

City Paper Is Shuttered Permanently

Pittsburgh no longer has a weekly alternative newspaper. **Block Communications** has announced the permanent end to *Pittsburgh City Paper*.



The news became public on New Year's Eve. "This is a loss for us, but it's a bigger loss for Pittsburgh readers," outgoing editor Colin William posted to [social media](#).

It is certainly a loss for the region's creative industries. For decades, nearly every facet --- art galleries, concert promoters, theater companies and their related businesses (such as restaurants) --- have relied on the paper's articles, reviews and display advertising opportunities.

Pittsburgh City Paper began in 1991 as a direct competitor the pre-existing *In Pittsburgh* weekly. It would eventually succeed, leading the latter to close. At its peak, *City Paper* was the flagship unit of **Steel City Media**, which also owned radio stations and had a prominent presence in Downtown Pittsburgh. The company eventually sold the paper to the **Eagle Printing Company** (publishers of the *Butler Eagle* daily) and relocated its offices to the suburbs.

Block (which also owns the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*) bought the weekly three years ago. The company recently shifted *City* from a weekly to a quarterly with a regularly updated website. Apparently, it soon became clear that this new model wasn't going to work. "The *City Paper* business model has not reached a level of financial performance that allows Block Commu-

nications to continue operating it responsibly," [the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's Megan Trotter](#) quotes an official Block statement.

In other news, Supreme Court Associate Justice Samuel Alito has [issued a stay](#) following a November ruling in the *Post-Gazette's* continuing labor dispute.



Trump's Impact on the Arts
A RUNNING LIST OF UPDATES

GREATER PITTSBURGH ARTS COUNCIL
Arts loud and clear

Wiz Khalia Convicted

Pittsburgh rapper [Cameron “Wiz Khalifa” Thomaz](#) has been sentenced to nine months in prison by a Romanian court.

The situation began in 2024 when Khalifa allegedly lit up a joint while on stage during a concert in the city of [Costinesti](#). Khalifa didn’t try to duck responsibility. [The following day](#), he posted online that “I didn’t mean any disrespect to the country of Romania by lighting up on stage,” crediting the police for being “very respectful” and promised that the next time he’ll appear on a Romanian stage it will be without “a big a**s joint.” He was initially fined the equivalent of \$700.

Apparently, that wasn’t sufficient for Romania’s prosecutors. They appealed to a higher court, which handed down the stiffer sentence. Khalifa is no longer in the country and it remains unclear if an extradition request will be made, [reports the Associated Press](#). Khalifa’s legal team is expected to appeal.



Paramount Still Spinning

It seems that the billionaire Ellison clan has few limits to their ambitions.

The family currently controls **Paramount Skydance**, the owner of two Pittsburgh television stations. Now they are taking on **Netflix**, which produces films and TV series in Pittsburgh. The prize: the many assets of **Warner Bros. Discovery** (WBD),



Warner Bros. Discovery was formed in 2022 through the merger of Discovery, Inc. with Warner Media LLC. The two companies were an odd fit: the storied Warner studios with a firm known for its cable channels and reality TV shows. The result has been awkward and loaded with debt. But it also includes assets like CNN and several superhero franchises.

[Neither a Paramount nor a Netflix acquisition appeals to many in the industry](#). There are fears that a Netflix buy will mean fewer projects produced and fewer movies released through theaters. A Paramount buy means these concerns along with worries about CNN’s editorial independence and reliability. Information about the respective offers can be [read here](#).

Those worried about CNN are directly related to those involving CBS News. Ever since the controversial [Bari Weiss](#) took on a senior post, she’s brought controversy to the news division. Recently, [she pulled a “60 Minutes” story](#) critical of the Trump team. She made the decision at the last minute, even though the story went through multiple vetting for accu-

racy and fairness (steps she declined to participate in).

Several people, some high-profile, have left CBS News. The appointment of [Tony Dokoupil](#) as the new “Evening News” anchor has elicited a mixed response. He has tried to reassure colleagues and audiences with a [video posted online](#). “Every time you see me in this chair,” Dokoupil announced, “you come first. Not advertisers. Not politicians. Not corporate interests. And, yes, that does include the corporate owners of CBS. I report for you.”

