

pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

Steeltown Shepherds Three Projects

A trio of film and television projects supported by the **Steeltown Entertainment Project** is hitting screens starting this month.



The Steeltown Entertainment Project seeks to strengthen Pittsburgh's entertainment industry connections, educate youth, discover talent and pioneer innovative models to incubate and invest in film and television projects.

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Pittsburgh A&E Group

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First among these is "The Chair," a reality series about two directors --- Anna Martemucci and Shane Dawson --- shooting separate films in Pittsburgh based on the same screenplay. Audiences will determine who wins the \$250,000 prize. Dawson has already made a name for himself through his popular online videos. Read more about him at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shane_Dawson.

"Chairs" will debut September 6 on **Starz Inc.'s** signature cable channel. Additional information is available at <http://www.starz.com/originals/thechair>

Another project is another reality show called "Farm Queens" about two very different people with very different lives switching roles: an animal farmer and a beauty pageant coach. It debuts September 14 on Great American Country, a cable channel owned

by **Scripps Networks Interactive**. Click http://www.gactv.com/gac/shows_gcfmq/

In addition, the locally-made film "No No: A Dockumentary" reaches screens nationwide on September 5. It delves into the life and challenges of professional baseball player Dock Ellis (1945-2008) who played primarily for the Pittsburgh Pirates in the 1970s. Read about it at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_No:_A_Dockumentary

"These three projects are more exciting confirmation that our innovative financial models and Pittsburgh's depth of resources and talent are taking advantage of the on-going disruption in the entertainment industry to drive economic growth across Southwestern Pennsylvania," Steeltown's Carl Kurlander recently wrote in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

Pittsburgh Bike Shop TV?

Local bike museum and repair shop **Bicycle Heaven** is being featured in a reality TV series, reports Cristina Holtzer in the *North Side Chronicle*.

According to Holtzer's article, the template for the series would be "American Pickers" on **A&E Networks'** History Channel.

"American Pickers" debuted in 2010 and follows professional antique/collectible experts Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz as they travel the country looking for various items.

Bicycle Heaven owner Craig Morrow would only confirm to Holtzer that such a series is "in the works."

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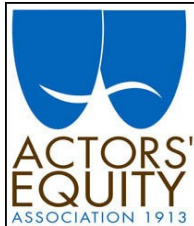
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Equity Auditions Scheduled

Actors Equity has announced its first ever Western Pennsylvania regional auditions, reports the union's newsletter.



Established in 2013, the **Actors' Equity Association** (AEA) represents artists in the world of live theatrical

performance. Local theater companies that have area contracts with AEA --- including **Barebones Productions** and **Carnivale Theatrics**, among others --- have agreed to participate.

"A number of our local theatres have said they would send someone to see these auditions," said Ingrid Sonnichsen, the AEA co-chair of the Pittsburgh Area Liaison Committee explains in the article. "We're hoping to widen the employment opportunities for our local membership and to support the smaller theatres in the region."

Auditions will be held Sunday, September 7 from Noon to 6:00 p.m. and Monday, September 8 from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at **Bricolage** in Downtown Pittsburgh.

Expect No More Credit

Hopes that the state's annual \$60 million tax credit cap for film production will be increased this year are all but dashed, reports Max Radwin of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

The credits are used to attract film and television productions to Pennsylvania, much of it to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Radwin explains that there is still opposition in Harrisburg for the credit program by those who "question whether it's fair to expand this at the expense of other worthy state programs that also could benefit from tax incentives."

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Andy Warhol: From 16mm to Digital

Hundreds of Andy Warhol's daring, experimental films are being digitized, announced the Andy Warhol Museum on August 14.

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Established in 1994, the Andy Warhol Museum is a component of the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh** and the largest museum in the United States dedicated to the work of a single artist, Pittsburgh-native Andy Warhol (1928-1987). The project is a joint effort with the **Museum of Modern Art** (MOMA), considered by many to be the most influential modern art museum in the world.

A press release explains that "the project will once again make accessible approximately 500 titles that Warhol made between 1963 and 1972, then withdrew from circulation more than 40 years ago. Nearly 1,000 rolls of original 16mm film will be digitally scanned, frame by frame, and converted into high resolution (2K) images. The process will begin in August and will take several years to complete as the process of scanning is delicate. However once completely digitized the entire collection of Warhol films will be available for public screening."

The Warhol's Patrick Moore told Randy Kennedy of the *New York Times* that "I think the art world

in particular, and hopefully the culture as a whole, will come to feel the way we do: which is that the films are every bit as significant and revolutionary as Warhol's paintings."

The digitizing is being provided by the New York office of the London-based **Moving Picture Company** (MPC), a post-production firm owned by media products company Technicolor. MPC has provided services for more than 25 years and their work can be seen in major productions including the "Harry Potter" films.

