

## Contending With Donald Trump

Both the commercial and non-profit creative worlds are searching for ways of responding to the changing landscape created by Donald Trump and his supporters.

The brief suspension of “Jimmy Kimmel Live” by group owners **NexStar Media Group** and **Sinclair Broadcast Group** (which owns two Pittsburgh TV stations) has brought the situation to public attention --- at least, for a moment.

Fear of retribution is fueling caution. Award winning British TV producer Armando Iannucci has been frustrated in his efforts to raise funds for a project critical of Trump. He is quoted by [Deadline’ Jake Kanter](#) that the advice he’s been getting from America is “you better lawyer up [if the project is realized], you will spend the next four years just weighed down by legal issues you have to get through.”

Locally, the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC) has been especially active in keeping Pittsburgh’s creative community informed and engaged with its [frequently updated blog](#).

Among what may be the most important responses to the Kimmel issue is coming from the **Directors Guild of America** (DGA). The union has called on its members [to report any instances of censorship](#) that they are facing. “We understand that these issues go beyond the suspension of one late night program, and the guild remains committed to protecting your artistic and creative rights.”

One bright spot was [a September 19 ruling by a federal judge](#) that

“enjoined and set aside [a **National Endowment for the Arts**] implementation of an executive order that prohibits federal funding for grants that express ideas disfavored by the government.”

Nonprofit media has been hit especially hard by federal budget cuts. [Rob Tornoe reports for the Philadelphia Inquirer](#) that a Pennsylvania organization will be the first in the nation to shut down as a direct result of Trump’s actions. WPSU-TV has been serving much of the state’s rural population for more than seven decades. And the entire NJ PBS web of stations owned by **the New Jersey Public Broadcasting Authority** (a state agency) is at serious risk. “The loss of NJ PBS would seriously harm the flow of news and information,” [writes Ray Schultz for MediaPost](#).

In a September 30 email to *Pittsburgh Applause*, **WQED Multimedia’s** Jason Jedlinski underscored that “WQED is not going anywhere.”

“Make no mistake,” Jedlinski added, “PBS programming will change. But we are determined to keep educating and inspiring people across southwestern Pennsylvania --- no matter what.”

The Far Right has targeted the media for decades. “The efforts to eliminate television deemed offensive to conservatives, whether those offenses came on social or political grounds, stretches back nearly 45 years,” [the Hollywood Reporter’s Steven Zeitchik](#) docu-

ments in detail. But the earliest efforts of the Far Right failed. There were fewer media options then which gave companies greater ability to withstand such pressure. And the Republican Party was still fairly centrist in its politics.

Public media has been especially derided as being “too liberal” by organizations such as the **Heritage Foundation**, the driving force behind the controversial Project 2025. But the atmosphere has changed, Zeitchik states bluntly. Donald Trump benefits from having “attack-dog loyalists at the highest levels of government.”

GPAC is seeking input and collaborators in addressing on how the arts can address hate and censorship. Anyone interested in participating should [click here](#).



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



## Ellison Starts Making His Mark

The new leadership at what is now called **Paramount, a Skydance Corporation** (and the owner of two Pittsburgh TV stations) has been really busy the last few weeks.

Some of the actions reflect CEO David Ellison's commitment to new media and technology. This includes hiring Dane Glasgow for the newly created position of Chief Product Officer. The company's announcement says that Glasgow "will lead the company's product vision and strategy, driving innovation across digital platforms, immersive storytelling, advertising, and AI-powered capabilities." He was most recently with **Meta Platforms**, the parent company of Facebook.



Other actions appear to reflect Ellison's conservative political views. Among these is hiring attorney and lobbyist **Makan Delrahim** as Chief Legal Officer. He is a long-time Donald Trump supporter who once worked in the [first Trump Administration](#).

And a recent policy change is seen as CBS News capitulating the current administration. That decision is no longer to edit interviews conducted on the series "Face the Nation." It came after complaints that an interview with U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem was modified to focus on false statements she was making.

