

## Paramount Global Deal May Be Close

The rollercoaster ride being experienced by KDKA-TV's parent company, **Paramount Global** continues.

Recent developments include Bob Bakish resigning as the company's CEO. He has been with the company (in one form or another) since 1997. "Bakish's departure had much to do with increasing viewership declines, and steadily eroding advertising revenue of its live, linear TV networks," reports Wayne Friedman for MediaPost.com. "Paramount in its release of its first-quarter financial report . . . showed the company's [direct-to-consumer] business narrowed its cash flow net loss (adjusted operating income before depreciation and amortization) to \$286 million."

Paramount Global remains in play for buyout or merger. The privately held **Skydance Media** remains



the leading contender, writes Jill Goldsmith for Deadline.com. "Skydance's offer for Paramount, said to be its last and final, includes a sweetened \$3 billion cash injection --- up by at least \$1 billion contemplated previously. That's key as a priority is Paramount holding enough cash on its balance sheet for an investment grade status with big ratings agencies."

Skydance was founded in 2006 by film producer David Ellison (who is, himself, the son of billionaire Larry Ellison, who founded technology company **Oracle Corporation**). The company has already had a relationship with Paramount producing or co-producing films like "Top Gun: Maverick" (2022) and TV series such as "Grace and Frankie" (2015-2022). Skydance is partnering with investment firm **RedBird Capital Partners**.

Another bid may be forthcoming from **Sony Corporation**, writes Alex Weprin for the *Hollywood*

*Reporter*. An offer by Sony will likely be in partnership with private equity firm **Apollo Global Management** [the primary shareholder of **Cox Media Group**, which owns local station WPXI-TV -- ed.]

How a Sony/Apollo deal would be structured is unclear, Weprin points out, "though the Paramount film and TV studios would likely fit in nicely with Sony's own studios. It would raise questions about both Paramount+, given Sony's decision to avoid entering the streaming wars, as well as Paramount's linear TV assets, including CBS. There are federal regulations restricting foreign ownership of U.S. broadcast stations, and as a Japanese company Sony could face scrutiny under such rules."

The final decision will be that of Shari Redstone. Her family's company, **National Amusements**, is the controlling shareholder of Paramount Global.

## WCT Gets New CEO

Benjamin Luczak has been named the new President of the **Westmoreland Cultural Trust** (WCT), reports the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's* Joe Napsha.



The post is something of a homecoming for Luczak, who grew up in the region and even performed

as a teen at the WCT's flagship venue, the Palace Theatre. "This [role] is an accumulation of everything I've learned, all in one position," Napsha quotes him. Luczak's background is particularly strong in developing through stints with organizations in Iowa and Florida.

Learn more by reading [Napsha's article](#).



## CMU Gets \$10 Million Grant

An impressive \$10 million gift has been made to **Carnegie Mellon University** (CMU) by two of its alumni, reports Benjamin Sutton for *The Art Newspaper*.

### Carnegie Mellon University

The donation is being made by Tod Johnson and his wife, Cindy. The two met as students at CMU. “Half of their gift will create an endowment for public art at the university, supporting acquisitions, commissions and more” explains Sutton.

Tod Johnson is a co-owner of **Duo Partners**, whose web site describes the firm as one that “invests in and consults with early-stage information and data companies to assist them in achieving their business and financial objectives.” Duo was founded in 2022 by Johnson and partner Karyn Schoenbart after their previous

company was absorbed into another firm.

The other half of the donation is going to the university’s new Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA). “In recognition of the gift, the university’s public art curator will have the official title of Johnson Family Public Art Curator and a gallery in the new ICA will be named for the Johnsons.”

Both Johnsons have had long careers as philanthropists, especially for key New York City institutions. [Read Sutton’s full article here.](#)



Channel  
Pittsburgh

## Dance Troupe Coming

Canadian contemporary dance organization **Springboard Danse** is moving from Montreal to Pittsburgh, reports the blog [OnStagePittsburgh](#).

Springboard’s web site describes itself as “a not-for-profit contemporary dance organization that centers career development and cultivates connections between professional dancers, choreographer, and companies.” The move is part of a partnership with **Point Park University**.

Read the [blog post](#) for details.



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2. an instance of being composed of differing elements or qualities

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## Audacy's Layoffs

There are more layoffs and other actions at the owner of seven Pittsburgh radio stations.

