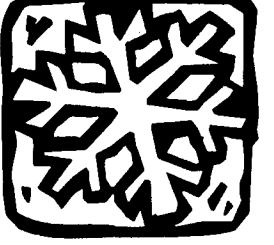


WINTER IN ERIE



STUDENTS FROM THE "WRITING BEHREND" FIRST YEAR SEMINAR OFFER TIPS FOR SURVIVING AND THRIVING DURING ERIE WINTERS.

Suck it up: dealing with winter in Erie

by Kristin Grudowski
Staff Writer

Whether you are an "Erieite" or this is your first winter in the lovely city, we all share one common realization. Winters in Erie are harsh and can be tough to handle. No one realizes this more than those students who are getting their first dose of arctic temperatures and bone-chilling winds as they experience their first semester at Behrend and other schools in the Northern U.S.

Faisal Ashlan (Finance, 02) has spent about fourteen years of his life in Kuwait, where the winters are much more mild, raining rather than snowing, and maintaining an average winter temperature of 45 to 50 degrees. Adapting to the elements of Erie has not been a leisurely process for Ashlan, as he comments on Erie's weather, "I want it to stop. I hate it."

Meshal Al-Khabbaz (Mec. Engineering, 02), who has spent about sixteen years in Kuwait, has also noticed the dramatic differences in the climates of the two regions. "Even September was too cold. I can stand the weather, but it is annoying at times."

While Ashlan and Al-Khabbaz are from Kuwait, they have lived in the north-eastern U.S. before for short periods of time. Perhaps that experience helped them to prepare for their first semester at Behrend. But what could prepare a student who has never even seen snow for the brutality of Erie's climate?

That was the situation Nina Lasont (Pre Law, 02) found herself in this winter. Lasont, coming from Jacksonville, Florida, had never seen snow before attending Behrend. Luckily, she reacted positively to what Erie weather had to offer and lived it up, making snowmen and all. "I loved it because it's something I've never seen or experienced before. If Erie offered 80 degrees and snow I would live here for the rest of my life," Lasont said.

Born and bred in north-western Millcreek, Denny Shaffer (Hist, 07) offers advice to those students experiencing their first taste of Erie's winter conditions. "Take advantage of the weather," Shaffer commented, continuing, "No matter how cold, windy or snowy it can get here, you can always find something fun to do in Erie."

That said, if you are complaining about the conditions in Erie, suck it up and deal with the weather. Most students can find some positive characteristics hidden in the snow, hail, freezing temperatures, excess salt and muck of Erie.



PHOTO BY JENN BENSON

Worst winter remembered

by Jeff Miller
Photo Editor

Throughout the years Erie has endured some pretty inhospitable winters. What makes a horrible winter? Lots of snow, ice, people flooding to the grocery store, car accidents, and, what every kid remembers, snow days. Everyone has his or her own idea about what makes winter terrible. However there seems to be a consensus among Behrend students that the worst winter in this area was in 1993.

Among the students who singled out the winter of '93, Eunice Ng (Bio, 06) said, "I remember there being ten inches of snow." Kim Moses (MET, 08) responded "I walked out of my house and remember the snow being up to my chin."

Every kid has hopes of snow days, days that are sure to stick in a child's mind. Tracy Jones (Comm, 04) said, "My school never closed, but in '93 they canceled it for three days. The snow was so deep we couldn't even play in it." Erika Weissenfluh (Psy, 04) also remembers staying home for three days.

There are some that remember another winter as the worst. "1996 was the year me and my friends turned sixteen, so we started to pull each other behind the car on a sled," said John McDiHaney (MIS, 04).

Winters have been rough in the past, but fortunately this winter has not been one to remember...yet!

Winter commuting hazards



PHOTO BY JENN BENSON

By Daryl Ploss
Staff Writer

What do all commuters have in common in the winter? We have the privilege of driving to and from Behrend every day in wonderful Erie weather!

Well, maybe it isn't a wonderful privilege, but we still have to do it. For some commuters the drive is five minutes, and for others it is 45 minutes, but if we all take some extra time to prepare the right way, we won't run into any problems in the middle of a winter storm.

As all commuters know, driving in Erie in the winter is totally different than driving in Erie in the summer. Because of this, drivers should leave their homes early. There is no for-

mula to use to calculate the extra amount of time to allow yourselves, so use your own discretion when leaving your home. For example, everyday I have to venture on Cooper Road down through the treacherous Wintergreen gorge. If I hear of a bad winter storm scheduled to hit Erie the night before my math test, I know that I should allow myself at least ten extra minutes in the morning, so I can avoid the always present dangers of Cooper Road.

