

pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

Pittsburgh To Host Arts Convention

Pittsburgh has been chosen as the site for **Americans For The Arts'** 2013 national convention.

Founded in 1960, Americans For The Arts (AFTA) is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education with over 150,000 members. AFTA's convention is the nation's largest gathering of arts leaders. The local host for the convention will be the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC).

AFTA's 2011 convention was held in San Diego, where prominent speakers included Pulitzer



Prize winning poet Rae Armantrout and Ben Cameron, program director for the arts at the **Doris Duke Charitable Foundation**. An estimated 1,200 professionals attended. To promote the 2011 convention, a video was post to YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2NetG2MmT8>

and the Huffington Post has an article available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-m-egeer/americans-for-the-arts-an_b_875008.html

GPAC is holding an information meeting at their downtown office on January 13. At this meeting, GPAC CEO Mitch Swain will outline Pittsburgh's responsibilities and hosting duties, as well as opportunities to get involved.

For more information, or to RSVP, call ProArts Tickets at (412) 394-3353.

Inside This Issue

Hip-hop pioneer Dwayne Muhammad has died. **Page 2**

Jim Krenn officially loses popular morning show **Page 3**

A locally produced TV pilot to go before the cameras. **Page 5**

Local movie biz keeps rolling with yet another flick. **Page 9**

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2 Grammy Nominations For Wiz Khalifa

One of Pittsburgh's biggest stars, rapper Wiz Khalifa --- aka Cameron J. Thomaz --- has been nominated for two Grammy Awards.

Khalifa's two nominations are connected to his single, "Black and Yellow". It was released in September 2010 as both a single and as part of his debut album. The single peaked at #1 on the Billboard Hot 100. It is a musical celebration, in rap, of Pittsburgh's three major sports teams. It is up

for Best rap Song and Best Performance.

The nominations capped off a banner year for Khalifa. His latest album, released in March 2011, which rose to #2 on the Billboard 200.

For a complete list of Grammy nominations, visit <http://www.grammy.com> [See related story on page 2 - ed.]

Hip-Hop Pioneer Muhammad Dies

First reported on the web site for event promotion company **Faded Industry**, local hip-hop pioneer Dwayne Muhammad suffered a heart attack and died on December 3, 2011.

In 2007, Muhammad created the Pittsburgh Hip-Hop Awards to honor and encourage the development of local hip-hop and rap artists. Among those who have received a boost from the program is Whiz Kahlifa, who was recently nominated for two Grammy Awards [see page 1 – ed.]

An obituary written by Scott Merivis appeared in the December 6, 2011 issue of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. It reports that he was born in 1971 to a teenage single

mother and given the name DeWayne Tolbert. A troubled youth who loved hip-hop, he was expelled from Schenley High School and later earned his GED. But Dwayne began turning his life around during the 1990s, starting a career as a music promoter and converting to Islam.

“Pittsburgh has lost a pioneer and visionary,” a local disc jockey told online newspaper UrbanMediaToday.com. “Honestly, I don’t know if the torch he lit can be carried on by anyone else.”

Local artists have posted condolences on Faded Industry’s web site, including rapper Prince Deekon, who wrote that “Brother mo, you will always be an inspiration to me. I wish I had the honor to

meet you here on this earth, but I surely will in heaven”.

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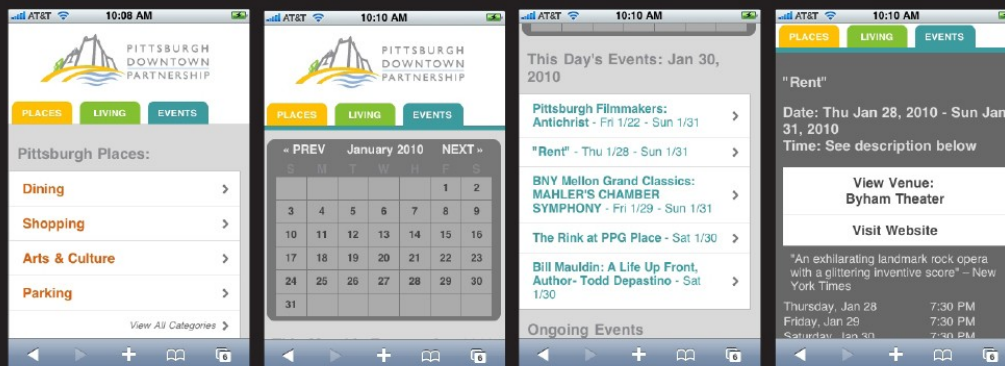
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Its Official: Krenn Off The Air

Pittsburgh's radio listeners are asking the question: what happened to popular on-air personality Jim Krenn, who has been a regular on **Clear Channel's** WDVE-FM for years?