Sinclair Launches Division

The move toward more original programming is being embraced by the **Sinclair Broadcast Group**, which owns two television stations in Pittsburgh.



In an August 21 press release, the company "announced today that it has launched Sinclair Original Programming (SOP), a division of the company involved in the creation and development of original content. SOP's focus will be on entertainment content and business-to-consumer content such as infomercials and direct response commercials."

Arthur Hasson, who is the general manager of the company's Harrisburg stations, will be in charge of the new division.

The press release quotes Sinclair's president, David Smith, as saying: "Controlling our content and its development not only reduces our dependency on others, providing a hedge against network disruptions, but allows us greater economic upside potential."

Specifics were not mentioned, but presumably talk, news and reality shows (all of which are relatively low-cost) will be pursued.

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Short Films Welcome

The local chapter of **Women in Film & Media** (WIFIM) is encouraging members (including incoming members) to support a short film to be screened as part of the parent organization's annual showcase.



WIFIM welcomes women and men who are involved in or wish to become involved in the film, television and new media world.

An eblast was sent out on August 13 reminding everyone that the final deadline is September 30 and that their shorts could be seen in cities around the world. For more information, visit <http://cts.vresp.com/c/?WomenInFilmandMedia/f23d1a2398/e5434b12c4/da1a7b768f>

Only members are eligible to win any prize money as part of the program. Membership information is available at <http://www.wifmpit.org>

Sally Wiggin Going To Hall Of Fame

One of Pittsburgh's iconic broadcasters, Sally Wiggin of **Hearst Television's** WTAE-TV will be inducted into the **Pennsylvania Association of Broadcasters** Hall of Fame early next year.

The news was reported in the August 16 issue of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

Wiggin has been with WTAE since 1980. "I continue to have a rewarding career, and this honor is a testament to the incredible people whom I have known and worked with for decades," she told the paper. "I am very grateful to do what I love."

Disney To Sell WDDZ

Nearly two dozen radio stations are being sold by the **Walt Disney Company**, including Pittsburgh station WDDZ-AM.



The news was first reported on TheWrap.com and the *Los Angeles Business Journal*. The sale is about planned changes being made to Radio Disney that involves focusing more on digital distribution.

"These decisions will optimize Radio Disney for long-term growth," the *Journal* quotes a company memo which goes on to say "and better reflect the habits of the consumers we serve --- a national audience of kids and families."



Images

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ACA Criticizes Cable Deal

The American Cable Association has sent the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) their official concerns over a pending deal that would change the nation's cable landscape.



Based in Pittsburgh, the American Cable Association (ACA) is a trade organization representing nearly 850 smaller and medium-sized, independent cable companies who provide broadband services for nearly 7 million cable subscribers primarily located in rural and smaller suburban markets across America. **Comcast** operates Pittsburgh cable television franchise and owns entertainment giant NBC-Universal. A complex group of transactions will merge different systems operated by **Time Warner Cable** with Comcast and others with **Charter Communications**.

"This merger will increase the size of Comcast and Charter, resulting in an unprecedented consolidation of content and distribution. It would result in higher costs to consumers and reduced competition. Without adequate remedies, consumers and competition will suffer under the Comcast-Time Warner Cable-Charter deal," ACA President and CEO Matthew M. Polka said in a press release.

The press release goes on to say that "the Comcast-Time Warner Cable merger would inflict serious 'vertical' and 'horizontal' harms on consumers and competition on a scale far higher than the per-merger capabilities of either firm."

The FCC has been reviewing the planned merger since April and the Justice Department has also announced a review.

Unions Reach Deal

A deal has been struck between Hollywood's major production companies and the **Directors Guild of America**, **Writers Guild of America** and **SAG-AFTRA** that will allow more programming to be made available on digital and cable networks.

All three unions have members in the Pittsburgh region and SAG-AFTRA maintains a full-time office in downtown Pittsburgh.

Brooks Barnes writes in the *New York Times* that "the new agreements replace the fixed-fee struc-

ture [for paying artists residuals for rerun episodes] with one that pays residuals based on the percentage of the rerun licensing deal." The change makes the episodes more affordable for cable channels.

This means recent shows like "Breaking Bad" and even classics like "Charlie's Angels" will now be more likely to be picked-up, generating revenue for the companies and artists alike.

Steelers Reach Deal With PrimeSport

A deal has been reached between the **Pittsburgh Steelers** and **PrimeSport** that makes the latter the team's official travel partner.

PrimeSport is a Florida-based company that provides direct access to large sporting events through ticketing, travel and hospitality programs. Steelers fans can purchase packages that include game tickets, hotel accommodations, official souvenirs and other benefits.

