

pittsburgh applause!

arts & entertainment newsletter

“Dark Knight” Brightens Pittsburgh

Although the final amount has not been determined, it is believed that the latest Batman film, “Dark Knight Rises” generated millions for the local economy.

Dawn Keezer of the **Pittsburgh Film Office** told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*'s Barbara Vancheri that about 200 local crew members were hired along with thousands of paid and unpaid extras. A number of stores, especially downtown, reported an uptick in sales as cast,

crew and fans all gathered for the shoots. An August 20 *Post-Gazette* article reported that **S.W. Randall Toys & Gifts** saw a 50% increase in sales thanks largely to Batman-theme items such as bobbleheads. Rick Conley, owner of **Oliver Flower Shop**, told the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*'s Many Hofmockel that his store also saw an improvement, and even sold out of Batman-theme balloons.

The film shot key exteriors in the city throughout August, with sections of Pittsburgh transformed

into the fictional Gotham City. Along the way, fake snow appeared under the summer sun, a hole was dug in a street, Steeler fans were transformed into Gotham Rogues fans and co-star Anne Hathaway found her Catwoman costume causing a stir on the web.

However, some people were unhappy about the inconvenience, especially the street closings even though many businesses were pleased with the efforts to keep problems to a minimum.

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The ToonSeum to expand, tripling its current space **Page 9**

Pittsburgh A&E Group

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Cultural Trust, IATSE In New Deal

A new agreement has been reached between the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust** (PCT) and the **International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees** (IATSE).



According to a *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* article published on August 16, the deal provides wage increases over the next three years for stagehands working at the

Benedum Center, Byham Theater and Cabaret at Theater Square.

IATSE members are scheduled to meet at the Irish Building on Penn Avenue on September 18 to vote on whether to ratify the agreement. It is expected to pass.

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EDMC Sued For \$11 Billion

The Pittsburgh-based **Education Management Corporation** (EDMC) is facing mounting criticism --- and now a major lawsuit --- over allegations that it bilked governments out of billions of dollars in loans and grants for nearly a decade.

EDMC
Education Management Corporation

EDMC, with corporate headquarters in downtown's K&L Gates Center, was founded in 1962 and operates for-profit post-secondary schools across the country including the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. It has faced claims for years of questionable practice. On August 8, 2011, four states and the U.S. Department of Justice filed a massive lawsuit alleging that the com-

pany received \$11 billion in financial aid it was not eligible for. The suit has its roots in a whistleblower case filed by two former employees. That suit claimed that the company's recruiters routinely sought out young people who were ill-prepared to be students and had little chance of graduating --- all for their money and government financial aid.

"The depth and breadth of the fraud laid out in the complaint are astonishing," Pittsburgh lawyer Harry Litman told the *New York Times*' Tamar Lewin. "It spans the entire company . . . and accounts for nearly all the revenues the company has realized since 2003." A day after the filing, the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*'s Brian Bowling quotes one of the company's consulting attorneys

that the allegations "are flat out wrong" and that the company's "2003 compensation plan followed the law in both its design and implementation."

A week later, in an August 16 editorial, the *Times* described the conduct of EDMC and companies like it "unscrupulous" and called about President Obama to support a new Department of Education rule that cuts off aid to such schools, despite heavy industry pressure.

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Ratings Drop At New WDUQ

As expected, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has approved the sale of WDUQ-FM to **Essential Public Media** (EPB), the partnership between WYEP-FM (aka **Pittsburgh Community Broadcasting Corporation**) and **Public Media Company**.



In its August 4, 2011 ruling, the FCC noted the objections that had been filed by various groups, which were focused on the decision to drop a jazz format. But the commission made it clear that it does not regulate programming. The call letters are expected to change, although it remains unclear what the new ones will be.

The change in format has affected the station's ratings. The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Adrian McCoy reported on August 17 that its ratings in May stood at 2.1 but after the new format was introduced in July, the number dropped to 1.4. (Each rating point represents 1% of the radio audience).

EPB's Tammy Terwelp was unconcerned; pointing out this often happens right after a format change and before a new audience is built. "It takes awhile," she told McCoy. "Six weeks is not enough. As more people discover us . . . as we develop our sound and voice . . ." the audience will increase. *Pittsburgh Applause* has recently learned that a new marketing director has been hired, although the name has not been released as of press time.

Meanwhile at WYEP, long-time host Howard "Bumblebee Slim" Kozy has left the station after hosting a well-regarded blues show for 25 years. He was a volunteer staffer.