RadioInsight.com reported on April 24

that “just under 100 employees” of **Audacy, Inc.** would be affected by layoffs with “the corporate Digital Editorial and Social Strategy departments along with the Traffic Weather Information Network” being the hardest hit. A few on-air personalities are included such as KDKA-AM’s Rick Dayton. [Other local changes announced by Audacy include a new morning show starring Cale Berger and Amanda Gorecki on WDSY-FM (Y108) – ed.]

The company has been enduring financial challenges and a restructuring. [Earlier



this year, Audacy filed for bankruptcy citing over \$1 billion in debt. – ed.] Now there is growing speculation that billionaire investor George Soros is eyeing the company with the possibility of merging it with another station owner, **Cumulus Media**. Max Tani of Semafor.com reported that “in February, [**Soros Fund Management**] became the largest shareholder in Audacy, the bankrupt second-largest radio company . . . in the U.S., with more than 230 U.S. stations and a podcast arm that includes Cadence13 and Pineapple Street Studios. In 2022, Soros invested an undisclosed amount in **Crooked Media**, the liberal podcast network.”

The two companies would make an interesting combination. Cumulus’ conservative commentators have stirred controversies including those involving the 2020 presidential election. Shortly after the January 6 attack, company executives instructed these popular personalities from further spreading disinformation.

## Warhol's New Sponsor

The Andy Warhol Museum, part of the **Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh**, has announced **Citizens Financial Group** as a presenting sponsor.



Citizens Financial Group began in 1828 as High Street Bank in Rhode Island’s capital city of Providence. The company currently has branches in fourteen states and the District of Columbia. Citizens is the second largest bank in Pennsylvania.

The company is sponsoring the Warhol’s long-running “Sound Series” of live music performances. “I’m so pleased to have the support of Citizens as a presenting sponsor for our Sound Series,” explains the museum’s Ben Harrison in a press release, “as we build on our long history of presenting musicians and performing artists from around the world in our unique museum spaces.”

Sponsorship is for the remaining 2024 concerts.

## Artists Chosen

Artists have been selected by the **Mattress Factory** for the museum’s By Artists For Artists program.

Nearly 1800 submissions came from



artists in 90 countries for what the museum describes as an “unparalleled program” to share their work. Three artists will create original site-specific works for what will be their first solo American exhibitions.

The trio selected include Taiwanese artist Ting Tong Chang who “crafts dynamic environments that blur the boundaries between the physical and digital realms”; multidisciplinary Egyptian artist Yasmin El Meleegy, who “explores the intersections between history, materiality, and identity” and Argentine duo Lolo y Lauti, which uses performance art to create “a mix of satire, humor and critical insight.”

More information is available by [clicking here](#).



## GPAC's Strategic Plan

A survey was recently conducted by the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC) regarding the organization's developing strategic plan.

GREATER PITTSBURGH  
ARTS COUNCIL



Arts loud and clear

Calling the multi-year plan

“transformative,” GPAC is studying virtually every aspect of its operation, from staffing to programming. An April 11 blog post explains that the organization’s “ultimate goal is to respond to the needs of the local arts ecosystem and cultivate a thriving, vibrant arts community for the Greater Pittsburgh region.”

GPAC has acknowledged its own institutional errors in that same blog post. These include creating programs that compete with similar programs provided by other organizations, poor communication and program mismanagement.

Results of the survey had not been published when *Pittsburgh Applause* went to press. However, GPAC did announce the end of the Art of the Walls program. In an April 30 blog post, GPAC’s Patrick Fisher explained that “we identified other community assets that have since launched programs addressing similar needs.”

A total of \$88,000 in grants have been awarded by the **Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council** (GPAC) to 44 creative entrepreneurs.

The grants are the result of the Creative Entrepreneur Accelerator program to help people who are developing a creative business. Details, including a full list of recipients, are available by [clicking here](#).

**JOE FLAHERTY**  
**(1941-2024)**

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## New Music Festival

Headliners have been booked for a new Pittsburgh music festival, reports Megan VerHelst for Patch.com.



The festival is called Sudden Little Thrills and it will be staged this September at the developing riverfront site called [Hazelwood Green](#).

“Inspired by Pittsburgh’s arts and culture legacy,” explains a press release, “the name Sudden Little Thrills embodies the ethos of the

festival --- to be present and open to sudden moments of fun, joy and inspiration.”