Critics of the policy change include [MediaPost's Wayne Friedman](#): "Journalistic editing processes can be subject to a broad range of things, including when facts, figures, statements are not

part of the central part of the story." He adds: "It also can give government officials and others the ability to grandstand and divulge promotional things, further muddying independent journalists' efforts. Accountability is then challenged."

In addition, there have been [reports](#) that Ellison is interested in adding internet media company **The Free Press** to the firm's CBS News division. The Free Press was co-founded in 2021 by Pittsburgh native [Bari Weiss](#) [her parents once owned **Weisshouse** – ed.]. The controversial Weiss has often been difficult to peg, but she is generally considered to be a neo-conservative.

## "The Pitt" Is Tops

Set in (and partially filmed in) Pittsburgh, the TV series "The Pitt" swept this year's Emmy Awards --- including Best Drama Series and Best Actor for star Noah Wyle.

"Wyle richly deserved this year's Best Actor award," [comments Adam Buckman for MediaPost](#).

"As a very experienced television actor, he brings great authority to the show in his role as the senior attending physician in a Pittsburgh hospital emergency room."

For a complete list of nominees and winners, [click here](#).

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## Carnegie Library Gets Special Gift

The first edition of any literarily significant book (i.e., part of the original print run as confirmed by the printer's key) can be hard to come by. Now, imagine receiving more than 3,500 of them. That's the number recently received by the **Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh** (CLP).

Marshall Cohen, founder of the **Greater Pittsburgh Festival of Books**, has donated his personal collection to the CLP.

"This donation is a reflection of my lifelong love of books and authors," explained Marshall Cohen in a press release. "I believe deeply in the power of reading to bring people together, to educate and to inspire. I'm proud to share this collection with a city and library system that nurtured my own love of reading from a young age. In these times especially, reading and books are more critical than



ever, and libraries are the core of that. We truly need to make America read again."

The Greater Pittsburgh Festival of Books (which is being [rebranded as PGH Book Fest](#)) began in 2021 to celebrate the region's rich literary history and to encourage reading books.

Many of the books have been signed by their authors. These include Truman Capote, Arthur Miller and Winston Churchill.

## Rogers Writers Unionize

The animation writers at **Fred Rogers Productions** (FRP) will now be represented by the **Writers Guild of America East** (WGAE), the union has announced. This includes FRP's partner, **Spiffy Pictures**.



These companies' writers will now work under a 2024 agreement made between WGAE and the **Public Broadcasting Service** (PBS). Spiffy Pictures was co-founded in 2003 by puppeteer David Rudman, who is best known for his work of children's television series such as "Sesame Street."

"The agreement covers writing work for animated programs over 5 minutes in length made for TV and new media, with writers re-

ceiving pension and health contributions on top of script fees and weekly salaries," WGAE explained in its announcement.

In other news, FRP and live entertainment firm **RWS Global** [have announced](#) a new immersive exhibition based on the popular "Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood" animated series. The traveling project is designed for zoos "to educate young visitors in playful ways and inspire wildlife advocacy."



Channel  
Pittsburgh

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## Bye, Bye ShowClix

As part of an effort to create a unified image, **Leap Event Technology** has announced that it is phasing out the ShowClix name.



ShowClix was co-founded in 2007 by Joshua Dziabiak. He was a mere 19 years old and had grown up on a Beaver County farm where the internet access was simple dial-up. The company began as an online event registration database before transforming into a ticket retailer in 2011. ShowClix was eventually purchased by Patron Technology (now called Leap Event Technology).

The rebranding (which also involves another division, Ticketbooth) means ShowClix will be known as Leap.

“This rebrand represents more than just a name change. It’s about unifying our incredible technology and passionate teams under one vision,” said Leap’s Michael Marty in a press release. “By bringing ShowClix and Ticketbooth under the Leap umbrella, we’re creating an unstoppable force that will revolutionize how organizers connect with their attendees and transform experiences.”

The company insists that “users can rest assured that their event operations will continue without interruption.” At press time, it was unclear if or how the local staff will be affected.

## PSO Hires Daniels

Tim Daniels has been named as the new Principal English Horn at the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO).

