

pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

Major Layoffs At Pittsburgh Filmmakers

Lay-offs at **Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts** (PF/PCA) is raising concerns, writes Bill O'Driscoll in *Pittsburgh City Paper*.

Pittsburgh Filmmakers was founded in 1971 and is one of the oldest and largest media arts centers in the United States. The organization operates three theaters, a media school and produces the annual Three Rivers Film Festival. In 2006, the organization absorbed the struggling Pittsburgh Center for the Arts.

O'Driscoll describes the lay-offs as "a bombshell" that affects about one-fifth of the PF/PCA staff. "Most of the layoffs were at Filmmakers' Oakland headquarters, including: Brady Lewis, the group's longtime director of education; half of its equipment-office staff; and its entire marketing department."



Marylynn Pitz of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* writes that executive director Charlie Humphrey sent a letter to staff members explaining that the layoffs are the result of "a cash-flow problem. We simply don't have enough money in the

bank to make payroll". Humphrey, himself, is taking a 30% pay cut and hopes that they lay-offs are temporary. Her full article is available at <http://www.post-gazette.com/ae/movies/2015/06/04/Humphrey-More-revenue-needed-at-Filmmakers/stories/201506040115>

However, O'Driscoll's article reports that "many current Filmmakers employees, saying problems at the organization run deep, are pessimistic about the future." Read O'Driscoll's complete story at <http://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/in-the-wake-of-massive-layoffs-concern-over-the-future-of-pittsburgh-filmmakers-pittsburgh-center-for-the-arts/Content?oid=1834254>

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Pittsburgh A&E Group	
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Local Film Opens

The locally-made film "Me and Earl and the Dying Girl" had its premier at the Waterfront on June 16.

"Me and Earl" is an adaptation of the novel of the same name by Pittsburgh author Jesse Andrews. The lead actors appeared at the debut with star Thomas Mann telling Jai-W Hayes-Jackson of *The Pitt News* how much he loves Pittsburgh. "I love the people, and the city just feels lived in," he's quoted. "It has a rustic vibe that works well."

In the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, critic Roger Moore calls it "as sweet take on a teen weeper" (see <http://triblive.com/aande/movies/8539599-74/earl-girl-dying#axzz3eYxdAmy7>) while the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Barbara Vancheri says that it "proves books can become good movies" (see <http://www.post-gazette.com/ae/movie-reviews/2015/06/26/Movie-review-Me-and-Earl-proves-books-can-become-good-movies/stories/201506260002>)

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Nick Jonas Rescues Pittsburgh Pride Event

Pop-rock star Nick Jonas volunteered to step-in at the last minute to perform at one of Pittsburgh's signature Pride Month events.

Every June is Pride Month in the US, which celebrates lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. Pittsburgh's major related events are produced by the non-profit **Delta Foundation**.

Delta had originally booked controversial Australian rapper Amezthyst Kelly (aka, "Iggy Azalea") to headline its "Pride in the

Street" concert and party. The artist is an online star but also became known for what many consider anti-gay lyrics and comments. Her planned performance had spotlighted other issues the LGBT community has with Delta. She canceled less than a week before the event.

Almost immediately, Jonas contacted Delta and agreed to perform at the June 13 event. By all appearances, "Pride in the Street" was a success although issues involving the organization continue to bubble.

Comcast Founder Dies; Changes At NBC

The founder of what is now **Comcast-NBC**, Ralph J. Roberts, has passed away.

In Pittsburgh, Comcast-NBC operates the city's cable television franchise.



Roberts was born in 1920. After his naval career, he bounced from one career to another before buying a small Mississippi cable system in 1963 with two partners. Today, his son Brian runs the multi-billion firm. Read more about him at <http://corporate.comcast.com/news-information/news-feed/ralph-j-roberts-statement>

Meanwhile, the company's flagship NBC network has announced that Lester Holt has officially replaced Brian Williams as the permanent anchor of "The NBC Nightly News." Williams, who has been at the center of controversy, is being moved over to the MSNBC cable news channel.

The company has also severed ties with presidential candidate Donald Trump after the real estate and entertainment mogul made disparaging comments about Mexican immigrants at his candidacy announcement. This means no more "The Apprentice" or Miss America pageant on NBC.

The **National Hispanic Media Coalition** (MHMC) praised the decision to drop Trump, reports John Eggerton in *Broadcasting & Cable*. "Bravo," he quotes from a

Auditions

With the support of the **Steeltown Entertainment Project**, you might just become a reality TV star.



