Star Trek” series will debut in early 2017 on the company’s online streaming service CBS All Access. The service is CBS Corp.’s effort to compete with **Netflix** and **Hulu**. The latter is co-owned by **Comcast** through

NBC-Universal. Comcast operates Pittsburgh’s cable television franchise.

“The brand-new ‘Star Trek’ will introduce new characters seeking imaginative new worlds and new civilizations,” says a press release, “while exploring the dramatic contemporary themes that have been a signature of the franchise since its inception in 1966.” It will be unrelated to the upcoming film “Star Trek Beyond.”

CBS Access has a library of over 7,500 television series episodes as well as access to online streaming of the company’s owned TV stations including KDKA. The service charges \$5.95 per month.

MSNBC Gets Execs

In an attempt to bolster its struggling MSNBC, Laren Frasca and Nina Weinstein have been named by NBC-Universal to head the channel’s longform unit.



MSNBC is the all-news network of NBC-Universal, a major component of **Comcast** which operates Pittsburgh’s cable television franchise.

Known for its liberal bent, MSNBC has been struggling in the ratings behind conservative Fox News Channel and the traditional Cable News Network (CNN), which has seen an up-swing recently. As the leaders of MSNBC Longform, Frasca and Weinstein will be responsible for developing and producing programs 60 minutes or longer that are not specifically news. Such longform programming has proven a successful compliment to CNN’s breaking news format. These include the award winning travel show “Parts Unknown.”

Until recently, Frasca was a VP at the Weather Channel and Weinstein a senior producer at journalist Robin Roberts’ production company.





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Marking Local Black History: Miniature Railroad Gets Miniature Grill

One of Pittsburgh's most beloved holiday traditions embraces more of the city's rich African-American heritage with a new addition to the Carnegie Science Center's popular miniature railroad display.

CARNEGIE MUSEUMS OF PITTSBURGH

The Carnegie Science Center (CSC) is one of the four components of the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**. The miniature railroad was created by World War I veteran Charles Bowdish (1896-1988) to represent the region as it transitioned from the 19th to the 20th century. It remained on display in Bowdish's home from 1920 to the 1954 when it moved to the Buhl Planetarium before setting into the CSC in 1992. Although the railroad is on display year round, it is specially trimmed out for Christmas and has a new model added each

year.

Unveiled at a special luncheon on November 17 is the 2015 edition: the legendary Crawford Grill, the famous nightclub that graced Pittsburgh's historic Hill District. It joins two other models reflecting local African-Americans: the Ebenezer Baptist Church and the *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper's building.

The Crawford Grill was opened in 1930 by local businessman William "Gus" Greenlee (1893-1952). It became a magnate for some of the jazz world's leading artists and welcomed all races. Some of the most famous people in the country, like actor/singer Frank Sinatra, were among the guests. Greenlee later owned the Pittsburgh Crawfords, a major

baseball team in the Negro League.

According to a CSC press release, curator Patty Everly "did extensive research using newspapers of the time, and painstakingly studied photos from the Charles 'Teenie' Harris collection now housed at Carnegie Museum of Art. In 2001, the museum purchased the complete Teenie Harris archives of 70,000-plus images of life in and around Pittsburgh's Hill District. She worked with colleagues at the Museum of Art to make contact with some of Crawford Grill's patrons and local historians and musicians."