Pittsburghers will have a chance to do just that. Dokoupil is scheduled to broadcast the January 16 “Evening News” from the Steel City.

THE PAPER CEILING:

(noun): The invisible barrier that comes at every turn for workers without a bachelor’s degree.

See also: no alumni network, biased algorithms, degree screens, stereotypes, and misperceptions.

Millions of qualified STARS — *workers Skilled Through Alternative Routes* — with experience, skills and diverse perspectives are being held back by this silent barrier.

Learn more at [ThePaperCeiling.org](#)



See your vision.



Take your project from
IMAGINATION to **Reality**

From writing to wrap. With over 30 years of experience, The Videohouse has a full menu of production services. Whether it's à la carte or the full course production, The Videohouse works with customers to bring their vision to screens small and large.

4K and beyond. No matter how many K's there are tomorrow, we're always exploring the latest technology and newest media. But we know it's more than just fancy tech that makes a great product – that's why you'll find creative, hard-working people dedicated to exceeding your expectations.

End-to-End Post & More

Editing	Sound Mixing
Animation	Color Grading
Design	Conforming
Motion Graphics	Compression
Website/Interactive	Archiving
Mobile	Streaming
Social Media	Duplication

All Industries Served

Ad Agencies	Motion Pictures
Broadcast	Government
Corporate	Higher Ed
Small Business	Manufacturing
Non-Profit	Medical
Entrepreneurs	Entertainment
Music	Museums

the **Videohouse**



See your vision.

412.921.7577
www.thevideohouse.com

GPAC Responds To Council's Pittsburgh 2050 Cancellations

It is touted as a “comprehensive plan [that] expresses a holistic, community-wide vision of the city’s future.” But something as big as [Pittsburgh 2050](#) takes money.

Last month, [city council](#) [voted to cancel](#) two related contracts citing the cost.

This could mean the demise of Pittsburgh 2050. Among the leading critics of this decision is Patrick Fisher, CEO of the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC).



“[Pittsburgh 250] was launched because the city needed a roadmap,” [Fisher posted online](#), “one shaped by its people, aligned with national best practices, and grounded in careful, data-driven planning. For years, Pittsburgh has struggled with fragmented development decisions, uneven growth, and persistent inequities across neighborhoods. The plan was designed to bring coherence to these challenges and ensure that residents, not political shifts or piecemeal policymaking, set the direction for the city’s next era.”

Regardless, there are prominent council members who feel that it is just too expensive. Erika Strassburger, who represents Squirrel Hill, told the [Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's Julia Burdelski](#) that “we paid too much for this.” Some

members felt that they expected more community engagement.

Fisher disagrees. “Most remarkable is how deeply this process has invited community participation. Residents from every corner of Pittsburgh --- long-timers, newcomers, elders, youth, small business owners, artists, neighborhood advocates, nonprofit leaders --- have shown up. They’ve shared their hopes for safer streets, more affordable housing, climate resilience, economic opportunity, better governance, and a city where every neighborhood has a fair chance to thrive.”

What happens next with Pittsburgh 2050 is not entirely clear.

The Pittsburgh A&E Book

**The Creative Professionals' Source For
Creative Professionals**



www.pittsburghaebook.com

NO ADS ~ NO FEES ~ NO REGISTRATION

Elms Joins Factory

Noted artist, writer and curator [Anthony Elms](#) has been named the new artistic director at the **Mattress Factory**.

The museum made the announcement on December 12.



“Anthony is the perfect fit for this moment at the Mattress Factory,” said [Executive Director David Oresick in a formal announcement](#). “His artist-first approach, his deep experience across the art world, and his history of producing exhibitions that resonate widely while remaining deeply attentive to the artists’ visions make him an exceptional addition to our team. We are thrilled to

welcome him and excited for the new energy, care, and creative ambition he will bring to our program.”

Elms has considerable experience with major projects in New York City, Chicago and Philadelphia. Probably the most high-profile was the 2014 Whitney Biennial, which he co-curated. He has also written several arts periodicals.