Daniels holds degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music (part of **Oberlin College**), the **Juilliard School** and the **San Francisco Conservatory of Music**. He has most recently performed with the **Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra**.



“Tim is a special musician whose warmth of sound and depth of expression will immediately be felt within our orchestra and by our audiences,” said PSO Music Director Manfred Honeck in a press release. “I am delighted to welcome him to the PSO family.”

Daniels begins with the PSO this month.

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## Public Art News

Interesting local public art projects are moving forward, **Shiftworks Community**, has announced.

### SHIFTWORKS

Pittsburgh-based artist [Kim Beck](#) has been selected by the **Pennsylvania Department of Transportation** (PennDOT) for an [interchange improvement project](#). The area's rich history of quilting is inspiring the work she is creating, which will include simple shapes and silhouettes of local plant and animal life.

Meanwhile, Shiftworks is seeking public input on another developing project. That project has local artist [Marsha Rollinger](#) creating a piece for Pittsburgh Regional Transit (PRT). The work she designs will be showcased on part of PRT's 7.1-mile University Line. Anyone interested in expressing an opinion is welcome to [click here](#).



## Bursic Gets \$5K Grant

Local filmmaker [Hansen Bursic](#) has won a \$5,000 grant, [reports Matthew Carey for Deadline](#).

The grant comes from **New-Filmmakers Los Angeles** (NFMLA) which champions emerging and independent filmmakers and storytellers. Bursic has residences in both Pittsburgh and LA.

Bursic has won multiple awards, particularly for his documentary work regarding the transgender community. "In this moment, we need films that are bold and unapologetic in their mission to uplift the trans community," he is quoted by Carey.

Learn more about NFMLA by visiting the [organization's web site](#).

## Nolan Heads DGA

British American filmmaker Sir Christopher Nolan has been elected president of the **Directors Guild of America** (DGA), the union has announced.



Nolan is no stranger to Pittsburgh, having shot parts of his "Batman" trilogy of films here.

"To be elected President of the Directors Guild of America is one of the greatest honors of my career," said Nolan in a press release. "Our industry is experiencing tremendous change, and I thank the Guild's membership for entrusting me with this responsibility. I also want to thank President Glatter for her leadership over the past four years. I look forward to collaborating with her and the newly elected Board to achieve important creative and economic protections for our members."

Nolan will serve a two-year term. The union has posted its new list of officers and board members [here](#).



## Astin Elected Union Chief

Sean Astin has been elected president of **SAG-AFTRA**, the union has announced.

**SAG-AFTRA**

Born in 1971, the actor is best known for the 1985 film "The Goonies" and the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy (2001-2003). He is the son of actress Patty Duke (1946-2016) and music promoter Michael Tell (1944-2025) and stepson of actor/director John Astin (born 1930). Duke served as SAG president in the 1980s.

"I am thrilled that the members have allowed me to lead our storied organization out of this challenging moment and into a future defined by confidence, progress and fierce advocacy," Austin said in a press release.

The official election results can be [read here](#).

In other news, the union has announced the formal launch a new distribution fund to benefit performers of made-for-streaming shows. [Here are the details](#).



## The Tizzy Over Tilly

Artificial intelligence (AI) was a major issue during the joint 2023 actors and writers strikes. Now those concerns have reached a new level with the arrival of [Tilly Norwood](#).

Tilly is an actress who doesn't exist. She is an AI-generated character created by Dutch actress/producer Eline Van der Velden. Despite her unreal status, there appear to be talent agencies considering representing "her."