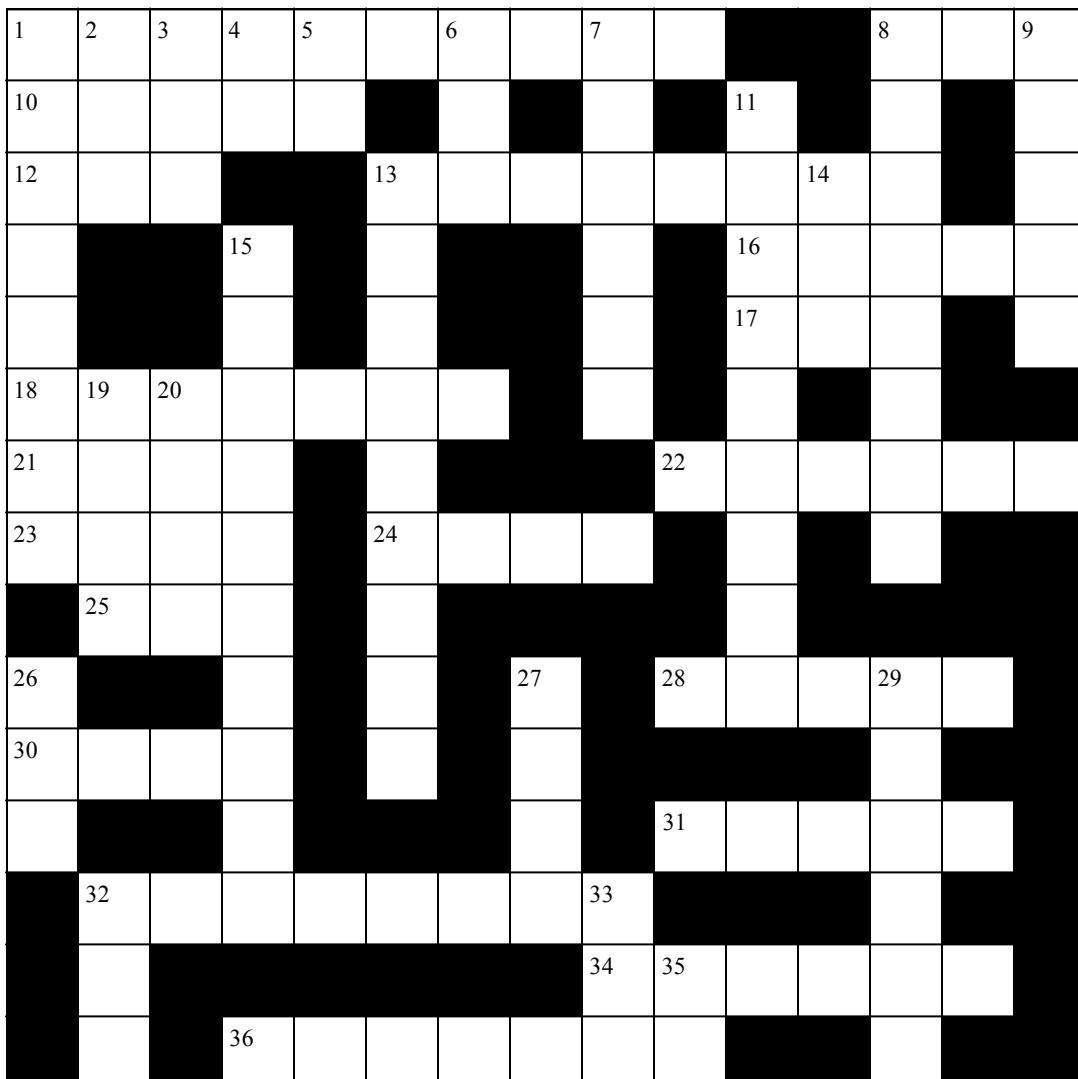
More about the Grill's history, including a photograph, can be seen at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crawford_Grill

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ACROSS

1. Santa's name in Hawaii
8. God kept challenging him
10. Kick out
12. Tell on your mob friend
13. Santa's name in France
16. Sum
17. English musician Brian ____
18. Santa's name in Hungary
21. Kazakhstan sea
22. Blankets
23. Half of Mork's goodbye
24. See 32-Down
25. Computer clock synchronizer
(abbr.)
28. Santa's home (with 27-Down)
30. Pinnacle
31. A massive gathering
32. Rudolph is the most famous one
34. See 29-Down
36. See 34-Across

DOWN

1. Santa's name in the Netherlands
2. Ms. Gabor, to pals
3. Something to pick
4. Wrong cooler for Dec. (abbr.)
5. 2002 Japanese political film
6. The First Family of Virginia
7. School tool: Trapper ____
8. Santa's name in Sweden
9. What Santa faces on Dec. 26
11. Santa's name in Japan
13. Santa's name in Brazil
14. A really long time
15. Santa's name in Finland
19. Tehran's home
20. Philosopher Immanuel ____
26. Bad flick: "Goin' ____!"
27. See 28-Across
29. Santa's favorite channel for old holiday flicks
(with 36 then 34 Across)
32. Rudolph's most famous feature
(with 24-Across)
33. A big semiconductor company
35. They celebrate Chrismakuh on this teen TV soap: "The ____"

Last Month's Solution

Oops!