"We are looking forward to our new partnership with PrimeSport and the opportunity to provide our incredible fans with the best possible experience when watching the Steelers play on the road," said Ryan Huzjak, Director of Partnerships and Sales of the Pittsburgh Steelers in a press release. "PrimeSport has built a strong reputation in the [**National Football League**] and we are confident this will continue with the Steelers organization."

This year's official Steelers travel games will be against the Carolina Panthers on September 21st, the Cleveland Browns on October 12th and the New York Jets on November 9th.



CBS' New Affiliate Deals

Key affiliation agreements have been reached between **CBS Corporation** and three media companies.



In Pittsburgh, CBS Corporation owns and operates two television and three radio stations.

The deals involve 12 stations owned by **LIN Media** and 26 stations owned by **Gray Television**. These stations are generally in mid-size markets. The most important one may be with **Tribune Broadcasting**, owner of a station in Indianapolis, the country's 25th largest television market (by the way, Pittsburgh ranks 23;

New York, of course, is #1. The full list is available at <http://www.stationindex.com/tv/tv-markets>).

In other CBS news, the company has announced that its TVGN cable channel (formerly the TV Guide Network) will be focusing more on original programming and has expanded that department within the channel. It will be led by Jessie Surovell and Kristan Giordano.

"As TVGN continues to expand its original programming, both Jessie and Kristan will play significant roles in building and managing our growing slate of content," said CBS' Paul Adler in a press release. "Their unique perspectives, creative voices and complementary skills make them a perfect duo."

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National/World A&E News Round-Up

ISIS Seen As Threat To Historic Sites

The ongoing interconnected conflicts in Syria and Iraq are costing lives, causing international worries --- and putting some of the world's cultural heritage at risk.

Emily Sharpe reports in TheArt-Newspaper.com that the terrorist group known as the Islamic State in Iraq & Syria (ISIS) is deliberately destroying irreplaceable archeological sites.

"Scholars in the West attempting to monitor destruction of cultural heritage by [ISIS] are increasingly concerned that social media sites recording the historic mosques, tombs and archaeological sites most at risk could be being monitored by the jihadist group, inadvertently becoming a useful tool for the extremists and their demolition squads," she writes.

Met Meets Deal

A compromise deal has been struck between the **Metropolitan Opera Association** and two of its unions, reports the *New York Times*' Michael Cooper.

Known simply as The Met, the New York City company traces its history back to 1880 and is the largest classical music organization in North America.

The Met and its unions have had an emotional tumultuous negotiation period over several months. After a long, intense bargaining session on August 18, a deal was finally struck. The agreement "had compromises from both sides," Cooper writes. "The unions representing the orchestra and chorus recognized the financial fragility of the opera house and agreed to their first pay cut in decades, while management abandoned its toughest demands and agreed to make significant reductions of its own, with independent oversight."

Now the company can focus on other financial and programming matters.

Tragedy On Set

An apparently accidental death occurred while taping an episode of "Cops," reports Carson Vaughan and Emma G. Fitzsimmons in the *New York Times*.

Originally debuting on the Fox Network in 1989, "Cops" is an unscripted series that follows law enforcement officers while on assignment, usually sting operations. It is currently produced by and aired on Spike TV, a cable channel owned by **Viacom**.

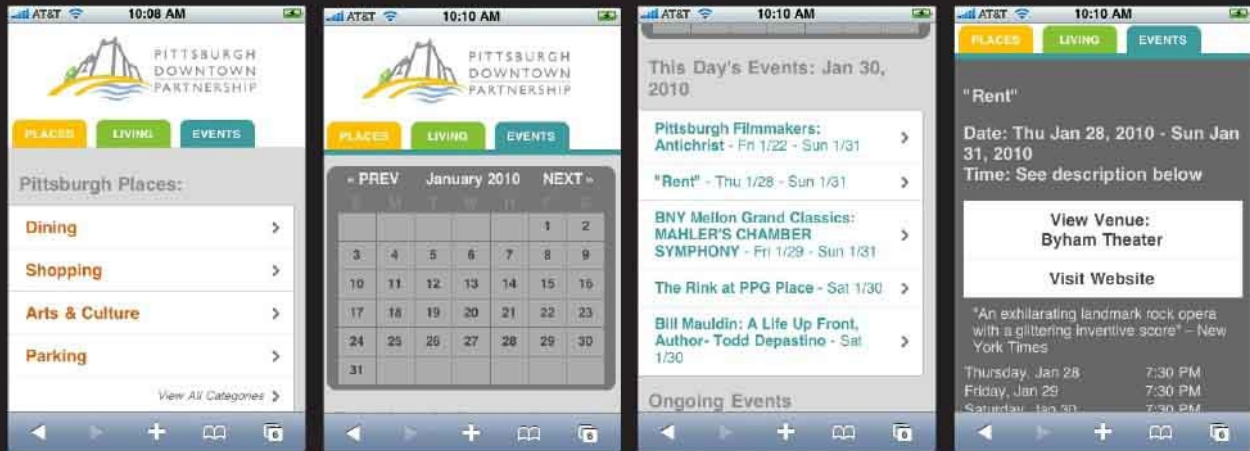
The article explains that the show was covering a police action at a Wendy's in Omaha, Nebraska. "After a standoff with a suspect inside the fast-food restaurant, both the robbery suspect and a sound supervisor for the show, Bryce Dion, were killed by police gunfire" says the article.

