

## Visiting Mars: an out-of-this-world experience

by Melody Sherosky  
contributing writer

Recently, a few friends and I were talking about how dull the semester was. With a full class load, a way-too-familiar campus, and only the usual things happening in Erie, we decided the best idea was to get out of town as much as possible. This notion led my friend Cory and me to Mars, Pennsylvania on a whim, in search of intelligent life (or at least some good pie).

For those of you who don't know, Mars is a town of about 1,600 people, located 20 miles north of Pittsburgh. If you've driven from Erie to Pittsburgh before you may have seen the sign for Mars and wondered, like I did, if anything interesting happens in Mars. Frankly, even if nothing interesting ever happened there, once we found out there was a big metal spaceship there, suitable for photo opportunities, there was no turning back.

Before heading South, we looked for Mars on the net and found only one relevant website, <http://www.purvisbros.com/mars/marstop.htm>, which included several non-striking photos of Grande Avenue and the big metal spaceship. It also had a section entitled "Life in Mars" and the town song, which is terrible. For example, one verse goes, "We're citizens of Mars, we don't make candy bars, we shine among the stars, because we are from Mars." The site provided us with little information.

It was luck, in the form of Behrend communications student



Michelle McKernan, which gave us something to look forward to in Mars. Michelle was born and raised in Mars, PA. Local legend has it, she says, that the two small aliens in the Mars postcard above are her sisters.

Among other things, Michelle told me about the man who held himself up in his house (she

thinks), in a 1996 police standoff.

Apparently he doused the house with kerosene and threatened to blow it up. The police evacuated all of Grande Avenue except Howard's restaurant, so that they could eat there during the standoff. I could not find any information about this standoff on the web. Perhaps, like

Michelle's sisters, it too is local legend.

Finally, after nearly two hours in the car with Cory and some wonderful techno, we found ourselves looking for Howard's restaurant on the quaint streets of Mars. Grande Avenue turned out to be all of 5 blocks long, and we

drove down it a few times before it was apparent that we would not find Howard's without asking. We parked the car across from the big metal spaceship and got out.

Cory mentioned it first, but I was thinking the same thought: Sunday afternoon in Mars was eerily quiet. There was not even the noise of

traffic. There were a few people down the road at the Mars Foodland, so we decided it would be our best bet (we needed to pick up some postcards, anyway). After dallying in the amazing selection and quantity of baked goods at the entrance to Foodland, we accosted a very young stock boy. He informed us that Howard's had been sold and was now called Suzie Q's. He then gave us directions, but when we got there Suzie Q's was closed.

We ended up with the only available option, Orizzo's Pizza. The crust was not bad, but they were extremely skimpy on the toppings. Disappointed in the pizza, we decided to read the local news, *The Cranberry Eagle*, while we had some ice cream at Scooper's ice creamery (which we found quite accidentally).

*The Eagle* was amusing, and we especially enjoyed the vague police reports: "Someone stole \$1,031 in a burglary at the home of Esther Thomas... The burglary occurred between June 15 and Aug. 18." And the excellent choice of ice creams at Scooper's was enough to make up for the bad pizza and the teenagers of Mars who drove by yelling out the window, "you're all getting fat!"

We got a beautiful view of life in Mars. Was it intelligent? Well, um, sure. Was it better than sitting around in Erie waiting for something to happen? Definitely. Oh, and we did get our picture taken with the big metal spaceship. Until next time...

## Studio theatre remains busy

by Karl Benacci  
features editor

On Friday, September 14, and Saturday, September 15, in the Behrend Studio Theatre, Dan Crozier, a theatre faculty member at Allegheny Collage, starred in the original one-man performance piece "Some Parts Missing or Broken," which is directed by Robert Levine.

In the play, Crozier explores human relationships, particularly those between fathers and sons.

Theatre Professor Tony Elliot, who is in charge of the Studio Theatre, stated, "I think the performance of "Some Parts

Missing or Broken" this weekend went well. The piece is not what Behrend audiences are used to and I think it confused some of the audience, but I am sure that all were entertained. It is important that this campus community be exposed to all kinds of entertainment, and that we support a wide range of styles and approaches. I am very pleased that Dan Crozier, from Allegheny College, was willing to come to Behrend and share his talents and point of view with our campus."

The Studio Theatre has also chosen its actors and actresses for the work "Sand Mountain," which centers on the Tennessee Frontier in the 1840's. "Sand Mountain"

consists of two plays performed in one evening, one concerning Rebecca, a young and attractive widow, who is courted by four very different possible mates. The other play centers around an impoverished and unmarried mountain couple and their 14 children, who get a visit from the Lord and Saint Peter.

The cast of the play had their first read-through of the play on Monday, September 17, and is now in staging rehearsals.

Performance dates for "Sand Mountain" will run from October 25 to November 4. Tickets for the show will go on sale on October 15, at the RUB Desk.

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