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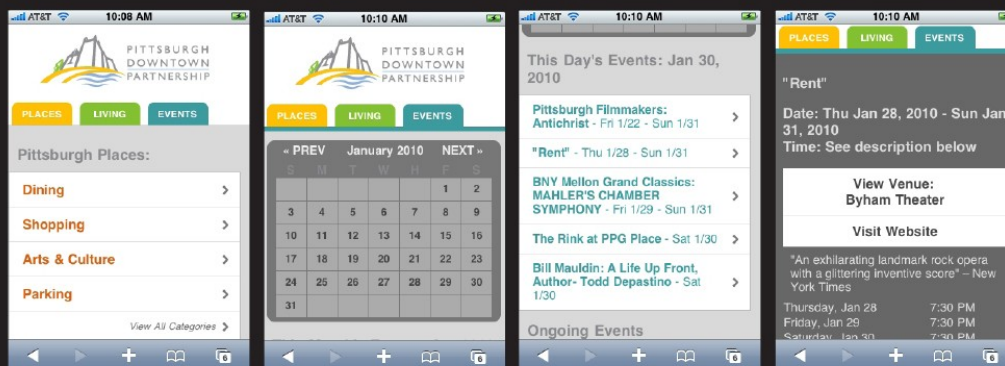
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“Mister Rogers” Redux

Pittsburgh’s favorite neighbor, Fred Rogers, may be gone but his legacy is getting new life with a new television series.



“Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood” was one of public television’s iconic series and was produced at Pittsburgh’s WQED-TV from 1965 to 1976 and 1979 to 2001. It was characterized by a quiet simplicity and gentleness ideal for its target audience of kids ages 2 to 5. Star and creator Fred Rogers died in 2003.

Now the non-profit **Fred Rogers Company** (formerly Family Communications) has begun production on a new animated TV series based on the “Neighborhood” characters.

Called “Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood,” it follows the son of Daniel Striped Tiger and his

New GM For RCBB

James Gourlay has been named the new general director of the **River City Brass Band**.

Founded in 1981, the River City Brass Band is a modified British-style brass band whose mission is to promote brass band music through recordings and performing new as well as classic works.

He begins immediately.

friends, all children of the famous “Mister Rogers” characters such as King Friday and Henrietta Pussycat. While a brand new series, the producers aim to remain true to Fred Rogers. People involved in the original series were even invited to submit notes and suggestions. “We wanted to weave the values and philosophy of Fred Rogers into whatever we did but make it relevant for the 21st century and a new audience,” the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* quotes executive producer Kevin Morrison at a press conference.

“Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood” is being produced in California and will be distributed to public television stations starting in the fall of 2012.

Emmy Noms In

Nominations have been announced for the Mid-Atlantic Emmy Awards --- and **WQED Multimedia** leads with 16 nominations.

The awards are a division of the **National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences**, which award the better known national Emmys and honors television production. Former KDKA-TV anchor Patrice King Brown will receive the Board of Governors Award in recognition of her career.

There ceremony will be held on September 24 at the Lowes Philadelphia Hotel in Philadelphia. For more information, visit <http://www.natasmid-atlantic.org>

Images

Photos Celebrating Pittsburgh’s Arts/Entertainment History & Community



Stopping at the ToonSeum are editorial cartoonist Rob Rogers, comic book legend Jerry Robinson and the director of “Dark Knight Rises” Christopher Nolan. At far right is the founder and executive director of the ToonSeum, Joe Wos. SOURCE: The ToonSeum

