

## Trump's NEA Changes Cause More Chaos

The worries and tumult regarding the Trump Administration among the creative world have grown considerably since [Pittsburgh Applause reported on the situation just a month ago](#).

As reported last month, concerns have been centered on the **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA). Those concerns were realized when the NEA announced that the Challenge America funding program has been cancelled. The program was created to support creative members of often underserved communities such as African Americans, LGBTQ, etc.

The cancellation is a direct response to [Executive Order 14151](#), which was signed on January 20 and [Executive Order 14173](#), which was signed on January 21. These and other orders called for the elimination of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts once supported by the federal government.

"The dissolution of Challenge America removes an entry-level funding opportunity designed for smaller organizations, which could make it harder for first-time applicants to access NEA support," **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** CEO Patrick Fisher said in an email.

NEA's [updated guidelines](#) now "encourage projects that celebrate the nation's rich artistic heritage and creativity by honoring the semi quincentennial of the United States of America" [which [occurs in 2026](#) – ed.]

James McNeel of **City Theatre** told [WESA-FM's Bill O'Driscoll](#) that DEI "is a value of our organization because it's something we believe in, it's something we feel lifts up our community." An NEA grant was meant to help finance a City Theater play about two gay women that utilized American Sign Language.



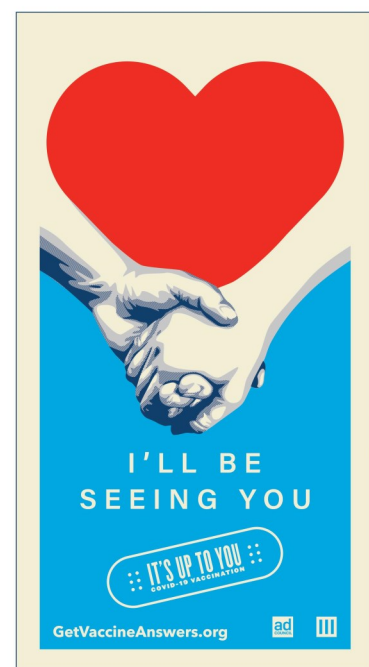
Some of the new NEA rules require grant applicants to reapply. O'Driscoll reports that these include local multimedia dance troupe **PearlArts Movement**.

While this was happening, the prestigious **John F. Kennedy Memorial Center for the Performing Arts** was thrown into chaos when President Donald Trump suddenly fired the entire board and named himself chair.

Opened in 1971, the Kennedy Center is a public-private partnership that hosts many kinds of performing arts and is home to both the **National Symphony Orchestra** and the **Washington National Opera**. Most of the center's funding comes from donations and ticket sales [the federal government pays for building maintenance – ed.] It has historically operated independently, although nominally under the sitting U.S. President.

Additional focal points are the **U.S. Department of Labor** (DOL) and the **National Labor Relations Board** (NLRB) which have the entertainment unions upset. Of particular concern was firing attorney [Gwynne Wilcox](#) as chairwoman of the NLRB. **The American Federation of Musicians** blasted the decision as unlawful and "harmful to musicians across the United States" while praising Wilcox as "a committed public servant." **The Writers Guild of America East** has called planned layoffs at the DOL as "a danger to workers everywhere."

James A. Richards, publisher of *Pittsburgh Applause*, has created what is expected to be a regular newsletter feature: "DOGE Watch". This is a page of links to keep readers updated about relevant activities by the controversial **Department of Government Efficiency** (DOGE).



**PITTSBURGH APPLAUSE**  
**DOGE WATCH**

A gold-colored decorative frame containing the text "PITTSBURGH APPLAUSE" and "DOGE WATCH" in red. Below the text is a pair of black binoculars. The left lens shows a portrait of Donald Trump, and the right lens shows a portrait of Elon Musk.



## Kamins Donate Another \$25 Million To CMP

An historic gift was announced on February 22 by the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh** (CMP) --- a donation of \$25 million by Daniel Kamin and his wife, Carole.



Daniel Kamin is president of development firm **Kamin Realty**. Founded an ancestor in 1916, the company today owns or manages over 400 properties across the country.