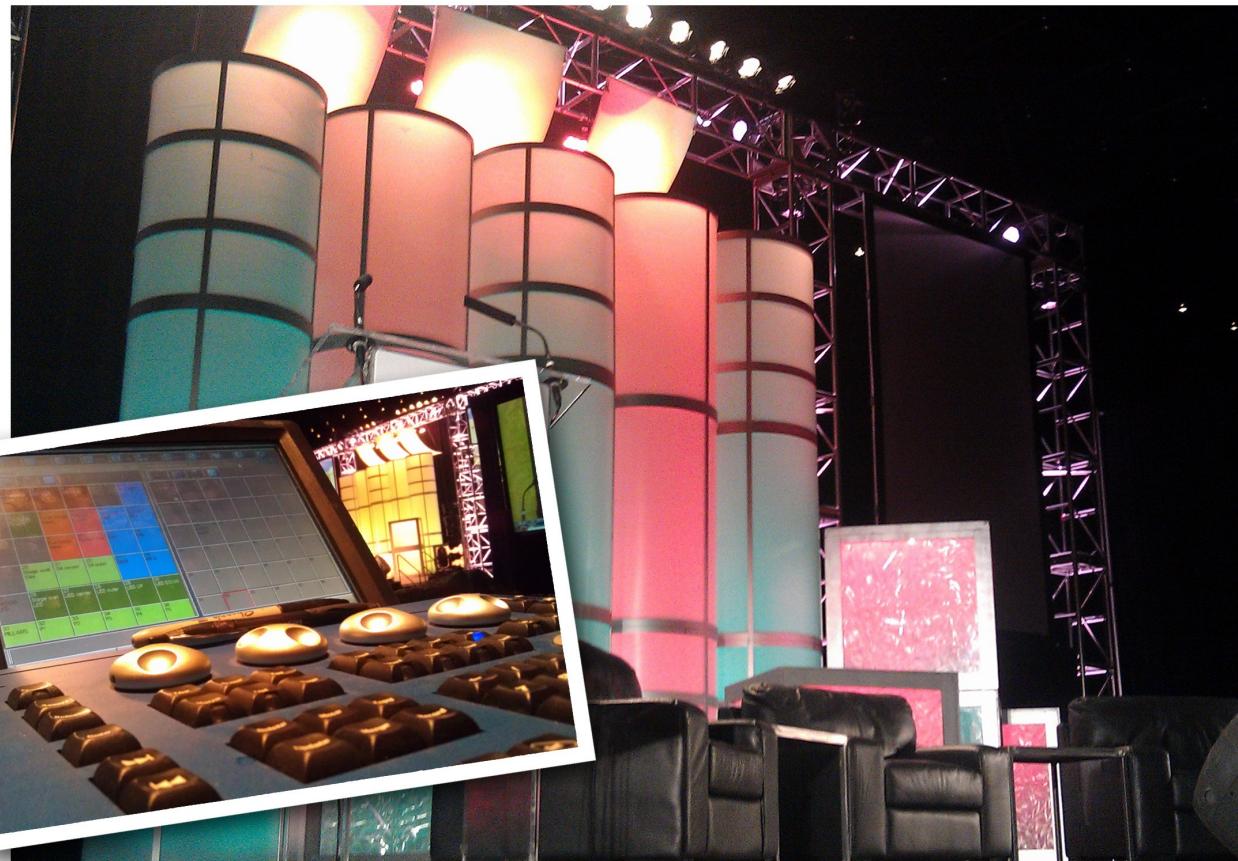
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