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

- THU 1** Bela Fleck & The Flecktones deliver a mixture of bluegrass and jazz at **Ampitheater Station**
- THU 1** Meanwhile, **Stage AE** rocks out with the legendary band Styx.
- SAT 3** A traveling exhibit arrives at the **Carnegie Museum Of Art** featuring rare material related to the influential architect Andrea Palladio.
- SAT 3** Get a kick out of the Pittsburgh Steelers at **Heinz Field** for their season opener.
- SAT 3** Country superstar shines Toby Keith at the **First Niagara Pavilion**.
- MON 5** Happy Labor Day! Be sure to take in the annual parade.
- WED 7** Green girl rule at the **Benedum Center** for the opening of the hit musical "Wicked".
- FRI 9** The site-specific exhibit called "Sites Of Passage" at the **Mattress Factory** is the result of a historic exchange with artists in Egypt.
- FRI 9** The delightful documentary "Carol Channing: Larger Than Life" at the **SouthSide Works** takes a fun, affectionate look at a Broadway leg-
- FRI 9** The **Pittsburgh Playhouse** opens its season with "A Child's Guide To Heresy" — a chilling tale set in 13th century England.
- SUN 11** There are a number of events in the area marking the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, and the web events calendar has an excellent list of them.
- MON 12** The band Dropkick Murphys performs raucous, chaotic Celtic rock at **Ampitheatre Station Square**.
- WED 14** The kids are the target audience at the **Byham Theater** as They Might Be Giants rock just for them.
- THU 15** The city keeps rocking with Blink 182 at **First Niagara Pavilion**.
- FRI 16** The hot rapper Kid Cudi is at the **Ampitheatre Station Square** where crosses musical boundaries in ways unlike his peers
- FRI 16** Travel out to the **First Niagara Pavilion** for the traveling Rockstar energy Festival.
- SAT 17** From disc jockeys to stilt walkers, the touring show Dayglow lights up the **Ampitheatre Station**
- SAT 17** Local favorites Gathering Field perform at **Stage AE**.
- SUN 18** The legendary band REO Speedwagon parks at **Ampitheatre Station Square**.
- THU 22** Best known for Broadway's "Rent", pals Adam Pascal and Anthony Rapp perform favorite tunes at the **Byham Theater**.
- FRI 23** The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's season at **Heinz Hall** opens tonight with special guest, award winning Viennese pianist Rudolf Buchbinder.
- THU 29** The Pittsburgh Public Theater's season begins at the **O'Reilly Theater** with a terrific adaptation of the classic Greek play "Electra".



The City's Best Online Calendar Can Be Found At
www.post-gazette.com/events

National/World A&E News Round-Up

Folk Art Museum Facing Closure

One of New York City's leading cultural lights, the **American Folk Art Museum** (AFAM), may be go dark.

Founded in 1961, the museum is dedicated to American folk art and the work of international self-taught artists. Its striking building, with a façade made of a white bronze alloy, is part of the problem: AFAM took on \$32 million in debt to construct it and later defaulted. The **Museum of Modern Art** has acquired the structure, just a decade after it opened.

In an extensive article that appeared in the *New York Times* on August 25, reporter Robin Pogrebin delved into the museum's crisis.

"There could have been more efforts around development," Pogrebin quotes a former curator. "We never quite became a fund-raising machine, the way most museums are. It was a consistently missed opportunity." AFAM has since moved back to its former facility and may cease operations completely, dispersing an impressive collection that took five decades to amass.

No More Fairness

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has officially dropped the Fairness Doctrine, which it had ceased enforcing in 1987.

Introduced in 1949, the doctrine was intended to require holders of broadcast licenses to present both sides of a controversial issue. Some people have been critical of the doctrine as an

infringement on free speech. However, in a 1969 ruling, the US Supreme Court stated that the doctrine was acceptable in certain circumstances.

The doctrine should not be confused with the Equal Time rule, which requires broadcasters to offer equivalent time to political candidates.

The Bump Heard Around The World

MTV's popular Video Music Awards caused buzz not for Lady Gaga's male drag act or any of the performances --- but by Beyonce Knowles, who announced that she and husband Shawn "Jay-Z" Carter are expecting their first child.

Hints were dropped on the red carpet, but the news became very real after Knowles performed live on stage --- and then showed off her baby bump.

The news then shot through the internet and was later confirmed by her publicist.

Making Music Together

A four-year legal battle between the **National Music Publishers Association** (NMPA) and **Google's** YouTube has ended.

At the core was YouTube not paying publishers for music played in user-generated videos that are uploaded to the site. Now music publishers have the option of entering into a licensing agreement that will allow them a cut from advertising that appears with the related video. "We are pleased

to have resolved NMPA's litigation claims and to work with YouTube in providing a new licensing opportunity for songwriters and publishers," MNPA's David Israelite said in a statement.

According to TheWrap.com, YouTube's deal is a little puzzling since a federal court ruled in 2010 that the company was not liable for any copyright infringement since it removed videos containing such material as they became aware of them.

No Lopez Tonight Or Any Other Night

TBS has canceled George Lopez's late-night talk show.

Once one of the cable channel's more popular programs, "Lopez Tonight" has seen its audience drop considerably in the year since comedian Conan O'Brien's show debuted. TBS, part of **Time-Warner**, made the announcement in a terse statement released on August 10 after apparently telling Lopez that his August 11 show would be his last.