Scheduled to perform are singer/songwriter Solana “SZA” Rowe, rock band The Killers, singer/songwriter Melanie Martinez and Pittsburgh native Cameron “Wiz Khalifa” Thomaz.

The festival is being produced by G3 Presents, an event production and artist management company owned by **Live Nation Entertainment**. More information is available on the [festival’s web site](#).

## Sinclair Embraces AI

As part of an attempt “to reach more audiences globally in their native languages,” **Sinclair Broadcast Group** will begin utilizing artificial intelligence (AI) software.



Sinclair owns two Pittsburgh television stations as well as various cable channels and digital broadcast subnetworks. One of these is the Tennis Channel. Sinclair will begin using AI to translate “Petko Unfiltered” from its original English into Spanish for some of the program’s European audiences.

Technology company **HeyGen** is being engaged. The [firm’s web site](#) describes its mission “is to make visual storytelling accessible to all.” All programs airing with AI translated languages will carry a disclosure slate. Sinclair chief Chris Ripley in a press release: “We recognize our duty to employ AI with integrity and transparency, to safeguard not only our industry’s reputation but also the trust of our audiences.”



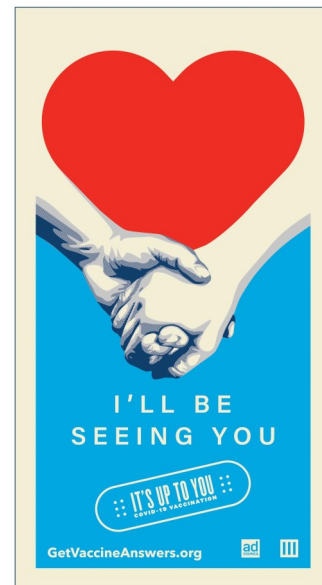
## Concert Hall Finally Coming

Construction may begin this fall on a new concert venue, reports the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s* Mark Belko.



The facility has been in the development stage for years and is a joint project of the **Pittsburgh Penguins** and **Live Nation Entertainment**. Plans originally called for garage portion of the multiuse structure first followed by the venue. “What we’re doing right now is making some adjustments to that sequence,” Belko quotes a Penguins executive.

Post-pandemic changes to parking needs are the driving forces behind the change. It is expected that the venue, capable of holding 4,500 people, will open in early 2026. [Read Belko’s full article for details](#).



# Frick Upgrades Facility

A new restroom is not normally considered an historic moment. However, the **Frick Pittsburgh** is describing its new facility as a “milestone.”



This is because the restroom is part of a continuing effort to bring the Frick into further compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). With a former Gilded Age mansion at its heart, making changes to the institution’s campus requires both historical and architectural sensitivities. The new all-gender restroom is located inside a building constructed in the 1970’s.

“Facing off against an old-school door frame with no blueprints to guide us, we had to get creative,” said the Frick’s Rob Henninger in a press release, “We called in a few favors, brainstormed with experts, and came up with a plan. The soft marble of the door frame turned out to be our saving grace for stability. After some trial and error, we figured out the best spot for a custom bracket. A local

architect drew up the design, a nearby shop made it a reality, and when all was said and done, we brought the new bracket on site and mounted everything to make the power-door mechanism possible.”

The new restroom has a spacious, open floorplan with a changing table, grab bars and a power-assist door.

## Images




*Above are four of the artists participating in City of Asylum’s “Jazz Poetry” program this month.*

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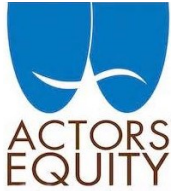


## Equity Issues Warning To Producers

June 17 is the deadline set by **Actors' Equity Association** (AEA)

“if meaningful progress is not made in negotiations” with the **Broadway League**.

This means that the union will stop issuing the contracts that allow its members --- including Pittsburgh actors who often perform in New York City --- to participate in the development of new works.



“We have tried every way we know to reach an agreement with The Broadway League, but if they don't see a way to take our concerns seriously, there is no way forward on the Development Agreement,” said AEA's Stephen Bogardus in a press release. “We love doing the work of creating Broadway's future hits, but we need to be treated as equal partners at the bargaining table. Unless and until The Broadway League is willing to make meaningful changes, actors and stage managers will not do this work.”

Known as the Development Agreement, the tool was introduced in 2019 to ensure that actors and stage managers can share in the success of a production that they helped develop.