Clear Channel owns the nation's largest broadcast radio group. The company has six radio stations in the Pittsburgh market. Krenn is known for hosting WDVE's top-rated morning show.

"WDVE made a decision to remove Jim from the air," David Sedelmeier, Krenn's agent, told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's*

Adrian McCoy. "It came as a complete surprise to him." In November, *Pittsburgh Applause* reported that Clear Channel had dismissed DJs at various stations across the country. Among those let go was Jim Reith, the long-time talk show host at WSYR-AM in Syracuse. He had been with the station for nearly three decades. His show has been replaced with conservative commentator Sean Hannity's syndicated program.

The two may not be connected. Regardless, McCoy reports in a follow-up article that Krenn won't be returning to the air, but remains under contract and a station employee. A Clear Channel

spokesman told McCoy that they "are currently in discussion with Jim" about his future with the station.

In other Clear Channel news, the company has named Bob Stohrer as Chief Marketing Officer for the digital division and Steven Cutler as Senior Vice President to oversee business development and corporate strategy.

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New TV Pilot Taping

As part of a new incubator program with **QED Multimedia** and the local organization **Steeltown Entertainment Project**, the pilot to a possible new national television series will be taped this month at QED's studios.



Founded in 2003, Steeltown's mission is to nurture promising talent and to incubate meaningful and commercially viable entertainment projects in Southwestern Pennsylvania. As *Pittsburgh Applause* reported in its October 2011 issue, the incubator program is an effort to make Pittsburgh a hub for television production.

The proposed series is a talk show built around life coach Anea Bogue, who will provide advice

and cover issues involving women and girls five days a week. It will be offered for syndication. The pilot will be directed by Pittsburgh native, actor/director Jamie Widdoes. He and others involved with the pilot were interviewed on KDKA-TV in December. A clip can be seen at <http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/video/?clipId=6543215&flvUri&partnerlipid&topVideoCatNo=198965&c&autoStart=true&activePane=info&LaunchPageAd-Tag=homepage&clipFormat=flv>

<http://pittsburgh.cbslocal.com/video/?clipId=6543215&flvUri&partnerlipid&topVideoCatNo=198965&c&autoStart=true&activePane=info&LaunchPageAd-Tag=homepage&clipFormat=flv>

Meanwhile, Steeltown's short film program [reported in the December 2011 *Pittsburgh Applause* – ed.] has had its deadline for submissions extended. For more information, visit <http://www.steeltownfilmfactory.org>

Reflecting On 2011

2011 was such a big year for major film and television productions in Pittsburgh that the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* created a special page dedicated to it in their January 1, 2012 issue.

Titled "Pittsburgh Emerges As A-List Star" it includes incredible photos of stars like Anne Hathaway, Viola Davis, Jennifer Lopez and Tom Cruise

Download it at <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/pdf/201112/20120101charticle1.pdf>

Images

Photos Celebrating Pittsburgh's Arts/Entertainment History & Community



Here is a photo of recent Grammy Award nominee, Pittsburgh rapper Wiz Khalifa, performing at a New York concert in 2009. Source: Wikipedia.

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



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MON
2 An amazing exhibit at **California University** features replicas of items designed by Leonardo da Vinci.

THU
5 The Second City comedy troupe makes a stop at the **O'Reilly Theater** for a night of wild laughs.

FRI
6 Local artist Teresa Foley uses the internet to create a very unusual puppet show at the **Andy Warhol Museum**.

FRI
6 Head over to the **David L. Lawrence Convention Center** for this year's Pittsburgh Remodeling Expo.

SAT
7 One of Pittsburgh's musical treasures, the Chatham Baroque performs during their own sparkling fundraiser at the **Pittsburgh Athletic Association**.

SUN
8 The Pittsburgh Jazz Society has found a new home for their weekly concerts: the new **James Street Gastropub**.

MON
9 The Children's Musical Theater stages the delightful musical "Charlotte's Web" at the **Byham Theater**.

FRI
13 KDKA's Jon Delano hosts this year's Martin Luther King Leadership Awards at **Heinz Field**.

FRI
13 Elmo becomes a superhero in "Sesame Street Live" at the **Consol Energy Center**.