According to *Advertising Age*, Lopez's audience has dropped some 40% over the past year. The show generated \$50 million in ad revenue in 2010 but a mere \$7.6 million in the first three months of 2011. Ironically, it was Lopez who helped lure O'Brien to TBS and agreed to have his show bumped to an hour later. O'Brien's numbers have also dropped, but not as steeply.

ToonSeum Expands: To Triple In Size

After just two years, the **ToonSeum's** popularity has grown so much that it has announced a significant expansion.



Located inside a Cultural District storefront, the museum is one of the few museums in the country devoted to comic and cartoon art. It began in a small space in the **Children's Museum of Pittsburgh** before moving downtown in 2009.

"The response to the ToonSeum has been tremendous," founder and executive director Joe Wos declared in a press release. Especially with the latest Batman movie shooting on location in

Pittsburgh happening while a superhero-theme exhibit was on display. According to an article in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* written by Sharon Ebersen, the ToonSeum has seen some 8,000 people visit since June --- compared with just 1,200 all of summer 2010.

The museum is adding the vacant space next door, once the street-level home of video production company **On Motion Media**. The firm has since relocated to the Strip District. The building is notable for the giant 15-foot sculptures by local artist James Simon framing the courtyard.

According to the press release, the expansion will more than triple the museum's size, allowing for additional exhibitions, a perma-

nent collection on display and an area for reading comics along with more office and storage space.

The expansion is expected to be complete sometime in November, possibly in time for this year's Light-Up Night.

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CBS' Mixed 2Q Revenue News

Reflecting a struggling economy, **CBS Corporation** announced that its ad revenue grew by a mere 3% in the second quarter.



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

The company has pointed out that 2010 was an election year and much of the robust sales of the time can be attributed to campaign spending. On the upside, overall revenues were up 8% and net earnings doubled. Licensing for TV shows in its library --- which includes decades of series, specials and movies --- increased an impressive 21%.

Meanwhile, "Two and a Half Men" has begun taping episodes without controversial former star Charlie Sheen. The first installment centers on the death of Sheen's character, who is killed off-camera in a strange train accident. Efforts were made to keep it a secret, but plot elements were leaked to TheWrap.com and can be found online at <http://www.thewrap.com/tv/article/charlie-sheens-men-death-gruesome-new-details-29884>.

Despite the major cast change --- dropping the problematic Sheen for Ashton Kutcher --- CBS claims to be confident of the hit series' future. MediaPost's Wayne Friedman quotes CBS Entertainment President Nina Tassler telling a group of critics

that the show "will be as irrelevant as it has always been" and expects "Men" to remain a top rated series.

CBS has also announced that it is pursuing a revival of the Emmy winning situation comedy "Bewitched". When it debuted in 1964, "Bewitched" was actually considered daring: it treated witches as a misunderstood minority group with thinly-veiled tales involving bigotry centered around a young couple who were very sexual for the day. The success of the rebooted "Hawaii 5-O" appears to have been a key motivator.

Comcast Loses Claim

A judge has ruled against **Comcast** in a dispute with **News Corporation's** DirectTV.

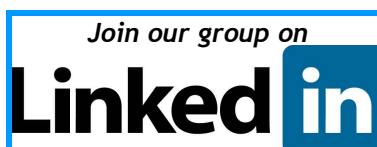


In Pittsburgh, Comcast operates the city's cable television franchise. It also has controlling interest in **NBC-Universal**.

Comcast claims that DirectTV is making a false advertising claim that its NFL Sunday Ticket package is free, when it actually requires a two-year subscription commitment. Comcast had been seeking a restraining order to stop the commercials.

DirectTV insists that they are not misleading consumers by describing the package as "at no extra charge" when subscribing as it is essentially a value-added for new customers.

In other news, Comcast is offering a discount internet service for Pittsburgh families with children who qualify for the National School Lunch program. It is part of an effort to expand web access to low-income households.



New Jazz Club Planned

In an August 17 article, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's* Diana Nelson-Jones reported that local jazz artists Al Dowe and Etta Cox are part of a group exploring a new jazz club in the Pittsburgh Cultural District.

They've been down this road before, once owning the club Dowe's on 9th, an upscale jazz club that closed. Dowe explains to Nelson-Jones that "it was too big. People like to rub shoulders."

The location being considered is a former coffee shop on Liberty Avenue. The upper floors are being converted into condos, including one for the building's owner.

AFTRA Negotiates New Sound Deal

Negotiations have begun between the **American Federation of Television & Radio Artists** (AFTRA) and the major record labels on a new National Code of Fair Practice for Sound Recordings.