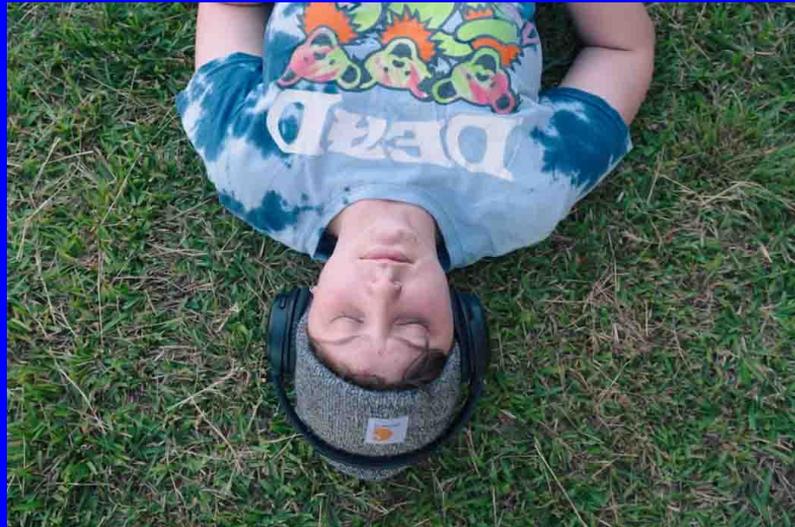
The reactions by flesh & blood performers have been swift and fierce. Actress Melissa Barrera posted online: "Hope all actors repped by the agent that does this, drop their a\$\$."

"Good Lord, we're screwed," actress Emily Blunt told [Variety's Clayton Davis](#). "That is really, really scary, Come on, [talent] agencies, don't do that. Please stop. Please stop taking away our human connection."

Performers union **SAG-AFTRA** released a [statement on September 30](#): "signatory producers should be aware that they may not use synthetic performers without complying with our contractual obligations, which require notice and bargaining whenever a synthetic performer is going to be used."

Meanwhile, **Meta Platforms** --- the parent company of Facebook --- has [launched a new political action committee \(PAC\)](#) to respond to attempts at government regulations concerning AI.

## Images



*The emotional documentary "Just Kids" is among the films being screened as part of this year's [Reel Q](#).*



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## NEP Buys Arab Company

Pittsburgh-based media company **NEP Group** has announced the purchase of Dubai-based broadcast firm **Seven Production**.



Seven Production was launched in 2007 and specializes in live sports, televised concerts, award shows and reality TV. The company also has facilities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Lebanon.

“For NEP, this is an exciting expansion in a high-growth market that taps into Seven Production’s deep experience and knowledge,” CEO Martin Stewart says in a press release. “This partnership marks a significant investment for us in the Middle East, allowing us to deepen and expand our support for broadcasters, leagues, rightsholders, and producers who need a trusted partner equipped to meet their demands.”

Seven’s clients include **LIV Golf**, which is financed by the Saudi’s sovereign wealth fund. Terms of the deal have not been disclosed.



## Schell Games @ Tech Events

Two leaders of Pittsburgh-based **Schell Games** are scheduled to speak at prestigious events.

Founder and CEO Jesse Schell will be delivering one of the keynote speeches when the annual

[Symposium on Computer-Human Interaction in Play \(CHI PLAY\)](#) comes to **Carnegie Mellon University** this month. CHI PLAY is a program of the **Associated for Computing Machinery (ACM)**, which brings together computing educators, researchers and other computer professionals.



Schell will be talking about the way new technologies, especially artificial intelligence and robotics, will change the world of gaming.

Next month, Schell’s John Pile will be traveling to the Kingdom of Spain for the [Unite 2025](#) conference. This is a program of game software firm Unity Technologies that brings together game developers, artists and others from around the world. Pile will be speaking on the subject of mixed party reality games.



**Channel  
Pittsburgh**



SAT  
4

# SIX

TUE  
7

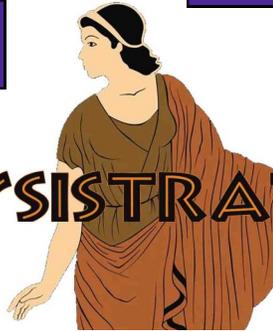


TUE  
7



THU  
9

THU  
9



# LYSISTRATA



FRI  
10



FRI  
10



FRI  
10



FRI  
24



FRI  
24



# Opportunities

Part-time on-air personalities are being sought by **Audacy** for its local radio stations. [Click here.](#)