[Additional information is available here.](#)

## Musicians Reach Deal

Members of the **American Federation of Musicians** (AFM) have ratified a new agreement with the major film and television companies. The union made the announcement on April 2.

“This agreement is a monumental victory for musicians who have long been under-

compensated for their work in the digital age,”

declared AFM

International

President and

Chief Negotiator

Tino Gagliardi in the announce-

ment. “It wouldn't have been possible without our members' un-

wavering strength and unity, along

with the tireless organizing efforts

that led up to this historic con-

tract. Their dedication was instru-

mental in achieving a favorable

agreement after just 12 days of

negotiations.”



Key elements include residuals

from streaming and rules involv-

ing artificial intelligence (AI). A

memorandum of understanding

was released earlier this year and

can be read by [clicking here.](#)

## SAG-AFTRA Sound Pact

More than 97% of relevant **SAG-AFTRA** members voted to ratify a new Sound Recordings Code with the major record labels.



“Singers and recording artists have a profound impact on our culture, and I'm thrilled that they've achieved a contract that not only recognizes their value with significant wage increases,

but also provides them essential protections around artificial intelligence,” said SAG-AFTRA President Fran Drescher in a press release. “We celebrate our human performers! I applaud the negotiating committee and staff, the record labels, and SAG-AFTRA members for getting this contract across the finish line!”

Key provisions include wage increases and rules for the use of artificial intelligence (AI). [Click here to read a summary.](#)





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MON  
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FRI  
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FRI  
31

# Opportunities

A part-time educator is being sought by the **Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre**. The successful candidate will be “an energetic, classically trained ballet instructor” for adult students. Other positions are also available (including the orchestra). [Click here](#).

Digital content producers and part-time hosts are among the opportunities at the **Audacy** stations in Pittsburgh. [Click here](#).

Two key positions are currently open at the **Pittsburgh Cultural Trust**. This includes a professional to join the programming team and the other to supervise the organization’s shared services. [Click here](#).



## PSO's European Tour

The dates have been announced by the **Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra** (PSO) for the orchestra's forthcoming European tour. The itinerary features nine cities in three countries from August 22 through September 7. But the most prestigious stop is probably the [Salzburg Festival](#).



Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). "We are honored to be the only American orchestra at the Salzburg Festival again this year," the PFO's Melia Tourangeau says in a press release. "Additionally, being invited to Europe's capital cities and showcasing the orchestra on the top stages . . . is a reflection of the city that supports us, and we are proud to represent Pittsburgh on the international stage."

Begun in 1920, the festival is held in the birthplace of legendary



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## Truckers Make Deal

One strike at the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* has been resolved. But four other unions are still on walkout.



Ray Schultz reports for MediaPost.com that all 23 members of Teamster Local 211/205 have voted to accept a new agreement with the newspaper. Local 211/205 represents truck drivers, who have been striking for some eighteen months. The most surprising angle, writes Schultz, is that Local 211/205 is dissolving. "It could be that the *Post-Gazette* made a satisfactory offer. But fear of job loss could also figure into it --- numerous other newspapers throughout the country are reducing print and delivering papers via the post office."

At press time, there were no signs that any of the other unions have reached an agreement with the newspaper.



## Across

1. Acclaimed 1925 novel (with 1-Down)
5. Actress and director Lupino, to friends
8. Extra device input port
9. The narrator of 1-Across
10. Penn's stage partner
12. State south of OR
13. Letters much in the news?
14. Songstress Vikki
16. He played the title character in the first film version of 1-Across
19. Another word for "tinkle"
20. Cool dude's greeting
21. Goofed
23. Successor to JFK
26. Ontario radio station call letters
28. He played the title character in the 1949 film version of 1-Across
31. Famed New Zealand dolphin
32. Another word for "lu-lu"
34. State east of OK
35. The author of 1-Across

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## Down

1. See 1-Across
2. Regret
3. Common constipation medicine
4. Foot extension?
5. Another word for "hip" or "trendy"
6. He layed the title character in the latest film version of 1-Across
7. "Not just a job, it's \_\_\_\_ !"
11. Afire
15. He played the title character in the 1974 film version of 1-Across
17. "You've Got Mail" letters
18. Memo subject, briefly
22. Coke and Pepsi competitor
24. Blemish
25. The famed "Age" of 1-Across
27. Tel Aviv protectors, initially
29. Archeological site
30. Barely passing grade
33. Big Brazilian phone company

### Last Month's Solution

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