AFTRA has hundreds of members in the Pittsburgh area and maintains a full-time office in downtown. The first Sound Recordings Code was established in 1951 and covers everyone from singers to announcers and even sound effects professionals in all forms of

recording. It has been updated several times over the decades to embrace new technologies and business models. The current code expires this December. According to an AFTRA press release, the code generates more than \$140 million annually for artists.

Locally, members of AFTRA are mourning the loss of actress Ann Muffly. A well-regarded performer, she appeared in numerous stage productions in the 1960s and 1970s while raising her three children. She became an AFTRA member in 1965 and began appearing in films and television productions including 1972's "The Hungry Wives" directed by George Romero and 1983's "Flashdance" directed by Adrian Lyne.

SAG Mails Ballots

As the **Screen Actors Guild** (SAG) continues negotiating with the **American Federation of Television & Radio Artists** (AFTRA), a group of anti-merger candidates has been placed on the roster for SAG's upcoming board elections.



Both unions have members in the region and AFTRA maintains a full-time office in downtown Pittsburgh. The two have discussed merger in the past, but negotiations this time look the most promising.

Current SAG president Ken Howard, who supports merger, is facing anti-merger candidate David Hillberg and two others.

Among the familiar names on the ballot are D.W. Moffett, Tony Shalhoub, Ayre Gross, Scott Bakula, Amy Aguino, Esai Morales, Valerie Harper, Stephen Collins and Adam Arkin.

In a posting, TheWrap.com's Jake Weibraub has identified at least a dozen of the candidates oppose merger and that "the elections are expected to provide a referendum on Howard's efforts to merge SAG" with AFTRA.

SAG members are required to submit their ballots by September 22.

We're Always Green



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Pittsburgh Applause Editorial

Thoughts About Fairness

By James A. Richards

Although it has been dormant for years, news that the Federal Communications Commission has formally dropped the Fairness Doctrine hit a chord for me.

You may have noticed that I write and edit every story in this newsletter. I majored in Communications in college, thinking that I would probably go into television journalism. Unfortunately, the first cable boom went bust when Ted Turner's Cable News Network bought out and shut down its only competition at the time, the struggling Satellite News Channel (boy, am I *really* dating myself). Nevertheless, I try to apply the fundamental journalism rules on every page.

The doctrine never applied to cable channels like MSNBC and Fox News Channel anyway. But it should. It really bothers me (as it does many others) that two popular news outlets seem little interested in journalism. MSNBC, rooted in the traditional NBC News, is the lesser evil: partisanship is largely limited to their talk shows. Not so Fox News, which is run by a former media consultant for Republican candidates (at other news operations, the boss is usually a journalist, not a politico).

In 2009, a report by the respected Pew Research Center indicated that Fox News had the highest negatives among viewers of all national news organizations and that "partisan differences in views of Fox News have increased sub-

stantially since 2007". Memos leaked from the office of vice president Bill Sammon have essentially confirmed the channel's obvious bias as a semi-official policy. As a result, comedian Jon Stewart finds easy material for his show. Even "The Simpsons" --- another Fox property --- has poked fun at it.

But the most disturbing part: more people watch Fox News Channel than any other.

Maybe we don't need the Fairness Doctrine any more. But we need something.

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

They may be edited for

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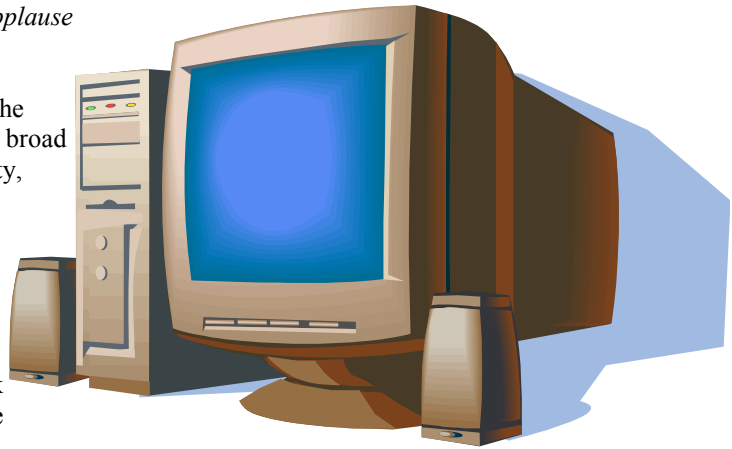
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Jim hopes to eventually bring *Pittsburgh Applause* back to the real world!

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But Jim needs a collection of advertisers willing and able to commit to at least six months of advertising. For more information, contact him at jim@james-richards.com

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