An initial police review of video footage indicates that the police followed procedure and that the death was unintentional. This is the first time any "Cops" crew member was killed during a taping.



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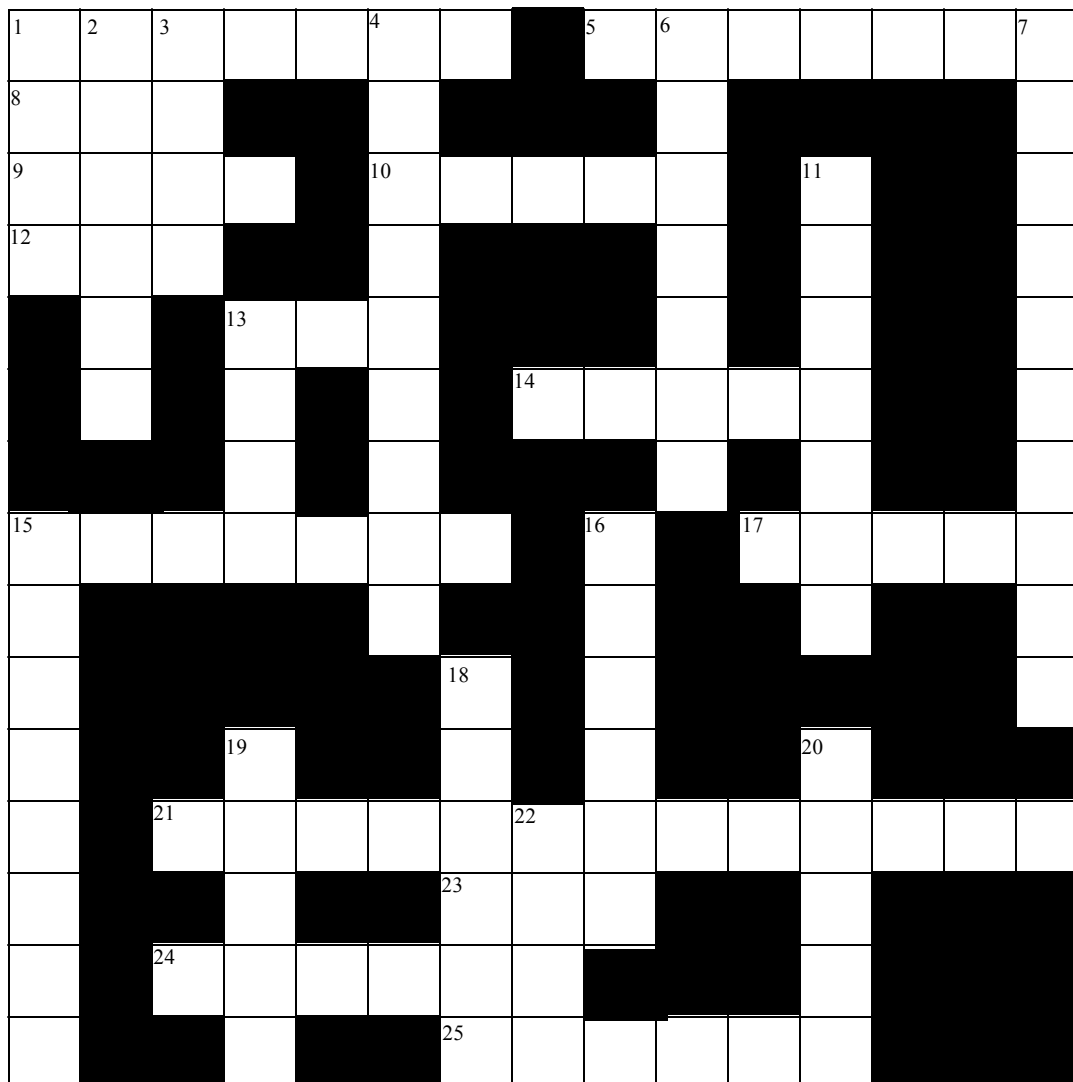
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