

The Mullet: Form or Function?



Untitled 21
Ben Kundman

Ah, Winter Break. Time to go crazy cooped up in your house; have a draconian curfew imposed by your parents; and work 40 hours a week in order to pay off all of your darn credit card bills. Every time I'm at school, I wish I were at home. Within 184 seconds of arriving at home, I wish I were back at school.

In order to get everyone in the spirit of "hey school sucks why on earth did I think I wanted to be back here anyways," I have compiled a list (think of this as the unhappy yang to last column's happy-cute-sweet-nice yin) highlighting some of the reasons Behrend and Erie both suck.

Pizza - Last column, I shared my love for pizza. Unfortunately, just as New York has "New York" Style Pizza, Chicago has "Chicago Style" Pizza, Erie has "Cafeteria Style" Pizza. Granted, the national chains are decent, but I have yet to find a local pizza joint that doesn't serve pies that look and taste like the crap they served in my high school café.

Slow-Walker-Talkers - These people make it a point to walk to class at two minutes before the hour, shoulder-to-shoulder so they take up the entire sidewalk, talking loudly about nothing, and walking at a pace that could only be described as "makes snails look like Carl Lewis."

Hey-Can-I-Get-a-Mocha-and-a-Cappuccino-Even-Though-its-9:58-am-and-There-Are-23-People-In-Line-Behind-Me-Who-Are-All-Late-For-Class-People - I like crappuccino as much as the next guy. The problem with our little coffee booth at Bruno's, although it might be Seattle's Best Coffee, it's Erie's Slowest Service. However, I place no blame on the employees of this establishment. I have yet to see anyone, not even The Flash, make a darn mocha in less than four minutes. I mean, come on people! I'm standing behind you and it's going to take me and the 22 other poor schmucks behind me 8.9 seconds each to pump our own coffee and then have the worker person do the card swipecy thing.

Erie is "hip" to new trends. The preceding statement is entirely true if your definition of "hip" is mullets, Iroc-z's, and Def Leppard on the radio every hour on the hour. Erie is cool... circa 1985.

The Red Lights - in my 3.5 years here in Erie, Pennsylvania, I have noticed one universal constant: no matter how cold it is, how much snow is on the ground, or how late at night it is, you will always see someone on a bicycle. At first, I thought the incredible amount of people using bicycles as their primary mode of transportation was due to the fact that Erie is blessed with the highest per-capita amount of white trash of any American city (The average white trash person has 7.8 DUI's, forcing them to use shoddy Schwinn 10 speeds to pick up their disability checks, beer, lottery tickets, beef jerky and Copenhagen). After driving through "downtown" several thousand times, I finally realized the true reason people ride bicycles 24-7-365 is because of the lousy red lights. Having a large amount of red lights is not that bad of a thing, so long as they are synchronized in the conventional method. The red lights in Erie are synchronized so that the only way to make it through town without catching every one is to alternate your speed from 2.7 mph to 67.34 mph with the acceleration of a top fuel dragster. (This is calculated for a 35 mph zone. Adjust accordingly for different speed limits)

Cell Phones - You have finally perfected sleeping through class with your eyes open, and all the sudden you hear a tinny rendition of Muzak's version of Muskrat Love blaring from someone's cell phone. You leap out of your seat, throw the cell phone on the floor and proceed to stomp it into tiny bits. I think all cell phones should come factory equipped with 14 pounds of C-4. If the phone is set to one of its 147 annoying rings and someone calls in an inappropriate place, (i.e., movie theaters, class, weddings, in the bathroom) the C-4 will detonate, ridding that person and any nearby next of kin from this world.

Kundman's column appears every three weeks



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'The Hot Debate of The Week'

Free'n Willie

Sure there was the whole... but our Bill Clinton... what?

Our country is still in one piece. For the past eight years, the economy has improved, weapons reform has been enacted, and relations with Vietnam have been positive. Bill Clinton, regardless of his frisky nature, has been a strong president throughout his two terms.

Not only was the budget balanced in 1998—the first time since the 60's, but there was also a surplus. And maybe the Clinton/Gore team didn't invent the internet, but the growth of technology in the 90's was phenomenal. Clinton extended internet access to schools, libraries, and people all over the world, enabling enhanced communication and learning.

As an outreach to the world, Clinton visited war-torn Kosovo, and then continued to invite those who were left homeless to seek refuge in the United States. He visited many nations, such as Africa and China, to improve stability between the US and foreign countries.

No, it doesn't seem that a lot has been accomplished in the past eight years. Blame it partially on a divided congress. Realistically, nothing has gone terribly wrong. The US is in a strong enough position for Bush to build upon (or even destroy).

Most important, Billy has been cause for hours of endless laughter. Leno and Letterman have had field days of jokes concerning Clinton's scandals, his powerful wife, and not-so-attractive daughter. Could a comedian ask for a better target? We'll see in the next four years.

