

Website of the Week

by Christine Piccola
staff writer

A round trip ticket from San Francisco to Amsterdam: \$330; from New York to Zurich: \$370; from Cleveland to Chicago & back: \$59. Where did these amazing deals come from? No, not the world's greatest travel agency or a relative in the airline industry. You can get these astonishing airfare deals online in a matter of minutes. All around the world, travelers are using the World Wide Web to book airfares, hotel reservations, and car rentals in rapidly increasing numbers, saving tons of money in the process.

In 1998, Americans spent \$2.1 billion on online travel purchases alone, and it is expected that that figure will grow to \$12 billion by 2002. \$7 billion of which is spent on airline tickets, according to Internet research firm Jupiter Communications. Why are these figures so high? The key is savings. People are finding out that tickets acquired online are frequently cheaper than anything they can get from travel agencies, or even by calling the airlines themselves.

There are numerous ways to find cheap airfares online, from full-service travel websites to airline homepages to online auctions. The consensus is to shop all of them. By taking the time to look at all of them, you will definitely find the lowest fare and the method that works best for you.

The first method is full-service

sites—all purpose, virtual travel agencies that cover everything you could ever want from hotels to car rentals to specialized vacation packages. And there are plenty of them to choose from. The three most popular are **M S N E x p e d i a** (WWW.EXPEDIA.COM), **Travelocity** (WWW.TRAVELOCITY.COM), and **Preview Travel** (WWW.PREVIEWTRAVEL.COM). These sites access the same major computer reservation systems that the airlines and travel agents use, which makes them a great place to get an idea on prices. Most let you create a user profile where you can securely store your credit card number, seating and meal preferences, and frequent flier numbers so that every time you want to order tickets they are readily available. And some will even email you with fare alerts on special deals to the locations you select in your profile. Jupiter Communications suggests that you check out as many full-service sites as you can before settling on one.

Another method is the actual airline websites. Most are now offering secure bookings directly through the website. Internet bookings save the airlines money because the travel agents' commissions are eliminated, and this works out well for you. The savings that the airlines receive are passed on to you through special discounts on online purchases.

Many airlines also offer what they call "cyberdeals," where tickets are obtainable for last-minute purchase and travel at tremendous savings. You can only get these deals from the air-

lines' websites, and they are usually not listed on major reservation databases, so you can't get them anywhere else. One drawback is that you must be able to travel on short notice.

You can also check out discount and auction websites. They are the latest addition into the online ticketing game. While offering some of the best deals, they come with limited options and the least amount of service.

At a discount site such as WWW.PRICELINE.COM, you designate what days you want to fly and how much you want to pay for a round trip ticket, and Priceline tries to find an airline from the 18 that it works with that will take your offer.

With an auction site such as WWW.TRAVELCLEARINGHOUSE.COM, you bid for tickets between particular destinations within a restricted time frame. The deals can be hit-or-miss, and you do need to read the fine print carefully. Ticket prices very seldom include taxes and mailing fees, and you usually cannot earn frequent flier miles with these tickets. Regardless, these sites are still a feasible option, and you just might find a deal too good to pass up.

Whether you are traveling to Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, or even San Juan, shopping for airfare online just might be the way to go. If you are going home for the holidays, you can save money and time—2 things college students never seem to have enough of.

STUDENT CLUB OF THE WEEK

International Student Organization

by Liz Hayes
associate editor

This week's student club of the week is brand new to Behrend. The International Student Organization (ISO) just received its charter from SGA in the past month after several weeks of development.

As stated by Abdullah AL-Mutairi, president of ISO, the organization's mission is to "represent international students as a body and to help in their assimilation and adjustment to the student body...[as well as] to act as a resource of information for people interested in foreign nations." Upon his arrival at Behrend, AL-Mutairi (who is originally from Kuwait) found that there was no

specific organization that represented international students, and he and fellow club founders "wanted to show the students of Behrend and the Erie community something that would broaden their cultural and international horizon[s]."

AL-Mutairi, 01 Petroleum and Natural Gas Engineering, was one of the principle founders of the club. Also involved were Meshal AL-Khabbaz (treasurer), Faisal Ashlan (vice president), Janique Caffie, and Masrur Syed (the latter two act as the club's advisors). The club has already accumulated 20 official members, and has had several more expressing an interest.

Due to the club's recent development, no official events or activities have been planned thus far. However, plans for an international car-

nival are in the works for the spring 2000 semester. The club is even considering inviting other local universities to participate. Also being planned are several guest speakers and field trips. The club is also planning to discuss at its next meeting its relationship to the Multi-Cultural Council, and how much it will work in conjunction with the MCC.

Currently, the club does not have an official office, and therefore does not have an official club phone number. Anyone interested in ISO should contact AL-Mutairi at his on-campus room at x7108. The club's next meeting will be held in the MCC suite; a date has not yet been established. All meetings are open to the public, and students are encouraged to join so that the club can really get off the ground.



LEX



H



Aries (March 21-April 19). Take time out for yourself this week.

R

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Finals are coming, make sure you study.

O

Gemini (May 21-June 21). This is a very stressful time of year, try not to get overwhelmed.

S

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Go retro, wear a Jean Jacket to class.

C

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Make a donation to your favorite charity.

O

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Try shaving between your eyes, it's a new look.

P

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Don't go with the crowd, jump off a bridge by yourself.