The Steeltown Entertainment Project was established in 2003 to forge a vibrant and sustainable entertainment industry for southwestern Pennsylvania.

Ellen Berkman Davis is leading an open casting call at WQED-TV's studios on July 11 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. representing **One Louder Productions'** "The Next Reality Star."

"Following someone's life is interesting and sometimes that translates well into a TV show," Davis told Laurie Bailey of the web site NextPittsburgh.com

Interested performers can meet her at the Bigham Tavern on Mt. Washington on July 2 at 5:00 p.m. to learn more about the process.

Additional information is available online at www.thenextrealitystar.com

statement released by MHMC's Alex Nogales in a statement following the Monday move. "It is good to have media partners with a conscience who understand that doing business with people like Trump is not only unconscionable, but also would harm relationships with the Latino community and other fair-minded non-Latinos."

NBC let Trump go just days after **Univision Communications** also suspended their relationship with him.

Natural History Museum's New Director

Dr. Eric Dorfman has been named director of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH).

CARNEGIE MUSEUMS OF PITTSBURGH

The CMNH is one of the four **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**, a research, archival and exhibition organization founded in 1895 by industrialist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919).

Dorfman is a California native who is currently director of the Whanganui Regional Museum in New Zealand which he joined in 2010. The Whanganui was founded in 1892 and has an extensive collection of natural and human history items. Dorfman's areas of specialties are ecology and

marine sciences. As director, he is credited with founding a respected research center and boosting the Whanganui's attendance fourfold.

"We are very lucky to have recruited Eric to the Museum of Natural History," said Dr. Jo Ellen Parker, president and CEO of Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh in a press release. "His outstanding work at the Whanganui Museum demonstrates all the values of innovation, audience focus, social inclusiveness, and business acumen that are central to our aspirations for Carnegie Museums. His expertise in environmental science is accompanied by a passionate commitment to the arts: he is a true Renaissance man poised to lead a distinguished museum."

In other Carnegie news: on June 19, the Carnegie Museum of Art launched a new version of their blog which they have described as a "dynamic site" that "bolsters and broadens the editorial voice of the institution by publishing original writing, criticism, photo essays, shared arts and culture news and selected by writers and artists from Pittsburgh and beyond." The blog is available at <http://blog.cmoa.org>



Symphony Hires Two New Conductors

Two new assistant conductors have been hired by the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO): Andres Franco and Francesco Lecce-Chong.



A native of Columbia, Andres Franco has a master's degree from **Texas Christian University** and has worked

with organizations such as the **Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra**. "I am very excited to be joining the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra team! I was in Pittsburgh for the season finale concerts and was very inspired by the passion, commitment and energy the orchestra brings to the stage," he says in a press release. "This is

truly one of the world's great orchestras and it is an honor to work with Maestro Honeck and these wonderful musicians. I look forward to becoming part of the Pittsburgh Symphony family and getting to know and interact with our amazing audience, board and staff."

Francesco Lecce-Chong is a graduate of the **New School's** Mannes College of Music who was most recently with the **Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra**.

"I am thrilled to be joining the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and look forward to working with Maestro Honeck, the musicians, staff and supporters," says Lecce-Chong in the same press release. "It is inspiring to join such a vibrant organization, with a rich

history committed to the arts throughout its own city and the world. I am very excited to become a part of the Pittsburgh community and grateful for the opportunity to share in the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's magnificent artistry."

Both gentlemen begin with the PSO for the 2015-2016 season.



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Another New SBG Network

Paige Albiniak reports in *Broadcasting & Cable* that **Sinclair Broadcast Group** has reached a deal with **Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios** (MGM) to create a new sci-fi television network.



In Pittsburgh, Sinclair owns and operates two TV stations. Presumably the network will broadcast on Sinclair's many sub-channels across the country, including Pittsburgh.

No name or launch date has been determined. The web will tap into MGM's extensive library of sci-

ence fiction programs (approximately 1,500 hours).

Sinclair had already announced ([and Pittsburgh Applause reported last month](#)) a new network of original programming being launched that will include Pittsburgh's WPMY-TV 22.

In a separate article, Albiniak offers an update: Sinclair is partnering with **The Tornante Company** to develop programming. Tornante is a private firm co-owned by Sinclair and **Walt Disney Company's** former chief Michael Eisner.

CK1's New Photo Booth

Award winning video production company and advertising agency **CK1 Productions** has launched a new Photo Booth service.