The gift will be used by the Carnegie Museum of Natural History to renovate the museum's iconic "Dinosaurs in Their Time" exhibition and endow future scientific missions. It is being described by

the CMP as "the largest individual monetary gift to Carnegie Museum of Natural History since Andrew Carnegie founded Carnegie Museums in 1895."

"Twice in the past year, Dan and Carole Kamin have demonstrated their profound commitment to the work of our museums through transformational gifts totaling \$90 million," said the CMP's Dr. Steven Knapp in a press release. [The first was a donation to the Carnegie Science Center. [See Pittsburgh Applause February 2024](#) – ed.] "We are deeply grateful for their unparalleled endorsement of our museums' power to inspire and inform, and we are honored to be a part of their great legacy of generosity in the Pittsburgh region." In other news, Beth L. Wright

has been named by the CMP as the institution's new Vice President, Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer. Her previous experience is primarily in financial management at educational organizations such as **Chartiers Valley School District** and **Propel Schools, Inc.**

I am thrilled to be joining the Carnegie Museums team," Wright said in a press release. "I've been visiting the museums all my life, and I still feel the awe that the four Carnegie Museums inspire on every visit. I can now look forward to being a part of bringing the joy of the museums to future generations."

Beth L. Wright assumes her new post on April 22.

## Trust Plans Arts Landing

As part of the proposed Downtown revitalization efforts, the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust** has announced plans for a new outdoor space to be called Arts Landing.



"Arts Landing will welcome residents and visitors, host festivals and performances, exhibit public art, and provide opportunities for everyday recreation and relaxation," said Kendra Whitlock Ingram, President & CEO of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust in a press release. "We are grateful to our civic leaders and project partners whose generosity and collaborative spirit continue to push the downtown revitalization vision forward."

Construction is scheduled to begin this April on the vacant surface lots on Eighth Street located between Penn Avenue and Fort Duquesne Boulevard. Key elements will include a one-acre great lawn, a bandshell, a pedestrian-friendly garden walk and a visitor center, among others.

The Trust has provided details [in a press release that can be read here](#).



James A. Richards, publisher of *Pittsburgh Applause*, has (finally) completed the new online version of *The Pittsburgh A&E Book* professional directory.

The directory has been published in hardcopy sporadically since 2001. It is drawn from the most complete database of art and entertainment professionals, organizations, companies and services in the region. It is through the *A&E Book* that a filmmaker can find a studio, a theater producer finds props, a sculptor to secure supplies and a gallery while a musician can locate a recording studio and maybe get booked at a club.

All by logging on to [www.pittsburghaebook.com](http://www.pittsburghaebook.com).

The online directory is organized and fully searchable. It is best accessed via a PC or a tablet. Anyone interested in learning more should contact Jim.

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## Craft Expands — Across The Street

In early February, **Contemporary Craft** (CC) announced the purchase of a nearby property as part of a major expansion.

The building is across the street from CC. Constructed in stages between 1907 and 1915, it was originally home to the **Hunter Saw & Machine Company**. The firm's [Wikipedia article](#) describes it as a family firm that "produced various custom tools and machinery with a specialty in cold saws." It has been renovated and restored by builders/architects Doug and Liza Cruze. A listing for the property on **Ballymoney Real Estate** [web site](#) has it priced at \$2,750,000.



"This is an incredible moment for Contemporary Craft and Pittsburgh. Our expansion will not only serve our regional community, but it will also allow us to grow our national and international programming," said Contemporary Craft's Rachel Saul Rearick in a press release. "I'm honored to be at the organization during this period of growth, and I have so much gratitude for the dedication of our staff and board. We're excited to make Pittsburgh the heart of craft."

Renovations have made the Hunter Saw Building nearly turnkey. It will be called the Timmons Studios (after a donor). A \$4.5 million capital campaign has been launched to finance the expansion.

The press release explains: "The Timmons Studios will offer Contemporary Craft an additional 13,000 square feet to build out the fibers and metals programs, reintroduce a woodworking studio, and build out a new blacksmithing studio. With the addition of the Timmons Studios, space in the current facility will also be adjusted to create a small gallery dedicated to the exhibition of regional artists; with the main gallery remaining focused on national and international craft artists."