“For nearly fifty years, the Mattress Factory has given artists the space and support to explore those questions on their own terms,” Elms said. “I am honored by the invitation to share in this challenging work with Pittsburgh and beyond.”

Elms takes his post next month.

Kara Boos Retiring

Karla Boos, the founder and artistic director of **Quantum Theatre**, has announced her retirement.

Founded in 1990, Quantum stages plays in non-traditional --- sometimes unorthodox --- locations.

“Some people just can’t imagine retiring, but I’m not one of those people,” Boos told [Alexis Papaia of the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review](#). “I think that life is full of wonderful chapters.”

Boos went into greater detail with [WESA-FM’s Bill O’Driscoll](#). She shared her memories of nearly four decades leading an

innovative organization. Among these is a 1997 production of Shakespeare’s “Anthony & Cleopatra” at the former Duquesne Brewery --- at that time, a crumbling structure and home to a group of artist squatters. Today that building is now the Brew House.

The history of the company, including a list of past productions, is [available here](#). Boos will continue in her post through December 2026.



Baker Leaving CMNH

Gretchen Baker is stepping down as head of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, reports [Bill O’Driscoll reports for WESA-FM](#).



Baker took on the post in 2021 at the height of the pandemic, dealing complex issues ranging from recovering from the shutdown to Donald Trump’s cancellation of promised grants. It was also during her tenure when the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh** became unionized.

“It has been an honor to serve as the director of Carnegie Museum of Natural History and contribute to Carnegie Museums’ 130-year story,” O’Driscoll quotes her.

Baker has been named as president of the Chicago Botanic Garden, owned by the **Forest Preserve District of Cook County**.



C'mon Over, Neighbor!



The Pittsburgh Banjo Club is proud to be part of the North Side

Join us at our weekly rehearsal.
The admission is free and the atmosphere is lively as the audience sings along.

400 Cedar Avenue
(Next to Giant Eagle)
Call 412-321-1834
for Group Reservations

Every Wednesday
8 PM
ThePittsburghBanjoClub.com

Union Okays Intimacy Pact

For the first time, **SAG-AFTRA** has ratified a collective bargaining agreement covering intimacy coordinators.



“This is a significant and long-awaited achievement for intimacy coordinators and for our union as a whole,” said [SAG-AFTRA President Sean Astin in a press release](#). “These professionals deserve the same kind of protections and benefits that other workers in our industry enjoy,

and a SAG-AFTRA contract will help create more stable, sustainable careers for them. This agreement recognizes their essential contributions and establishes a safer, more equitable future for both intimacy coordinators and the performers they support.”

Provisions include contributions to key funds (health, pension, retirement); overtime and travel expenses; and guaranteed access.

An information meeting for intimacy coordinators will be held January 8. The agreement goes into effect on February 22.

“Pitt” PA’s Unionized

The production assistants of “The Pitt” have become unionized.

According to the [Hollywood Reporter’s Katie Kilkenny](#), the pact “allows PAs on the show to qualify for the Motion Picture Industry Health and Pension plans like other crew members. Returning PAs for the show’s third season, if it is greenlit, will also receive a \$1.22 an hour raise per the deal.”

The deal also creates a “pathway committee” to aid in career development.



CMU Students Honored

A group of **Carnegie Mellon University** (CMU) students have been honored for creating a unique video game that fits well with our current environment of disinformation and restricted speech.

Carnegie Mellon University

The honored occurred at this year’s **Serious Games Showcase & Challenge**, an annual event for creators of non-entertainment games that began in 2006.

Six students at the university’s Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) took home the Best Student-Developed Game award. The game is called [“Speak Your Heart.”](#) an interactive program set on the CMU campus exploring freedom of expression.

One inspiration was **Electronic Arts’** popular “The Sims” series of life simulation games.

Local Film At Int’l Fest

The Pittsburgh-made film [“The Gymnast”](#) will make its world debut at this year’s Rotterdam Film Festival, writes [Georg Szalai for the Hollywood Reporter](#).