The service, called Photo Booths by CK1, offers unique features such as social media sharing, green screens and on-site professional attendants. Customizable backdrops and touch screen designs allow the booths to be modified for specific events.

More information is available at www.photoboostsbyck1.com

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Pittsburgh's Superhero: Michael Keaton To The Defense

You know that a Pittsburgher is an out and proud Yinzer when he stands out and proud at a public event.

That's what happened last month in Atlanta at Turner Field when the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball team was playing against the Atlanta Braves. Someone in the stands began heckling Pirates star Andrew McCutchen without realizing that actor, and Pittsburgh native, Michael Keaton was also at the game.

Grant Opportunity

Applications are being accepted by the **William H. Johnson Foundation for the Arts** to benefit minority artists in need of economic assistance.

The William H. Johnson Foundation for the Arts was established in 2001 to mark the centennial birth of African-American painter William Henry Johnson (1901-1970) who developed a powerful folk style which continues to inspire artists.

For specifics, log on to <http://www.whjohnsongrant.org/grants.html>

\$350,00 In Grants Awarded

A joint program of the **Heinz Endowments** and the **Pittsburgh Foundation** has awarded \$350,000 in grants to support African-American arts in Pittsburgh.

The program was launched in 2010 to support artistic risk-taking, outreach programming and career opportunities for artists as well as strategies to promote an arts organization's growth.

Recipients and amounts range from \$3,650 to the Shona **Sharif African Dance & Drum Ensemble** and \$9,00 to documentary filmmaker Njie Njaimeh to \$30,000 for **Afrika YETU** and \$15,000 to jazz composer Charlotte Ka.

The full list is available online at <http://heinz.org/Interior.aspx?id=423&n=395>

TheWrap.com's Todd Cunningham has a fun little story about the incident at <http://www.thewrap.com/birdman-michael-keaton-blasts-heckler-of-his-beloved-baseball-bucs/>



Images

Celebrate Pittsburgh's
arts & entertainment
history and community.



This beautiful work of art was created in 1969 by Cartier for American astronaut Michael Collins. It's just one of the amazing items on display in the Carnegie Museum of Natural History's current exhibit "Out of this World: Jewelry in the Space Age."

Source: Carnegie Museum of Natural History

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

CBS Corp News

A sign of the times: CBS has announced that its Showtime premium cable channel will now be available without a cable subscription.



In Pittsburgh, **CBS Corporation** owns two television and three radio stations. Showtime began in 1976 as a small, regional channel. It went national in 1978 to better compete with Home Box Office (HBO), which launched in 1972. The network was originally owned by Viacom until the company was split into two separate firms in 2005.

Consumers can now stream Showtime on their personal computers, laptops, portable devices and PlayStations using Hulu, Roku or a direct subscription.

CBS has also canceled its long-running late-night newscast "Up to the Minute" after three decades on the air. "Minute" began in 1982 as "Nightwatch," CBS' answer to the emergence of Cable News Network (CNN). It survived NBC's critically acclaimed entry "Overnight" (1982-1983) with Lloyd Dobbins and Linda Ellerbee. ABC's "World News Now" was a late coming, debuting in 1992.

Cox Introduces NewsOn

A collection of media companies led by Cox Media Group is launching a new venture "to provide live and same-day local TV newscasts on demand . . . to consumers' mobile and selected connected TV devices" according to a press release.



Cox Media Group is the subsidiary of **Cox Enterprises** that owns and operates Pittsburgh TV station WPXI as well as the Pittsburgh Cable News Channel (PCNC).

The release calls the new service NewsOn (www.newson.us) and says that the free, ad-supported service material (including live newscasts) from more than 100

stations across the country, including WPXI.

Media veteran Louis Gump is leading the project. "The sheer amount of live news coverage --- from TV stations around the country --- that has been assembled for delivery through NewsON's apps is unprecedented," Gump says in the press release. "Americans place a great deal of trust in their local news teams, who are typically the first informers from the local scene of the biggest news developments around the country. NewsON will bring instant access to live local news to a generation of viewers accustomed to using mobile and connected TV platforms to stay informed."

No specific launch date has been set, but NewsOn is expected to debut sometime this fall.

IATSE's New Safety Hotline

IATSE has announced the launch of a safety hotline program for members to report hazards on the job.



The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) is a union representing technicians, artisans and craftspeople in the entertainment industry. It was founded in 1893 and has three locals in Pittsburgh.