To learn more about the Timmons Studios and the expansion, visit [contemporarycraft.org/imagine-more](http://contemporarycraft.org/imagine-more)

## Aviary Also Grows

Thanks to a benefactor swooping in, **The National Aviary** is getting a satellite facility.



"A great deal of my gifting goes into conservation and wildlife preservation," the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Michael DiVittorio quotes venture capitalist S. Kent Rockwell. "I've always had an interest in those things. This seems to me like it would be a good fit for [the Aviary]. They need

the space. They're doing wonderful things and they're very cramped."

Rockwell and his partner, Patricia Babyak, are making the expansion possible by helping to finance a new campus for **Shady Side Academy**. The school's current campus will be converted into a conservation center and veterinary teaching hospital.

The Aviary is targeting 2027 for the new facility's grand opening. [To learn more, read DiVittorio's article.](#)

## 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.

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## “The Pitt” Is Renewed

The streaming medical drama “The Pitt” has been renewed for a second season, [reports Rick Porter of the Hollywood Reporter](#).

“The Pitt” is set in a fictional Pittsburgh hospital (purportedly inspired by Allegheny General Hospital) with exteriors shot locally. It is available on **Warner Brothers Discovery’s** (WBD) Max streaming service.

Unfortunately, the news isn’t all good. In a separate article, [Winston Cho reports](#) that WBD’s attempt to have a lawsuit involving the series dismissed has failed. The suit is being pursued by the estate of the late author Michael Crichton. The estate contends that “The Pitt” is an unauthorized spinoff of “ER” (1994-2009), which Crichton had created.

## KST Preps For Symposium

Details for this spring’s Owning Our Future symposium have been announced by the **Kelly-Strayhorn Theater** (KST).

The symposium is a four-day program to empower BIPOC [black, indigenous and people of color] artists. Writer, cultural strategist and educator Lisa Yancy has been slated as the opening keynote speaker. Panels will explore issues such as finances and operational practices. There will also be performances and a tour of KST’s East Liberty neighborhood.

Several local BIPOC artistic leaders will be participating. These include Veronica Corpuz of the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust**, Oronde S. Sharif of the **University of Pittsburgh** and historian Kilolo Luckett, among others. Owning Our Future is scheduled for May 15 through May 18. The entire schedule is [available online](#) and tickets are now available.

## “Pradeeps” Canned

After just one season, “The Pradeeps of Pittsburgh” has been canceled by **Amazon**.

[Nellie Anderson of Deadline](#) explains that the series “did not make much noise among viewers despite largely favorable reviews (75% on Rotten Tomatoes).”

The sitcom was about an Indian family building a new life in a



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## Union Scores A Court Win

Oral arguments were heard in a Philadelphia courtroom on February 26 that may lead to an end of the long strike against **Block Communications' Pittsburgh Post-Gazette** and the **Newspaper Guild of Pittsburgh**.



Block Communications, Inc.

Members of the guild have been on strike since October of 2022, charging that the company bargained in bad faith over a new

contract. The hearing occurred because of Block's appeal in response to the **National Labor Relations Board** (NLRB) affirming a ruling in the guild's favor.

[Bob Batz Jr. of the digital newspaper Union Progress reports](#)

NLRB attorney David Seid arguing that the union "is in danger of dying" and that the NLRB's "authority is rendered meaningless" if the injunction is not allowed to proceed.

The NLRB is to file its brief in the company's appeal no later than March 17.

## \$100K For Rogers Co.

A sizable grant of \$100,000 from Citizens Bank (part of **Citizens Financial Group**) has been awarded to the **Fred Rogers Company**.



The donation will benefit the organization's fellowship program for emerging writers. A press release describes the program: "The Fred Rogers Productions Writers' Neighborhood is a fellowship program that aims to help emerging writers build and sustain careers in children's media. Now in its third year, the mentorship program helps build the pipeline of creatives in children's programming by connecting fellows with industry professionals and enabling them to learn and network with experienced writers, story editors, head writers, and producers."

Some of the money will also be used for events connected to the animated children's series "Alma's Way." The show was a result of the program.