SAT
14 The innovative music group LotUS appears at the **Andy Warhol Museum** tonight.

SAT
14 Rev your engines at the **David L. Lawrence Convention Center** for this year's Pittsburgh RV Show.

WED
18 Renowned activist Michael Pollan holds court at **Heinz Hall** to discuss the importance of sustainable food for the world's future.

THU
19 Shakespeare's smartest and funniest play, "As You Like It," bows at the **O'Reilly Theater**.

SAT
21 Experience a captivating night of music and dance at the **August Wilson Center** dedicated to acclaimed singer/composer Bill Withers.

SAT
21 Actor/writer Mike Daisey turns his razor sharp wit toward Steve Jobs in his **Byham Theater** show.

THU
26 Grammy Award nominated saxophonist Dave Koz joins the Pittsburgh Symphony Pops at **Heinz Hall** for a night of memorable movie songs.

FRI
27 Get in gear for this year's World Of Wheels at the **David L. Lawrence Convention Center**.

SUN
29 International violin virtuoso David Garrett shines at the **Benedum Center**.



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National/World A&E News Round-Up

Music Business Does Better In 2011

Is the music business about to turn around? A modest improvement in revenue for 2011 has some of the national trade publications making that claim.

Early data shows that album sales for 2011 were 1% better than 2010. Adele Adkins and Michael Buble had the biggest sellers according to TheWrap.com's Chris Willman. In addition, the Los Angeles Times has reported that **Live Nation Entertainment** --- the world's largest concert promoter --- saw a 6% increase in concert ticket sales, although much of that is credited to discounting.

Billboard's Jem Aswald explains that "the music biz is in the middle of a very long and painful transition from one business model to a new and undefined one."

Talking Tickets

Speaking of Live Nation, their Ticketmaster unit is about to make good to their online customers.

Yahoo News reports that a proposed financial settlement will force Ticketmaster to credit \$1.50 per ticket order (up to 17 orders) because they allegedly charged online customers a processing fee without telling them there was a processing fee.

This affects sales between October 1999 and October 2011. The credits will be available in April.

Too Spic & Span?

Two of France's top art experts are claiming that a 500-year-old masterpiece by Leonardo da Vinci may have been "over cleaned" by the **Louvre** in Paris.

An article in *The Guardian* by Dalya Alberge reports that two key members of the museum's restoration team have resigned over how the painting "The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne" was restored. They argue that the cleaning left the painting with a brightness that da Vinci could not have intended.

The Louvre declined to comment on the two resignations, but defended its cleaning process as appropriate.

Soap Bubbling

There is still a chance for the canceled soaps "All My Children" and "One Life To Live" to come back to life.

According to an article in *Variety* by Andrew Wallenstein, **Prospect Park** --- the company that licensed the digital rights from ABC --- has continued talks with key parties. Among the options: bringing in an overseas firm to co-produce them.

At press time, Prospect Park has not issued any official comment.

Price Of Success

The basic cable networks have seen their audience shares climb with the introduction of more original programming (especially scripted fare) --- which is causing their production budgets to soar, reports the *Los Angeles Times*.

Time Warner's TNT --- which is bringing back the Emmy winning series "Dallas" to the air this summer --- has seen its programming expenses jump a whopping 55% since 2006 putting it over the \$1 billion mark.

Even those that rely primarily on reality fare, like **A&E Television Network's** History Channel, has seen its program costs climb.

"These channels are trying to poach viewers from the broadcast networks," the Times quotes a media analyst explaining. "And the way to do that is to invest in high-profile programming."

Weber: Stages Will Go Dark

Will London's famous West End --- Britain's equivalent of Broadway --- be the big loser when the city hosts the 2012 Olympics? That's what the legendary Andrew Lloyd Weber thinks.

"Nobody's going to go to the theatre at all," the composer told BBC Radio, adding that "most of the theatres in London will shut". He claimed that advance booking for the Olympic period are down 10% from their normal levels.

Weber predicts that only the biggest shows --- like his "Phantom of the Opera" --- will be able to weather the drop. The city's promotional organization disagrees, arguing that London's total economy --- including the West End --- will benefit from the Olympic crowds.

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AFTRA Contract News

Important new agreements have been reached between the TV networks and record companies and the **American Federation of Radio & Television Artists** (AFTRA).



AFTRA has hundreds of members in the Pittsburgh area and maintains a full-time office in downtown Pittsburgh.

