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Fairview library worth investment

By: Kevin Cuneo

When the new West County branch of the Erie County Public Library opens today in Fairview, visitors will be impressed by the building's beauty. Some might question why more than \$2 million was spent on a library branch in Fairview, but it's worth the investment. New libraries are built so rarely that it doesn't pay to scrimp. Think of the community leaders who planned and constructed the former public library on South Park Row, across from Perry Square, which opened in 1899. Now part of the federal courthouse complex, it served as a library for nearly a century and is still a wonderful building. Not only did leaders find the funds for this architectural gem, they also purchased a series of quality paintings that today are worth millions. ... You know autumn has begun when Sean Candela closes Sara's at Presque Isle for the season. Wednesday was the popular restaurant's final day for 2009, and Candela pronounced it a successful season despite a cool, rainy summer. "Our campground was busy all summer long, and I think, because of the economy, many people stayed close to home," he said. Candela will get a bit of a break before he starts preparing for the new season in April. ... Martin Magenau must love seeing his granddaughter, Gillian Jacobs, star in NBC's new show, "Community," which airs on Thursdays at 9:30 p.m. Magenau's daughter, Martina, is Jacobs' mom. The actress is a Juilliard graduate. ... Hugh and Ginny Pompeani must be proud that their daughter, longtime Washington, D.C., TV meteorologist Sue Palka, will be honored Saturday at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Palka will salute former Edinboro professor Bob Wallace at a reunion of the college's communications graduates. Edinboro's TV studio will be named in honor of Wallace. Palka, a popular figure on Washington's Fox affiliate, is married to Joe Palka, a talented actor, teacher and author of the "Last Stand of the Polish Sharpshooters." ... Penn State Behrend Chancellor Jack Burke is still getting praise for the inclusion of Behrend's engineering school in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of the nation's top 50 engineering programs. Burke points out that Behrend offers 10 engineering degrees.

Don't miss an opportunity to view op-art original works by Roy Ahlgren and Carl Sundberg at Steve and Stephanie Wood's Bayfront Gallery. Ahlgren was considered one of the nation's most inventive artists when he first showcased his op-art originals. ... Erie native Steve Scully, a familiar figure on C-Span for nearly two decades, is now a "distance learning" professor for the University of Denver. That's in addition to his work for C-Span. Scully regularly hosts familiar Washington figures such as John Dean in his classes, which are beamed across the nation. ... Mary Alice Brown's friends are planning an 80th birthday bash for the local jazz singer. Circle Oct. 28 on your calendar and stay tuned for more details. ... It appears major additions to Saint Mary's Home of Erie, 607 E. 26th St., are nearing completion. The buildings are on the East 28th Street side of the complex and look impressive. Saint Mary's has excelled at designing structures that fit into the residential neighborhood. Whenever somebody mentions Saint Mary's, I always think of the great work done there by Sister Anastasia Valimont, the late Sister Josina Boyersmith and many other Sisters of St. Joseph. ... Most Cleveland Indians fans asked, "What took so long?" when the club announced Wednesday that manager Eric Wedge and his staff would not return in 2010. It's time for a change. ... The handsome Erie quilt that was submitted to the All-American City panel is touring cities that made the competition's final cut. It was on display last week in Phoenix, where observers mentioned the fine needlework by Jodie Gloekler, who designed Erie's crest in the quilt's center. ... Carol Dovishaw's granddaughter, Nicki Henri, went right to work raising funds for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis research after learning that Carol has been diagnosed with the disease. Nicki, a talented golfer at Kenston High School in Bainbridge, Ohio, started a "Birdies Fore ALS" program, which is raising funds for research at the Cleveland Clinic.