In other news, long-time staff member Hedda Sharapan has been named a member of the Gold Circle of the **National Academy of Arts & Sciences**. She has been with Rogers for over fifty years and is currently a child development consultant for the TV series "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood."

**JON BURNETT  
(1954-2025)**



## Humphries Honored

Legendary Pittsburgh jazz drummer Roger Humphries is among the honorees of the inaugural Jazz Legacies Fellowship program.

A joint initiative of the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** and the **Jazz Foundation of America**, the fellowship honors jazz artists aged 62 and older for their “pivotal role” in the formation and strengthening of “the broader jazz ecosystem.” Each receives an unrestricted grant of \$100,000.

“Jazz is a quintessentially American art form, central to our vast and varied American culture, and this initiative rightly and broadly honors the work of those who continue to drive the evolution of jazz while also safeguarding its histories,” said Elizabeth Alexander, President of the Mellon Foundation, in a press release.

The full list of recipients and details about the initiative [are available by clicking here](#).



## New Foundation Home

One of the local art world’s leading funders, the **Pittsburgh Foundation**, has moved into a new home in the Pittsburgh Cultural District.

The foundation has moved from PPG Place to 912 Fort Duquesne Blvd. According to [Commercial Search](#),

the modernist building was completed in 1985 with 130,000 square feet in total space. It is located within a short walk of the David L. Lawrence Convention Center and the High School for Creative & Performing Arts. The foundation now occupies the top two floors.



“Our new, highly visible headquarters renews The Pittsburgh Foundation’s 80-year commitment to improving quality of life in our communities, neighbor by neighbor,” [said Foundation President Lisa Schroeder in a press release](#). “The headquarters is intentionally designed as a hub where stakeholders --- both new and familiar --- will gather and collaborate to forge paths to a future Pittsburgh where all residents have the opportunity to thrive.”

The space has been customized to meet the foundation’s desire to “provide community members with an inspiring environment” while meeting its operational needs.

## Images



*March 3 marks the 25th Lights! Glamour! Action! gala fundraiser for the Pittsburgh Film Office (PFO).*

Photo by G.T. Mendel; from the PO Facebook



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## Black Artist Grants

Fifteen artists have been awarded with Black Artist Empowerment Grant, the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC) has announced.

The goal of the grant program is to support Black artists in Allegheny County.

GREATER PITTSBURGH  
ARTS COUNCIL



Arts loud and clear

“Art is the connective tissue that fortifies the vital structures of our region,” said Ashanté Josey, Michael Carroll, and Kahlil Darden, former members of GPAC’s Black Arts Action Committee and founders of the grant initiative, said in a blog post. “By providing resources to our most disadvantaged creatives, we expand the horizons of expression, nourishing all communities not with bread and water, but with culture and perspective.”

Each artist receives \$500. [The full list, and details, are available here.](#)

## COAP Co-Founder Steps Down As Chair

The co-founder of **City of Asylum Pittsburgh** (COAP) has stepped down as board chairman, reports Bill O’Driscoll for WESA-FM.

Henry Reese founded COAP in the early 2000’s with Diane Samuels. It is part of a global network to raise awareness of and provide support to endangered writers. The Pittsburgh branch operates out of a facility called Alphabet City.

“Part of the plan in building Alphabet City was that it would become independent of the founders,” Reese is quoted by O’Driscoll. “And to signal to the world that we’ve grown up and we are 21 years old. We’re adults now,”

Reese particularly cites the success of executive director Caro Lewellyn, who was hired in 2023. [Read the full article.](#)

## Theater Comp Shuttters

Playwright and director Anya Martin has announced the closure of her theater company, **Hiawatha Project**. The news was reported in early February by the blog [On Stage Pittsburgh](#).

“It is with a spirit of profound gratitude, that we announce Hiawatha Project’s closing after 15

years of all new, and original world premiere theatre-making,” Martin posted on the company [web site](#).

Martin founded the company in 2010.

**MEL BOCHNER  
(1940-2025)**



## iHeart Ups Loesch

Bobbie Loesch has been promoted by **iHeart Media** to lead the company's Pittsburgh radio stations as Market President.



Loesch has been working at iHeart Pittsburgh since 2004 and is currently a vice president for sales at the local stations.