E

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Grapes, they're not just for breakfast anymore.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Oh, hell yea, it's your birthday.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Get your Christmas shopping done early.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb 18). Appreciate the people in your life.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). Expand your horizons, go to Eat n' Park.

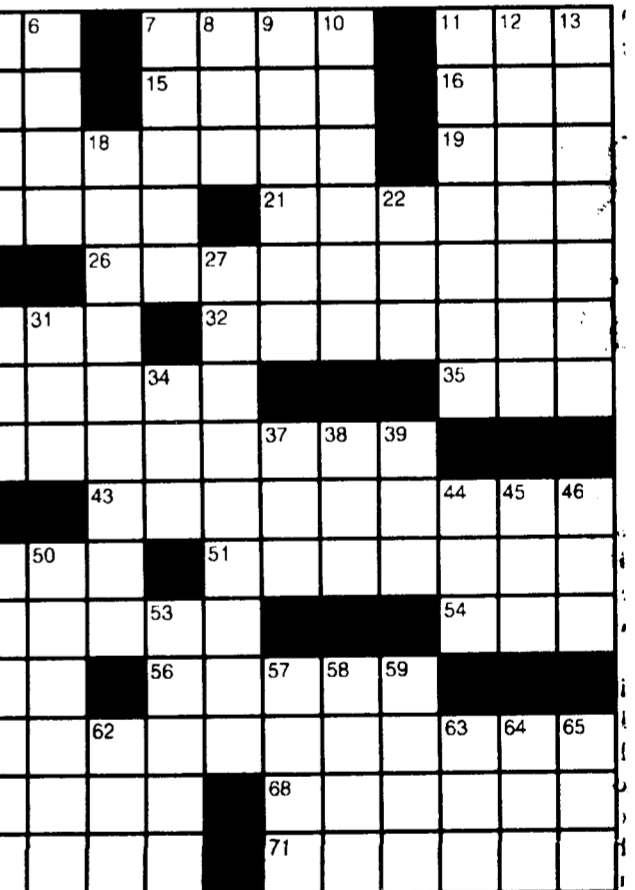


ACROSS

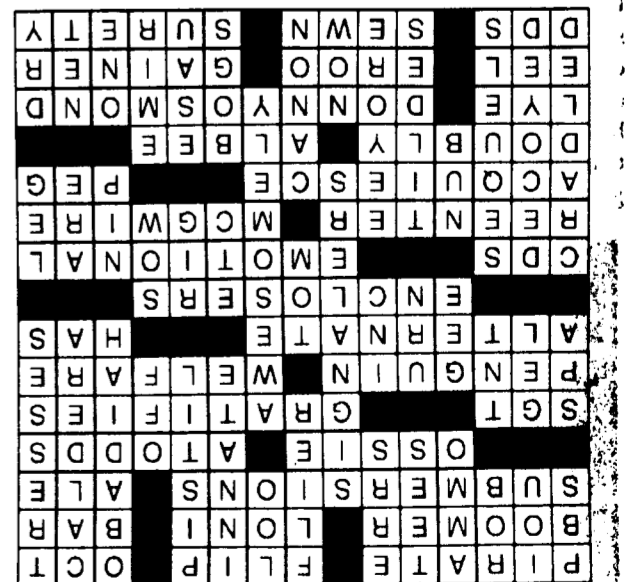
- 1 Freebooter
- 7 Coin toss
- 11 10 of calendars
- 14 Ex-QB Esiason
- 15 Burt's ex
- 16 Prohibit
- 17 Dunkings
- 19 Pint drink
- 20 Actor Davis
- 21 In conflict
- 23 Mil. rank
- 26 Pleases
- 28 Pittsburgh player
- 32 State support
- 33 Switch back and forth
- 35 Holds
- 36 Fences and walls, e.g.
- 40 Today's LPs
- 43 Moving
- 47 Input data again
- 51 Mark of homers
- 52 Comply without protest
- 54 Tent stake
- 55 Twofold
- 56 "Seascape" playwright
- 60 Potash
- 61 Marie's brother
- 66 Cave-dwelling fish
- 67 End of a switch?
- 68 Reverse dive
- 69 Deg. with teeth
- 70 Stitched
- 71 Something beyond doubt

DOWN

- 1 Network of "Nova"
- 2 Debt letters
- 3 Reiner or Lowe
- 4 Bullets, briefly
- 5 Golf shop purchase
- 6 Makes mistakes
- 7 Pamphlet
- 8 Old card game
- 9 Existing naturally
- 10 Female part of a flower
- 11 Shortest book of
- 12 Volcanic crater
- 13 Locks and shocks
- 18 Flag-wavers, of a sort
- 22 ___ and running
- 23 Tubs in Bath
- 24 Become a jelly
- 25 Lethal letters
- 27 Profoundly
- 29 Whiz lead-in
- 30 Vase with a base
- 31 Abbr. for a business
- 34 Cruise in Hollywood
- 37 And so forth: abbr.
- 38 Put in the fix
- 39 Scatter seed
- 40 Held in one's arms
- 41 Lured
- 42 Follow-up films
- 44 Puppy bite



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- 45 Exist
- 46 Part of a tour
- 48 Crux
- 49 Spanish accents
- 50 Friend of Pooh
- 53 Secular law
- 57 Fens
- 58 Jacob's twin
- 59 Eastern ruler
- 62 At present
- 63 Indefinite pronoun
- 64 Bottom-line figure
- 65 Arid

by Bongo the three legged monkey