IATSE members are now able to call (844) 422-9273 to speak with a safety representative (or leave a recorded message) who will begin exploring the complaint.





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SUN
4

4TH OF JULY

Be sure to check out our growing list of [Independence Day events!](#)

TUE
7

The “little orchestra” [Pink Martini](#) brings its global sound to the **Byham Theater**.

THU
9



The [Silk Screen Asian-American Film Festival](#) celebrates its tenth anniversary starting with a gala party.

FRI
10

It’s time again for the fun [Gallery Crawl](#) in the Cultural District!

FRI
10

You’ll be much impressed by [Shania Twain](#) during her concert at **Consol Energy Center**.

FRI
10

Local artist [Ashley Jean Hickes](#) brings her abstract sculptures to the **707/709 Galleries**.

FRI
10

One of Broadway’s best musicals, “[Gypsy](#)” camps out at the **Benedum Center**.

FRI
10

Wood Street Galleries is the site for a stunning multimedia installation by British artist collective [D-Fuse](#).

TUE
14

Boxheart opens an exhibit of artist [Erin Treacy’s](#) science-inspired sculptures.

SAT
18

Culminating about two weeks of related events is the [Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix](#).

FRI
24

Harkin back to the 80s with “[The Wedding Singer](#)” musical at the **Benedum Center**.

FRI
24

Atlanta rapper [Waka Flocka Flame](#) burns the stage at **Altar Bar**.

SAT
25

The Carnegie Museum of Art unpacks and displays its entire [Edward Hopper](#) collection of paintings.

WED
29

Have pity on him: Jim Richards turns the big Five-Oh today.



National/World A&E News Round-Up

Rupert Murdoch (Sort Of) Retires

Rupert Murdoch, the colorful and sometimes scandalous chief of **News Corp** and **21st Century Fox** is retiring --- sort of.

It was announced in June that Murdoch, 84, is stepping down from all but one position at Fox (executive chairman) and turning over the reins to his sons: 43-year-old Lachlan Murdoch and 42-year-old James Murdoch.

While ostensibly assigning the younger Murdochs to run the media giant, Rupert Murdoch will still yield a lot of power. That became apparent when Roger Ailes, the controversial head of the equally controversial Fox News Channel, signed a new three-year contract that has him reporting to the father as well as the sons.

It's no secret that Murdoch children and Ailes have clashed over the years. In a 2010 interview with the *New York Times*, Elizabeth Murdoch's then-husband --- British public relations professional Matthew Freud --- stated that "I am by no means alone within the family or the company in being ashamed and sickened by Roger Ailes's horrendous and sustained disregard of the journalistic standards that News Corporation, its founder and every other global media business aspires to." But the channel's huge revenue stream and Ailes' personal relationship with the Murdoch patriarch have shielded him from being removed.

Meanwhile, News Corp continues its efforts to recover from a hacking scandal in the United Kingdom that led to parliamentary hearings and legal action.

War's Other Cost

While there has been a lot of important news coverage of historic and artistic sites being destroyed Iraq and Syria, such destruction is also happening in other parts of the world.

Sophia Kishkovsky reports in *The Art Newspaper* that fighters in the separatist region of Ukraine have "blown up an installation by the Cameroonian artist Pascale Marthine Tayou on the grounds of Izolyatsia, a contemporary arts center in a former Soviet-era insulation factory that was seized during heavy fighting in 2014."

The whimsical piece was erected in 2012 and featured a giant lipstick atop a factory smokestack meant to honor the Donetsk women who worked hard to rebuild the city after World War II.

Daniels Hits It Big (Again)

Acclaimed writer, filmmaker and producer Lee Daniels has signed a new multi-year deal with Twentieth Century's flagship Fox Television Group. Daniels, who is best known for the award winning film "The Butler," is the co-creator and executive producer of last season's break-out hit series "Empire."

"Empire" is a modern soap opera about a former drug dealer who has become a music industry mogul and patriarch to a troubled family. In the deal, he will continue in that role and begin developing new properties for Fox. The deal makes Daniels one of the most influential African-Americans and gay people in the entertainment industry.

The Whitney's New Leaders

The board of trustees at the **Whitney Museum of American Art** have elected Neil G. Bluhm and Laurie M. Tisch as co-chairs and designated Richard M. DeMartini as president.

Founded in 1931 by socialite and art patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875-1942), the museum focuses on 20th and 21st century American art with more than 21,000 works in its collection.