"Bobbie has been an instrumental and driving force behind the success of our Pittsburgh cluster for over 20 years," [Radio Insight's Lance Venta](#) quotes Division President DJ Hodge, "and her leadership and vision make her the perfect fit to lead the team into the future."

## Schell Readies 3D Game

On February 20, **Schell Games** announced that it is working with **Innersloth** on a three-dimensional version of the latter company's "Among Us."

"Among Us" is [described by Innersloth](#) as "a party game of teamwork and betrayal" involving groups of players who must complete tasks on a spaceship while avoiding deadly imposters.



The new version being co-developed by Schell expands the number of players, adds new roles and new tasks and other elements.

"One thing that makes us super excited," the company cheers in a blog post. "is just how well the

[personal computer] and [virtual reality] crossplay intermixes with one another. It's a truly unique experience, and the only way to tell players apart by platform is by watching their hands."

Details are available by [clicking here](#).



Channel  
Pittsburgh



Channel  
Pittsburgh

Going Gaelic

Monday, March 17 @ 7pm EST

## PSO Names Musicians

Ukrainian violinist Marta Krechkovsky has been appointed Assistant Concertmaster by the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO).

Her promotion is part of a collection of new appointments among the PSO's musicians.



Krechkovsky's accomplishments began early at the age of 10 after she became a prizewinner at Kocian International Violin Competition in Czech Re-

public. She joined the PSO at the beginning of 2014-2015 season.

Uzbekistan-born violinist Ilkhom Mukhiddinov has been appointed First Violin. Coming from a musical family, Mukhiddinov debuted with the Uspensky Symphony Orchestra at age 7.

American trumpeter is the newly appointed associate principal trumpet. He has performed with various orchestras cross the country, from Philadelphia to Tuscon.

## Kennywood Goes Training

A new train-theme attraction is being added to Kennywood this year, reports [Eric Heyl for Patch Pittsburgh](#).



The amusement park has been a favorite place for generations of Pittsburghers since opening in 1898. It is currently owned by Spanish firm **Parques Reunidos** (operating locally as Palace Entertainment).

Called Kennywood Junction, it will feature five rides and a new celebration room. At the core will be the three-gauge railroad train the Gimbel's Flyer. This historic vehicle made its debut at the legendary [1939 New York World's Fair](#) and has called the park home since 1945.

Expect the attraction to open with the summer 2025 season.

## History Center Tops List (Again)

Once again, *USA Today* has named **Senator John Heinz History Center** as the nation's #1 history museum.



"We are honored that *USA Today* has selected the History Center as America's best history museum for the second time," said museum CEO Andy Masich in a press release. "At the History Center, visitors of all ages can have a meaningful experience while exploring American history. This national recognition means a lot to our staff and volunteers. It reflects the impact we have on communities here in

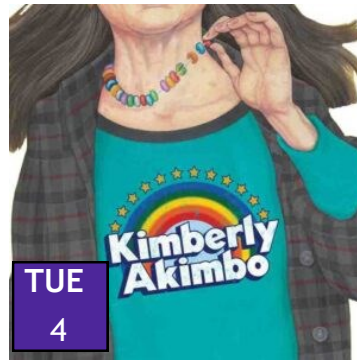
Western Pennsylvania and throughout the country."

Nominees for the newspaper's annual Readers' Choice Awards are chosen by a panel of industry experts and editors. Readers then vote for the winners. [The full list is available here](#).





SAT  
1



TUE  
4



FRI  
7



SAT  
8



FRI  
14



SAT  
15



WED  
19



FRI  
21



FRI  
28





# Opportunities

Applications are still being accepted by the **Kelly-Strayhorn Theater's** annual Freshworks residency program. [Download the PDF for the details.](#)

The local **iHeart Media** radio stations are seeking [a part-time promotions assistant](#). The successful candidate will participate in remote broadcasts and on-site events.