Set in the early 1990s, “The Gymnast” is the story of an Olympic hopeful and supportive father. It stars [Britney Wheeler](#) and [Ethan Embry](#). The film marks the feature directorial debut of [Charlotte Glynn](#). **The International Film Festival Rotterdam** (IFFR) was founded in 1972 with a focus on independent and experimental filmmaking. Learn more about the festival [by clicking here](#).

“With our target audience being university students, it’s a good genre to catch their attention and to keep their attention,” student and co-designer [Moe Arguilar is quoted by the university](#). “We knew from the beginning that since it’s a really heavy topic and it requires a lot of research, it would be ideal to get the players to read a lot in order to learn a lot. In narrative games, people read a lot, but in dating sims, particularly, people don’t feel like they’re reading.”

More information on the Serious Games is available by [clicking here](#).



Sports Museum Gets New Name

He helped win four Super Bowl trophies, was named Most Valuable Player and has been in the Pro Football Hall of Fame since 1990. Now, local football legend Franco Harris (1950-2022) will have a museum named for him.



The **Senator John Heinz History Center** announced on December 23 that its Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum composed is to be renamed the Franco Harris Sports Museum.

Going To The Dogs

A pair of local radio personalities are teaming with a retired footballer for a new business, [reports Eric Heyl for Patch Pittsburgh.](#)

KDKA-AM morning show host Larry Richert, comedian and former WDVE-FM host Jim Krenn are opening a hot dog eatery with retired Pittsburgh Steeler Dan Marino. The restaurant is called [Yinzer Dogs](#) and it claims to blend "Pittsburgh pride with bold, crave-worthy flavors."

The partnership group is planning to open at least two additional outlets in 2026.

Harris best known for the "[Immaculate Reception](#)," a game-winning touchdown during a 1972 match between the **Pittsburgh Steelers** and the Oakland Raiders (now the **Las Vegas Raiders**).

"Franco touched and inspired so many of us, not only with his achievements on the gridiron, but with his kindness, generosity and leadership," center CEO Andy Masich is quoted by [Patch Pittsburgh's Eric Heyl](#). "His influence has gone well beyond Western Pennsylvania and will continue to inspire future generations. It is altogether fitting that the sports museum should bear Franco's name." The formal name change will occur sometime this year.

In other news, the center has received national accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). "Recognized as the field's gold standard for museum excellence for 55 years," explains a press release, "AAM Accreditation signifies a museum's quality and credibility to the entire museum community, governments and outside agencies, and the museum-going public. Through a rigorous process of self-assessment and peer review, accredited museums demonstrate that they meet the highest professional standards, follow best practices, and serve as responsible stewards of the collections and resources they hold in the public trust."

Images



The Ladies of Longford is among the acts performing in "Brigid" at the New Hazlett. Click [here](#) to learn more.



VINCENT
LIGHTING SYSTEMS

When your show matters, choose the company that professionals trust. Choose Vincent Lighting Systems.



Shows • Parties • Meetings • Weddings • Theater • Film & Video Shoots

Production Services • Rentals • Sales • Service

"Vincent Lighting outdid themselves by creating this jaw-dropping lighting design ... the lighting just completely transforms the space."

"I am truly thankful for Vincent Lighting Systems and their wonderful customer service team!"

"I have received tons of compliments on how cool the stage looked. Your crew was extremely easy to work with, and they were very professional and got the job done!"



412.788.5250  vls.com

  [vincentlighting](http://vincentlighting.com)

Brouman & Trump

Controversial artist and Pittsburgh native Isabelle Brouman was among this year's most noteworthy participants at the 2025 Art Basel Miami Beach, writes Melinda Sheckells for the *Hollywood Reporter*.

Art Basel Miami Beach is a satellite of the prestigious Art Basel network of high-end art fairs owned by the Swiss firm **MCH Group**. Brouman is a mixed-media artist who has become known for her bold, celebrity courtroom sketches (such as Johnny Depp and Amber Heard).

Since the 2024 election, Brouman has focused on Donald Trump through a new series of pieces she calls "Aftermath." The latest creation "is a response to Brouman's visit to the sacred land around Alligator Alcatraz [a federally-funded, state-operated immigrant detention facility inside a Florida nature reserve – ed.] and a larger synthesis of her time spent documenting the mass-immigration machine in New York and Chicago."