Applications are being accepted by the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** for the next round of Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator grant. [Click here.](#)

The nonprofit improv stage **Arcade Comedy Theater** is seeking an executive director. This is a part-time position. [Click here.](#)

WPXI-TV, part of **Cox Media Group**, has an opening in advertising sales. [Click here.](#)

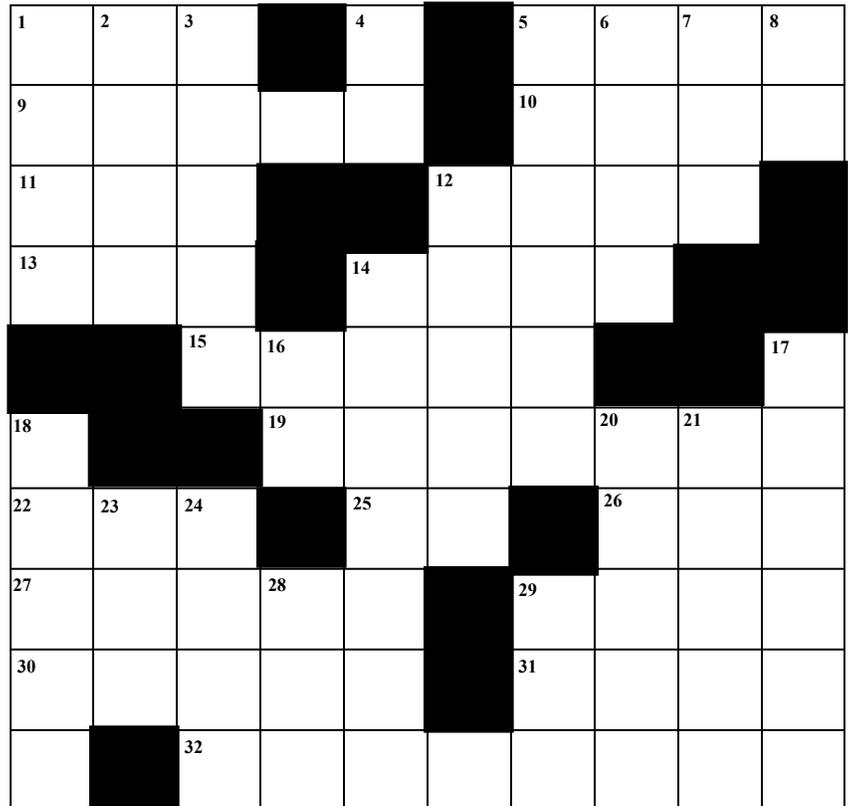
With its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday less than two years away, the **Mattress Factory** is actively looking for a new artistic director. [Click here.](#)

Positions in the areas of sales and operation are open at the **Pittsburgh Opera**. [Click here.](#)



## Across

1. The basement facility for 19-Across
5. Batman or Superman, e.g.
9. Cool abode up north
10. Smart teen in "Call Me by Your Name"
11. Actress Thompson, to pals
12. Equine TV star
13. Oui or si
14. Rosalind Russel role
15. Pretty crown
19. Batty member of 32-Across
22. Nickname for Arnaz Jr.?
25. Computer person, initially
26. Nasty rodent
27. Saliva from the mouth
29. Corn cob, e.g.
30. Common literary device
31. Done
32. Silly spooky 1964 TV series family



## Down

1. Matriarch of 32-Across
2. *A Death in the Family* author
3. Explosion
4. Pass it and get \$200
5. Patriarch of 32-Across
6. Robt. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Eliminate
8. Disappointing tied score
12. French journalist and politician
14. Loveliest member of 32-Across
16. Nobel Prize parody
17. Social media is filled with them
18. The little rascal of 32-Across
20. Pilot a motorcar
21. It follows news or precedes mâché
23. It means to be human
24. Camera lens action
28. Religious school in Bourbonnais, Illinois (initially)
29. Marijuana, to a hippie

### Last Month's Solution

J	A	C	K			C	B	S	
O	P	E	N		C	H	E	A	T
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