The new three-year Television Code with the networks and producers includes an increase in employer contributions to the union's retirement funds, wage increases and contract

language to increase equal employment opportunities for union members --- which now includes discrimination protections for gender identity.

AFTRA's new agreement with the record labels calls for an increase in base rates as well as more employer contributions to the retirement plans. It also expands performers' base of participation in revenue from the sale of digital downloads.

Both agreements are tentative and await member approval, which is expected.

New Film Coming

Yet another major film is coming to Pittsburgh, reports the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Adrian McCoy.

That film is "Frank Or Francis," to be directed by Oscar-winning screenwriter Charlie Kaufman. He told *Time Out London* in September that the ambitious script is "about online film criticism" He added: "There's a lot in there about the internet and anger: cultural, societal and individual anger. And isolation in this particular age we live in. And competition: it's about the idea of people in this world wanting to be seen."

A writer for Indiewire.com, Edward Davis, read the script and called it "a deliciously good and contemptuous (though self-aware)

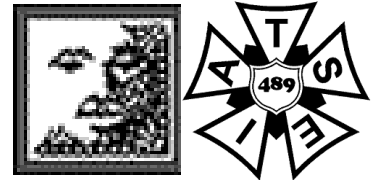
screed/send-up of the film industry, not only, the graffiti-with-punctuation bloggers, but the entire machine: fatuous filmmakers, vapid PR people, self-absorbed writers, blowhard actors, and last but not least it serves up a jujitsu-like takedown on the ego-driven, vacuous meat-parade that is the Academy Awards. No stone is left unturned nor is there much of any kind of hero in the story as everyone is as equally moronic and narcissistic as the other."

It's also a musical.

At press time, the **Pittsburgh Film Office** (PFO) did not have any cast or crew information posted on its web site. McCoy's article says that filming could begin as early as January or February.

No Deal For PCT, IATSE

As the year came to a close, it started looking like there would be no deal between the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust** (PCT) and the **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 3** (IATSE)



IATSE 3 represents the hundreds of stage hands who work at venues such as the Benedum Center and Byham Theater. The two sides have been going over proposals during the last week of December, reports the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Joe Smyde. The key issue is hiring non-union stage hands for the outdoor stages on First Night, the city's New Year's Eve festival that the PCT produces.

At press time, neither party had posted an update to their respective web sites.

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More SAG Scandal

The controversy surrounding the **Screen Actors Guild's** (SAG) pension and health funds continues.



SAG has hundreds of members in the Pittsburgh region and is currently in merger talks with the **American Federation of Television & Radio Artists** (AFTRA), which maintains a full-time office in downtown Pittsburgh. *Pittsburgh Applause* published its first article on the subject in our October issue.

The administrators of the union's pension and health plans --- worth an estimated \$2 billion --- are being accused of covering up an embezzlement scheme that may have cost SAG members as much as \$10 million. A former employee of the fund has filed a formal complaint with the United States Department of Labor.

In two separate articles, TheWrap.com reports that union members are becoming increasingly worried despite assurances that the pension fund is safe. An online petition has been started.

Among the allegations is that the funds' CEO, Bruce Dow, had, among other things, used fund money to pay for his wife's breast-enhancement surgery. The claims were made by a former employee, Craig Simmons.

The fund's board of trustees has issued a letter to members telling them that an investigation has

found that "the fiscal integrity" of the fund "remains sound and your benefits are secure." They also said that "most of Mr. Simmons' allegations are false, including his claims that Mr. Dow is anti-gay, that he caused the plans to improperly reimburse health expenses for his wife, that he caused plan employees to work on his home and perform personal chores for him, that he promoted employees who were unqualified and that he instructed staff to mislead U.S. Department of Labor auditors."

Some members are not accepting the investigation's results. "What's behind this is you have a bunch of members waking up and realizing that things are not as rosy as we're being told in all the press releases," one SAG member told TheWrap.com's Brent Lang. "There's a culture here that says that the members are idiots and don't know what's good for them and that it's better to take care of things in-house. There's never really been an independent accounting of the pension and health fund."

Lang reports that the charges "especially have riled up members already agitated by the proposed merger" with AFTRA.



EDMC Denies Claims

Pittsburgh-based company **Education Management Corporation** (EDMC) insists that it did not illegally pay recruiters as the federal government and eleven states claim, reports the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Rich Lord.