Interestingly, Trump actually sat for Brouman at Mar-a-Lago during the campaign. She shares this and other stories with Sheckells, which can be read by [clicking here](#).

Shiftworks Gets \$1.4 Million

A collection of funders --- primarily from the **Heinz Endowments** and the **Eden Hall Foundation** --- have provided **Shiftworks Community + Public Arts** in \$1.4 million in grants.

SHIFTWORKS

"These awards are a testament to the strength of our regional partnerships and the growing recognition that artists are essential to civic and cultural life," said Sallyann Kluz, Executive Director of Shiftworks in a press release. "This funding enables us to invest in the infrastructure that artists need to thrive --- training, networks, legal and financial support, and meaningful partnerships with communities. These aren't add-ons for artists working

in community and public arts; they're essentials."

Projects include those involving public art and training initiatives.



Stations Raise Millions

A group of **Audacy** radio stations --- including Pittsburgh's WDSY-FM --- have raised more than \$3 million for **St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital**.

Between December 11 and 12, seven stations participated in the



company's annual "Country Cares for St. Jude Kids Radiothon." St. Jude's was founded in 1962 by entertainer Danny Thomas (1912-1991) to provide free medical care to children facing catastrophic health crises.

"Our national radiothon series is fueled by the incredible dedication of our Audacy team, who put their hearts into supporting the kids at

St. Jude," said Audacy's Tim Roberts in a press release. "Radio's greatest strength is its ability to unite communities, and the selfless support from our audience this year has been nothing short of inspiring. Our partnership with St. Jude remains a cornerstone of our mission, and every dollar donated is a victory in the fight to end childhood cancer."

The final total, about \$3.2 million, will help cover patients' treatment and other expenses.



FRI
9



FRI
9



SAT
10



SAT
10

WED
14

WICKED

FRI
16



FRI
16

SAT
17



WED
21



FRI
23



WED
28



FRI
30



Verizon Battles CMG - - - Viewers Lose

“This channel is temporarily unavailable.”



That’s the first sentence of an on-screen message local Verizon Fios subscribers see when they try to watch “Saturday Night Live” or “Wheel of Fortune.” This is because of a dispute between Verizon and WPXI-TV’s owner, **Cox Media Group** (CMG).

Starting December 15, **Verizon Communications** has blocked CMG stations in Pittsburgh, Boston and Providence over the carriage fees the stations’ owner wants to charge.

“Industry analysts note such carriage disputes typically resolve within weeks,” explains [Elizabeth Kartini for Technobess](#), “but the timing during holiday sports programming increases pressure on both parties. Similar disputes have become increasingly common as broadcasters seek higher retransmission fees from cable and fiber providers.”

Verizon claims that CMG’s fee demands are “excessive and unreasonable” (per the onscreen message). Needless to say, CMG has a different view.

“Despite what you may have heard, this dispute is not about WPXI seeking large fees,” [TV Tech’s George Winslow](#) quotes from the station’s online statement. “WPXI is often the highest

rated channel on Verizon/Fios. Producing and broadcasting high rated, top-quality programming and being a network affiliate is very expensive. We invest millions of dollars every year in our local news, weather, emergency programming, entertainment content and network affiliations. To keep doing that, we need a fair market deal from Verizon/Fios and all our distributors. We have carriage agreements with every other major cable, telco and satellite company that is carrying WPXI and are seeking to be treated fairly by Verizon/Fios.

As of press time, no resolution has been announced.

Museums Get Grants

A number of local cultural institutions have received grants from the **Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission** (PHMC), reports [Kalliyann Winder for WESA-FM](#).

The PHMC is a state agency established in 1945. For many organizations, the funds are often critical. Traci Weatherford-

Brown of the **Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh** (CMP) told Winder that they provide “about half a million dollars every year in free or reduced access. And that’s a big hole to fill.” CMP is receiving \$45,000.

Nearly \$4 million is being distributed state-wide by the PHMC.



Opportunities

Several positions, including fundraising, are available at the **Pittsburgh Opera**. [Click here](#).

Applications are being accepted through January 19 by the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** for the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator grant program. [Click here](#).