Periodically it is very important to check your windshield washer fluid level. Nothing is more annoying than when you are running late to English class and flying across 38th Street when you get stuck behind some big 18-wheel semi-truck. Of course, the truck's tires are throwing dirty water and

slush onto your windshield making it impossible to see! So you try to use windshield washer fluid, but nothing happens (except that the wipers smear the dirty water and slush, making it worse!). I know this has happened to all commuters, so regularly check your fluid level.

One final tip, and this will be the hardest for us all to do. It is hard because as we all know college students rarely have money. So here it is: keep your gas level above half a tank. Why? Because the gas in your tank provides for weight when you are sliding on ice and trying to make it up large hills. Also, the more gas in your tank, the less likely it is that your gas will freeze up.

Winter sports heat up in Erie

By Mike Cooklis
Staff Writer

While the winters of Erie's past might have seemed boring, the winters of today are filled with many exciting sporting events to help pass the time away.

The Erie sports scene is brimming with activity at this time of the year. Any given night can provide hours of quality entertainment. Local sports are not dominated by high school athletics, as you might think from watching the local news. Erie's professional hockey team, the Otters, are now a part of the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), and the quality of play is better than ever. But the Otters are not alone.

New to many fans this year is the addition of an arena football team, the Erie Invaders. Playing

from April 1 to July 8, this will mark the first year that an arena



team has ever called the Erie Civic Center home. Arena football is an exciting brand of football that will bring a high action, fast paced style that is more fan friendly than traditional football. Arena football recently produced Kurt Warner, MVP of Super Bowl XXXIV.

Behrend student Chris Cooper (MIS, 02) said of the local sports

scene, "Erie has many more athletic events, both pro and college, than my old home in Vancouver had."

Not to be overlooked in Erie is the presence of quality college athletics. The small schools are more than capable of providing big games. Behrend, Mercyhurst, Gannon, and Edinboro all field excellent basketball programs for both men and women. The action is as close as your own back yard, Erie Hall, to be specific.

Many students attend Behrend basketball games regularly. "I like the games because of the atmosphere and the level of play," said Drew Weinheimer (MIS, 02).

As you can see, Erie might not be as "dreary" as you once thought. With a multitude of sporting events, you can keep busy right up until the spring thaw.



PHOTO BY JENN BENSON

Treat your car with care: winter auto tips

By Rob Wynne
Associate Editor

Your car loves winter in Erie about as much you do.

The elements can truly take their toll on an automobile over the course of a winter, especially for those vehicles used to commute long distances. Salt, ice, snow, and slush become the colors of your vehicle on the outside, but your car's insides may be suffering as well.

Giving your car some "under-the hood" attention for a few minutes a week may just save you from being stranded on the high-

way 20 minutes before a mid-term. Here are a few tips and suggestions for "winterizing" your car.

You've probably heard that the best thing you can do for your car is to change the oil every 3,000 miles. This is especially true during the winter because colder temperatures, along with short-trip driving, can lead to premature breakdown of your oil, which will ultimately decrease the life of your engine.



Also, try using a lower viscosity oil in your vehicle during the winter. For example, if your car calls for 10W-30 oil, try using 5W-30. Lower viscosity oils are more suitable for colder temperatures and will allow your car easier starting.

Many cars today are designed with 4-cylinder engines. Thus, they run hotter than some 6 or 8 cylinder autos. And yes, even though it's cool outside, your vehicle still needs coolant. Don't let your car catch a fever. Check

the coolant level by using the guides on your coolant reserve tank (it contains green or red coolant).

When adding coolant to the reserve tank, ALWAYS dilute with water. Typically, a 50/50 ratio is called for. But, it's winter, so you can safely use a 70% coolant, 30% water mixture. Again, this is more suitable for your car in colder temperatures.

Is your car front or rear wheel drive? Most newer vehicles are front-wheel drive, with the exception of some vans and trucks. If you have snow-tires, put them closer to where your drive comes

from: back or front. If your car is rear-wheel drive, you have snow tires and you are still sliding, try adding some weight (like sandbags) in your trunk, evenly distributed.

One last tip: start your car early and give it some warm-up time. Not only will this warm up the engine and its components to prevent damage, your interior (if it's vinyl or leather) will not suffer as much cracking when you sit on it. Some newer makes do not promote "warm-up" time, however. So, as always, consult your owner's manual for specifics. Here's to safe and happy driving!