

The Past On Display

—Compiled by Marian Cowhig—

From the French explorers who settled the area in the 1700s to the maritime industry centered on Lake Erie, the past informs Erie's future. So it's only natural for that past and the creations it produced to be celebrated in an array of museums.

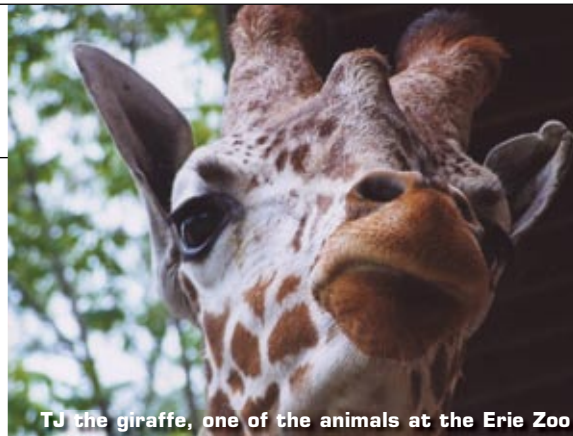
Housed in a nineteenth-century former bank and government building, the **Erie Art Museum** boasts a 5,000-piece collection of paintings, sculptures, photographs, textiles, and ceramics. Through April, visit "Artists of the Commonwealth," which features Pennsylvania artists of the Realism style. 411 State St., 814-459-5477, erieartmuseum.org

One of four museum sites run by the Erie County Historical Society, the **Erie County History Center** highlights local history. The technology and transportation exhibit shows bicycles

and automobiles built in Erie, as well as grist and saw mills. For some ancient history, take a look at dinosaur fossils found in Erie County. 419 State St., 814-454-1813, eriecountyhistory.org

A companion to the reconstructed U.S. Brig *Niagara*, the **Erie Maritime Museum** offers information about the area's relationship with Lake Erie. Exhibits explore the ecosystem of the Great Lakes, the lives of early sailors, and noted Lake Erie naval battles. 150 E. Front St., 814-452-2744, brigniaagara.org/museum

The animals and plants at the **Erie Zoo** aren't artifacts — they're very much alive. But the zoo itself, with a main building dating back to 1930, offers history buffs and naturalists



TJ the giraffe, one of the animals at the Erie Zoo

ERIE AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

alike something to ooh and ah over. An exhibit for children showcases animals such as a Sardinian donkey and a golden mantella. 423 W. 38th St., 814-864-4091, eriezoo.org

For railroad buffs, there's no better place to go than the **GE Transportation Rail History Museum**. Exhibits describe the development of the Erie plant and innovations in the locomotive industry. Building 1-C on the GE campus, Franklin Avenue and East Lake Road, 814-875-2494



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