Founded in 1926 and headquartered in the K+L Gates Center in downtown Pittsburgh, EDMC operates career-focused schools around the country including the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. They employ 19,000 people in faculty and staff positions and had an estimated 160,000 students enrolled in the fall of 2010. It is the second largest operate or for-profit colleges, behind the University of Phoenix, operated by the **Apollo Group**.

In our June 2011 issue, *Pittsburgh Applause* ran a story about a lawsuit contending that the company fraudulently obtained student loans and other federal financial aid by using aggressive recruiting tactics and tying recruiter compensation to the number of new student enrollments. The charges were first reported by Bloomberg News.

On December 4, 2011, the federal government, a pair of whistleblowers and eleven states attorney general formally filed their claims with the courts. The company insists that the allegations are without merit, and that recruiters were paid based on a number of criteria, not simply the raw number of new students.

Carnegie Library Gets New Director

In a press release dated December 13, 2011, the **Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh** (CLP) announced that Mary Frances Cooper has been named the library system's new directory.



Begun in 1890, the CLP was initially funded by Pittsburgh industrialist Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), and has since grown to 19 branch locations. Assuming the post this month, Cooper will be the institution's eleventh leader.

The press release describes Cooper, who has been on staff since 2008, as "uniquely qualified to provide leadership and direction"

to the library's operations. It goes on to say that she "has been integral in strengthening the Library's relationships with community groups, individual residents, and library Friends groups; and has led service innovations including the CLP-LYNCS (the Library in your Neighborhood, Community and School) outreach program. Ms. Cooper also has served as President of the Electronic Information Network board, leading change and improvements in library technology services throughout the county. The strengths she brings from her experiences at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and throughout the country include direct oversight of multi-branch library operations, collections and budgets, community interaction, strategic

visioning and collaborative planning"

According to an article in the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* written by Bill Zlatos, Cooper has a three-year contract paying her at least \$170,000 a year.

Teacher Pleads Guilty

Philicia Barbierie, a former substitute science teacher at the Pittsburgh Creative & Performing Arts School, has admitted in court to robbing a bank in April. This and two other crimes she and boyfriend Alvin Carter III pled guilty to were used to finance a drug habit.



Pittsburgh Applause first published a story on the case in our May 2011 issue. The school is part of **Pittsburgh Public Schools**.

"She was teaching school and doing well and then she gets involved with heroin. It ruined her life," the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Bobby Kerlik quotes Barbierie's attorney, Patrick Thomassey. "When you have that type of addiction, you lose sight of everything."

Barbieri is in a rehab program; sentencing is scheduled for March.

New PSO Conductor

Fawzi Haimor has been named assistant conductor for the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO), the orchestra has announced in a press release.



Just 28 years old, Haimor's responsibilities will include assisting with programming and conducting the PSO's Education & Community Engagement concerts as well as leading pre-concert talks. He will succeed departing assistant conductor Thomas Hong beginning with the 2012-2013 season.

The press release says that Haimor was raised in the Middle East and California. He began playing the violin at 6 years old and conducted an orchestra for the first time at 16. Haimor studied at the **University of California-Davis** and later at the prestigious **Indiana University Jacobs School of Music**.

In other news, composer/conductor Marvin Hamlisch has signed on for three more seasons leading the Pittsburgh Symphony Pops. He will continue with the orchestra through the 2014-2015 season. Hamlisch has won four Grammy Awards, three Oscars, four Emmy Awards and a Tony for his work.

CO/P Gets Approval

Zoning approval has been granted to **City of Asylum/Pittsburgh** for its planned North Side cultural center.



City of Asylum/Pittsburgh (CO/P) provides sanctuary to writers exiled under threat of death, imprisonment or persecution in their native countries. The organization provides a furnished house, a living stipend, medical coverage, and help in transitioning to poten-

tially permanent exile.

CO/P is planning to build a literary center in the historic Manchester War Streets neighborhood, replacing, among other things, a closed nuisance bar. The center will include residences, a café, a bookstore and an event space.

Pittsburgh Applause readers can learn more by checking out CO/P's PowerPoint proposal to the Central Northside Neighborhood Council by visiting http://www.cityofasylumpittsburgh.org/Portals/0/AlphabetCity_powerpoint.pdf

CBS Buys TV Station

Surprising some observers, but pleasing many industry analysts, **CBS Corporation** has acquired a second New York City television station --- giving it a duopoly in the nation's largest media market.



In Pittsburgh, CBS Corporation owns two television and four radio stations. Most prominent are KDKA-TV and KDKA-AM.