On the museum's web site, the **Mattress Factory** is open for someone capable of "writing compelling, comprehensive proposals and reports" that can be submitted to foundations and other funders. [This is a part-time position.](#)

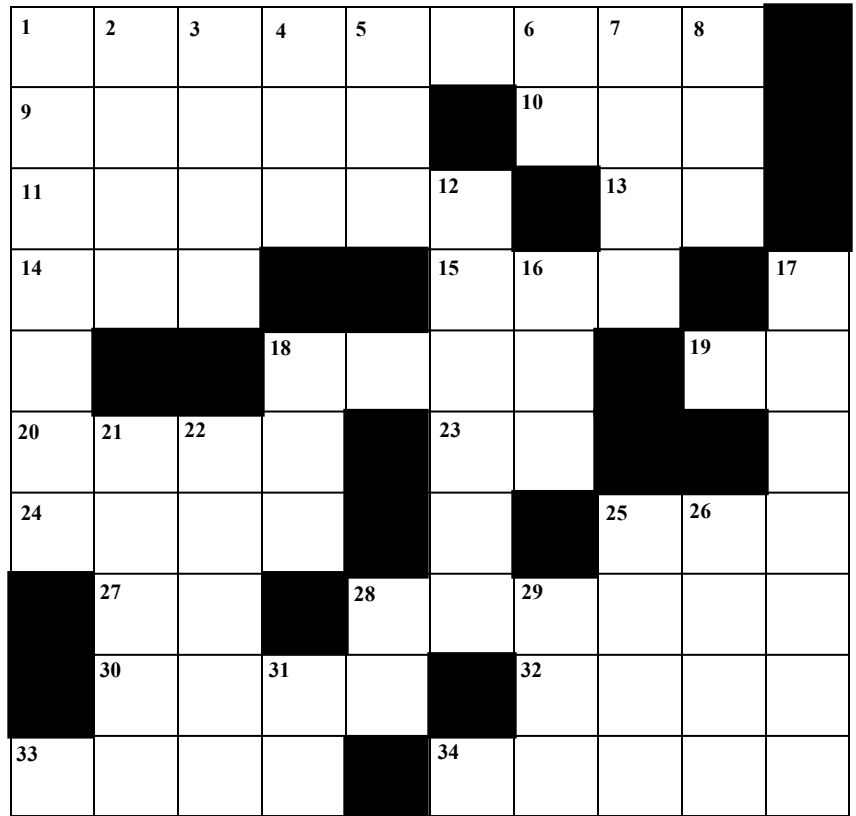


## Across

1. Architectural style of 28-Across
9. Muscat resident
10. Plane regulator as it is plainly known
11. A bichon's boss?
13. A movie franchise's rights, commonly
14. Half a laugh
15. Union that form at the site of  
28-Across in 1881 (initially)
18. Noted architect Saarinen, to pals
19. Madrid affirmation
20. Noted actor Alda, to pals
23. News organization and Trump's  
latest media target
24. Number of circular basins for the  
fountain at 28-Across
25. Letters associated with a hit  
Broadway show
27. Part of the Bible before NT
28. Cool urban Square and subject of  
this puzzle
30. Type of baby that is often maligned
32. Upper human extremity
33. Canadian extension of ExxonMobil
34. Theater that once sat at 28-Across

### Last Month's Solution

E	R				M	E	A	L	S
B	A	S	T	E	R	D	S		E
O	D	E	R		B	O	T	H	A
L	A	V	A		U		R	O	T
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		N	H		T				
	K			L	O	U	I	S	
B	A	T	M	A	N		B	E	D
	L	A	I	R		D	E	C	K
	B	R	A	D	P	I	T	T	



## Down

1. Cinematic "Prophecies" that filmed a  
scene at 28-Across
2. Honduran town of 10,000 people
3. Possible nickname for Niles Crane's  
TV wife
4. Finish
5. Site of 2016 Olympics, briefly
6. 2024 film starring Ryan Reynolds
7. Fabric needed to power any of  
Columbus' ships
8. A loud type of dance
12. Facility located below 28-Across
16. A dude too interested in his duds
17. Either half of the landscape  
architectural firm behind 28-Across
18. The opposite of SWS
21. Tigers' cousins
22. Ponies up, as in a card game
25. A Czech or a Serb
26. Guitarist Benise, to pals
28. What a detective looks for, initially
29. NYC LGBTQ org.
31. "Kung Fu Panda" protagonist