WTAE-TV, the local ABC affiliate owned by **Hearst Communications**, is looking for a morning news anchor/host. [Click here](#).

An experienced producing director is being sought by the **Pittsburgh CLO**. [Click here](#).

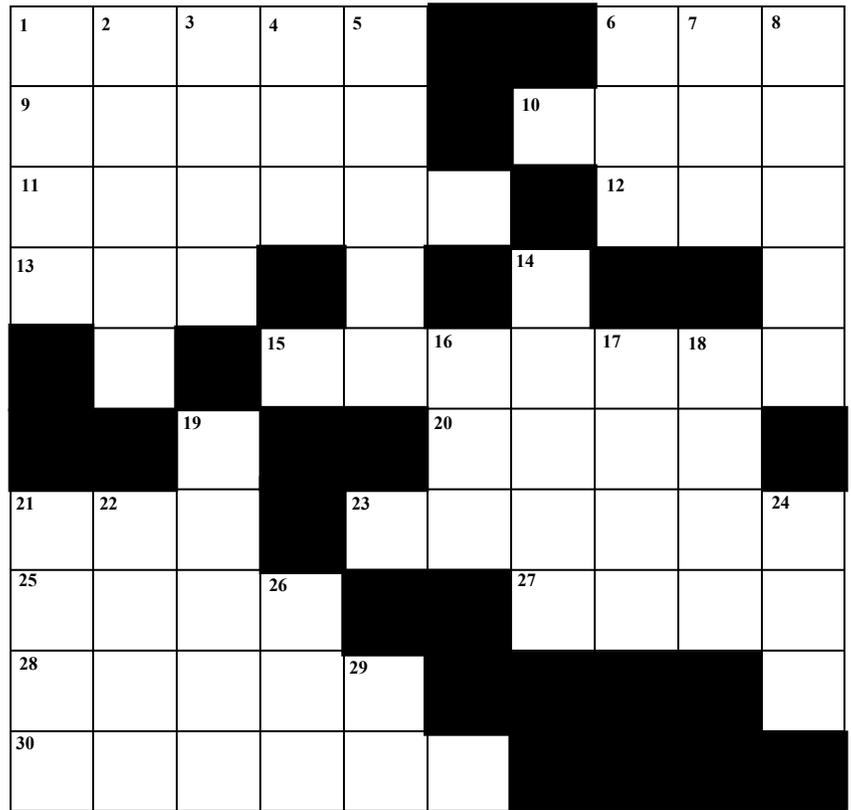
Various positions at local **Audacy** radio stations, both on-air and not, are available. [Click here](#).

An engineer with management experience is being sought by **NEP Group**. [Click here](#).



Across

1. Jolly man vacationing in Bermuda this month?
6. What the jolly man hopes to get?
9. "Tosca" or "Aida"
10. Tardy
11. Blood vessel
12. Stinger
13. Brussell's landmark: Manneken _____
15. Many children hope for this
20. Big follower?
21. It can be comprised of matching units
23. 2020 British film starring Ben Whishaw
25. Ensnare
27. Lucy's former mate
28. Broadcast
30. The eponymous corpse/host in a hit 1989 comedy film



Down

1. Satirical 1970's TV series
2. The month for fools and showers?
3. Gains
4. Guitar-like Cuban musical instrument
5. Spelling or Sorkin, to pals
6. Bar bill
7. Dined
8. In want
14. Douglas Fairbanks' cinematic weapon of choice
16. Japanese city and home of Shigakkan University
17. Much hated acronym of 2025
18. Home of Iowa State University
19. Brenda or Bart
21. Attempt
22. Spine tingling
24. Adultery, for example
26. Common writing instrument
29. Beloved late princess, informally

Last Month's Solution

J	E	T	S	O	N	S		R	
A	D	A	P	T		T	O	E	
N	O	R	A	D		I	N	N	S
E			C			N		O	K
		G	E	O	R	G	E		Y
O	P	A	L		O		L	I	P
J	U	D	Y		S	O	R	T	A
E	R	F			I	R	O	A	D
D	I	L	L		E	N	Y	A	
A	M	Y				A		L	