"The combined strengths of CBS 2 and WLNY-TV will give us a terrific platform for serving the entire New York area," CBS executive Peter Dunn explains in a company press release. "Our plans for the station include adding people and resources to fuel a significant expansion of local news programming . . . [and] continue to honor the station's deep commitment to serving the people

of Long Island" where the station is officially licensed.

A securities analyst with **Wells Fargo & Company** is quoted by TVNewsCheck.com that a "duopoly market tends to have higher margins than a single-station market." Pittsburgh is one of the markets with a CBS duopoly.

In other news, the company has announced a new agreement with the **National Football League** (NFL) which will allow CBS to continue broadcasting games through the 2022 season. This includes the broadcast rights to three Super Bowls.

Locally, KDKA-AM's programming director, Marshall Adams, has ended with Adams telling the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Maria Sciullo that he is "looking forward to new adventures."

New Home For Jazz

Having lost their regular gig at the city's casino, the **Pittsburgh Jazz Society** has found a new home for its Sunday night concerts.

Established in 1987, the Pittsburgh Jazz Society (PJS) is dedicated to the promotion, preservation and perpetuation of all jazz. This is accomplished through education, performance, partnering and community outreach for members and the general public.

The weekly concerts showcase local jazz artists, most of whom lack a web site or marketing program to promote themselves. Starting January 8, the PJS shows will be at the **James Street Gastropub & Speakeasy**, a new restaurant located in the building that once housed the popular James Street Restaurant. No cover will be charged. The full schedule is available at <http://www.post-gazette.com/events/default.asp?mode=3&id=2616>

Other jazz artists are making an effort to keep the art form alive in the city. The informal group, called **Space Exchange**, includes saxophonist Ben Opie and drummer Dave Throckmorton. "We don't want to market it as [just] a jazz night," Throckmorton told writer Manny Theiner in a *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article. "It's about finding a place where we can book whatever we want, and hope that there's some camaraderie that could build a little scene." But expect jazz to be a focus.

Space Exchange's concerts will be held at the **Thunderbird Café** in the city's Lawrenceville neighborhood starting January 3.

Pittsburgh Applause Editorial

Looking Ahead To 2012

By James A. Richards

I seldom read horoscopes but when Yahoo News reported that we Leos --- I was born in July --- will have a banner 2012, especially professionally. I smiled.

One can only hope.

We all could use some help during these trying economic times. For my part, I have finally gone ahead and scheduled what will hopefully be the first in a series of workshops to help local musicians and singers better market themselves.

This will happen February 18 at the Carnegie Library Squirrel Hill. (Look for details soon at www.james-richards.com) I must

confess to being a little nervous. I have done many things in my life and career, but never have I actually taught.

Of course, I have other projects coming up. Some I can talk about, some I can't. My trilogy of novels, *Faraway Hill*, is making slow progress but I should be able to secure a new publisher (the recession forced my old publisher out of business). I also hope to get back to my professional memoir, looking back on 25 years working in Pittsburgh's arts/entertainment scene.

I am also pitching to a new client.

Everyone tries to use the start of a new year to refresh their personal or professional life. That seems to

be the best reason. At least, better than what a horoscope says.

That is my wish for all of you: make the most of 2012. A year from now you'll be able to look back on the preceding twelve months with a sense of accomplishment.

Letters to the editor are welcome via email to jim@james-richards.com

They may be edited for publication.

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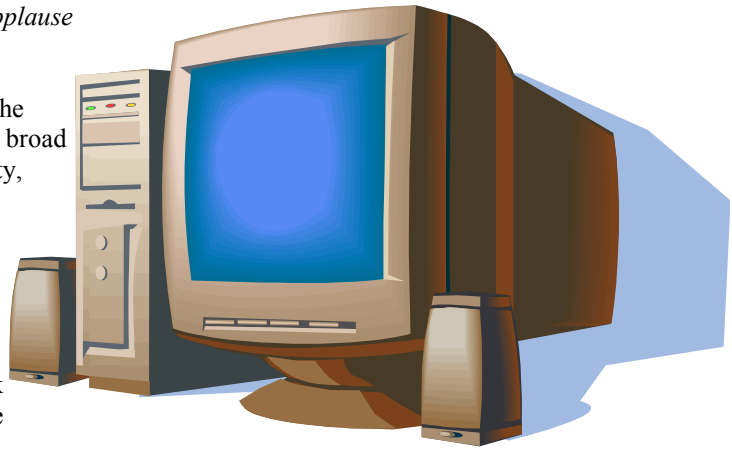
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