Hannah Ghorashi explains on ArtNews.com that "Tisch was elected to the Whitney's board in 1996, and currently serves as president of the **Laurie M. Tisch Illumination Fund**, a New York City-based arts nonprofit dedicated to increasing access to education, art, economic development, and healthy food."

She adds that Bluhm runs his own real estate company and has been on the board since 2003. DeMartini is a former bank president. All three start their new positions on July 1.

Not Quite The Pride Flag

Time-Warner's Cable News Network (CNN) recently reported an ISIS flag being waived during New York City's huge and colorful Gay Pride Parade.

It turns out to have been a piece created by British artist Paul Coombs.

TheWrap.com has posted a video report on the incident at <http://www.thewrap.com/cnn-boner-highlights-the-dildos-dildonts-of-tv-news-wrap-trends/>

Condors Swoop Into National Aviary

Four massive Andean Condors have a new home --- the **National Aviary**.



THE NATIONAL AVIARY

Founded in 1952 as the Pittsburgh Aviary Conservatory, the National Aviary is the largest aviary in the United States. It was spun off into its own independent non-profit in 1991 and has been officially designated the National Aviary by the United States Congress.

“The National Aviary is now the only accredited zoo in North America exhibiting two pairs of Andean Condors as well as man-

aging them for breeding,” says National Aviary Managing Director Cheryl Tracy in a press release.

The birds’ new home is called Condor Court and features a 20-foot-high rock façade, nesting caves, bathing pools, nesting elements designed to mimic the condors’ native habitat and make them feel comfortable.

Tracy adds in the press release: “The decline of these birds in Ecuador has been steady and dramatic, and the National Aviary is proud to be playing a key role in international efforts to protect them. Here in Pittsburgh, Condor Court will provide an excellent setting for breeding, and for educational programming. In Ecu-

dor, we’ve funded one of the world’s largest Andean Condor exhibits and breeding programs, as well as a veterinary clinic modeled after our own. We are working with our partners in Ecuador to establish a reintroduction program so that chicks hatched at the National Aviary can be released into the wild.”

Visitors to the National Aviary are now able to view the condors and learn more about them.



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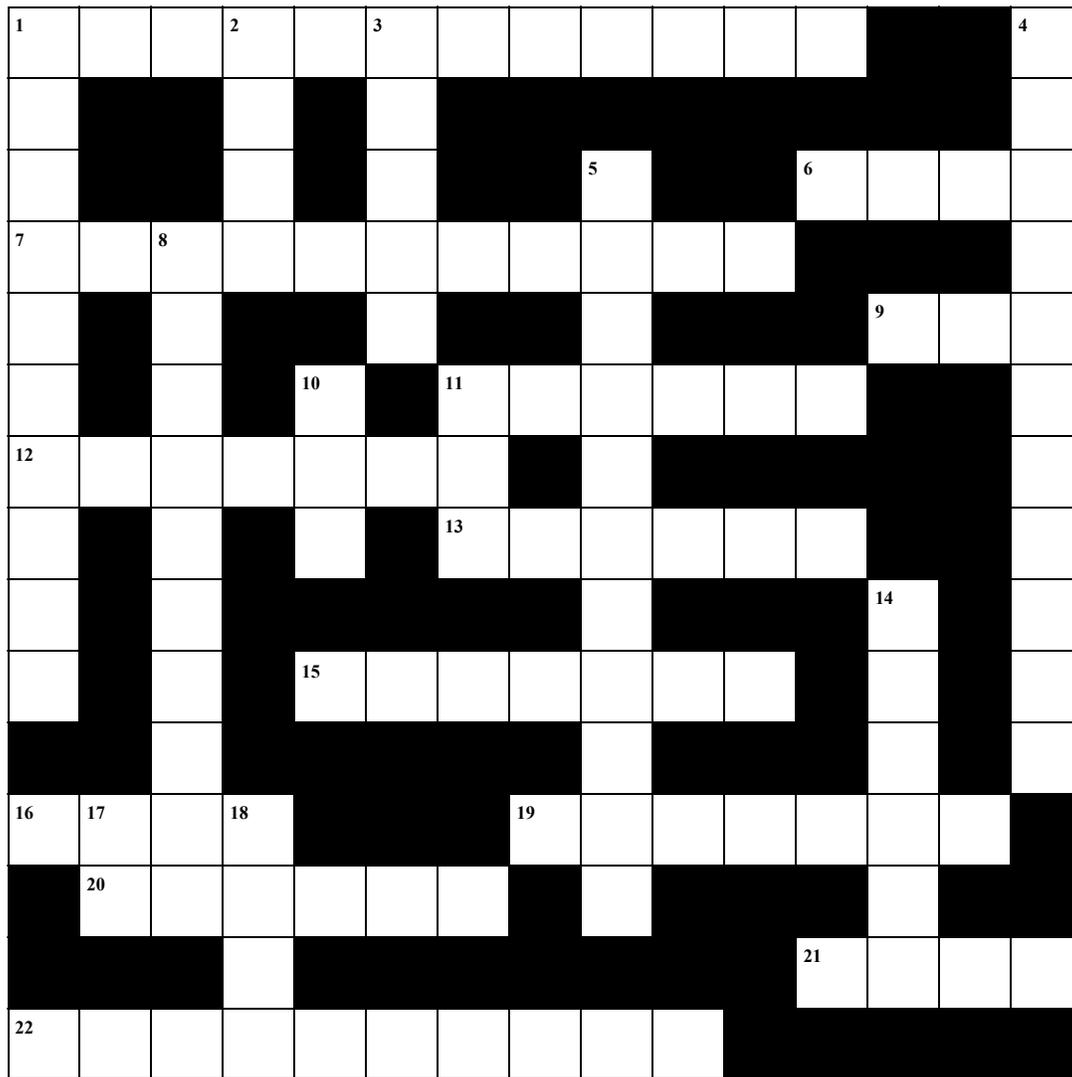
Jim Richards does many things for Pittsburgh arts community --- most for free --- despite limiting health issues. So show your support in one or more of the following ways:

- * Purchase an ad in *Pittsburgh Applause*
- * Sponsor a project
- * Hire Jim to do your marketing
- * Give him free tickets to your show
- * Make a monetary donation

James A. Richards
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www.james-richards.com

THE APPLAUSE PUZZLE

“The Simpsons”



ACROSS

1. “The Simpsons” creator
6. Famous office shape
7. The Simpsons’ hometown
9. Lisa’s grandpa, to pals
11. See 19-Across
12. Lisa’s preferred food, informally
13. See 20-Across
15. Marge’s maiden name
16. Maggie’s big brother
19. Homer’s half-brother (with 11-Across)
20. It all started on her show (with 13-Across)
21. He voices Apu, etc. (with 19-Down)
22. Krusty’s last name

DOWN

1. Homer’s hangout
2. Picard’s Betazoid aid
3. “Home on the ___”
4. She voices Marge and her sisters
5. Sideshow Bob’s last name
8. Marge’s teen crush
10. Number of Selma’s husbands
11. Paterno’s school
14. See 21-Across
17. Early IBM computer
18. Soviet news agency

Last Month’s Solution

C	A	R	N	E	G	I	E	M	E	L	L	O	N	
A			E		U						O		G	
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Pittsburgh Applause Editorial

Filmmakers: The Unforeseen & Seen

By James A. Richards

Life can be so very unpredictable. No matter how smart our advance planning, there is a good chance that something will come along to screw it up.

That appears to be what has happened at the Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts.

In his recent *Pittsburgh City Paper* article, Bill O'Driscoll describes a disturbing situation at one of the city's (and, arguably, the nation's) leading media arts institutions. The word "disturbing" is certainly a good description for what has happened. However, many of the financial problems facing PF/PCA could happen to any organization.

For starters, the facilities are extremely old. Pittsburgh Filmmakers is housed in a former warehouse and the Center for the Arts is in a former mansion built in 1909. Age always costs more. That was reinforced when the HVAC at the center failed requiring major and expensive upgrades. There were also licensing issues connected to software upgrades.

Executive director Charlie Humphrey has been the target of criticism. In the blog that accompanies O'Driscoll's article are comments such as "time for new leadership and focus" and that Humphrey has "a short sighted vision."

Perhaps that's true, but it does speak well of Humphrey that *he* is among his own critics. O'Driscoll's article points out that

"Humphrey blames another portion of the cash shortfall on his own overly optimistic estimates of how quickly new Filmmakers education programs would generate significant revenue." It also speaks well of him that he is declining a salary for June and is giving himself a 30% pay cut.

However, the article also raises questions about staff morale even before the layoffs. If the article is correct, then some modification in his management approach would also speak well of Charlie Humphrey.

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