Clinton has survived eight years reminding Americans just about every day that the economy is the greatest it's ever been. Funny that in his final months it is falling apart almost as quickly as his marriage. Average sports teams are usually measured by their ability to play three quarters. Good teams are the ones that can play all four.

I'll hand it to Clinton. He is the King of Political Persuasion. He is the greatest talker, actor, lip-biter and tear-jerker in American political history (his wife in a close second). If he was the president on *West Wing*, he would win an Emmy, but he's the president of our country. That wins him popularity points, but not points in presidential greatness.

With our eyes glazed over with the "Clinton persuasion factor," we have been blind to bigger problems that our country is facing now that we didn't have so much of eight years ago. Military morale, national security, taxation out our rears and one other thing that used to be important...morals.

There was actually a time in America not long ago, where people saw infidelity as being bad, not a great theme for successful television (*Temptation Island*). The standards for leadership have been lowered, and it's obvious Clinton is the prime suspect.

Maybe that's why Americans chose "W" in this past election. Despite the media and late night talk show hosts constantly reminding us that George W. is dumb, he still got elected. Maybe we would rather hear our president stumbling over words like "sublimable" than defining to his people what "sex" is.

Every week, two editors from the staff will debate a topic that is hot. Students, faculty and staff are encouraged to email suggestions for the hot topic. Send ideas to behrcoll2@aol.com

Lake gulls and snow

While searching for a prime spot in the parking lot every morning, I often notice the plethora of license plates from across the country—Connecticut, New Jersey, Florida, and so on. My first question to myself usually consists of "Self, why do these people come to Erie? Why do they leave warm states such as California to join in our Winter Wonderland?" I doubt I'll ever know the answer, nor do I really care all that much. However, for those of you out of state or out of Erie, I welcome you to our miniature town, but please, do not nitpick. This is Erie, it is cold here, get over it.

For those freshman (or above) who aren't quite acquainted with it yet, let me offer you a few words of wisdom. I am, in fact, a 19-year Erieite...and still alive.

1. Erie is cold. It snows a lot. It snows more than a lot. While sitting in the movie theatre the other night watching a preview for *Vertical Limit*, my friend asked why someone would be stupid enough to climb Mount Everest with the underlying thought of dying in the snow. Why not just go lie down on an Erie sidewalk? It's about an equal amount of snow. Oh, that's right, one may get run over by those crazy snowplows.

2. The lake isn't all that disgusting. I grew up on beach front property, swimming



Attitude Problem
Paige Miles

and boating every single summer. I don't have a third eye yet. It is during a storm that the lake becomes churned around and gross. And heck, those storms are sure fun to boat in.

3. Interstate 79 doesn't hit the Behrend campus. Never will it. Stop suggesting it.

4. There are gas stations in Erie that are full service, it's just a matter of finding them. Until then, get your lazy butt out of the warm car and pump it yourself. You aren't the only one that is cold.

5. Country Fair is our convenience store god. Sheetz? 7-11? Yeah, we've heard the legends of them, but they will never knock Country Fair off the Erie market.

6. It is called pop around here. No one knows what soda is.

7. To quote the infamous chain letter: "Pennsylvania has three seasons—almost winter, winter, and road construction." This was written mainly for Erie. Try to avoid Interstate 90, Interstate 79, Route 5, Route 20, or Peach Street during the winter and road construction season. You are in for a traffic jam.

8. While on the subject of travel, it is quite normal to see deer, cows, and yeti crossing the road—be it in the city or the back roads. Ask me and I'll tell you the story of Thanksgiving dinner and how it started on the grill of my car.

9. Those little white lights above traffic lights mean that an ambulance is in the area. If you see it, have the common sense to pull over.

10. Drive out about ten miles east and you will be surrounded by grapes. The town, North East (yes, it is a town and not a direction, thank you), holds records in Guinness for longest grape rows, most grapes, the best wine to get drunk on, etc. Oh, and the North East High School mascot is the GrapePicker. Ask Leno and Letterman.

11. I give a monkey's butt about what National Geographic says; I've been to Key

West and I've been to California. Erie still has the most beautiful sunsets in the world.

12. Those annoying white birds that hang out in the Quality Markets parking lot—the ones that don't move when cars drive through their herds? Those aren't seagulls. Is there a sea around here? Nope, sorry. They are Lake Gulls.

13. Yes, Erie is boring. The locals are used to it, and tend to amuse themselves by hanging out with the circus of people on the dock. Try it.

14. Accent? I don't think so. Don't tell anyone in Erie they have an accent. It's a proven fact that the Erie area dialect is the standard for broadcasting in the United States.

15. Pot holes are a blast with 4WD. I hope I provided some enlightenment to those unfamiliar with my hometown. And if it sounds like I'm complaining, tough. I have dealt with this city for years, so hence I've earned the right to grumble. Yes, I love Erie, but I still can't wait to leave. I pray there is more to the world. Oh, by the way, it snows here.

Miles' column appears every three weeks.

Being a celebrity rules!

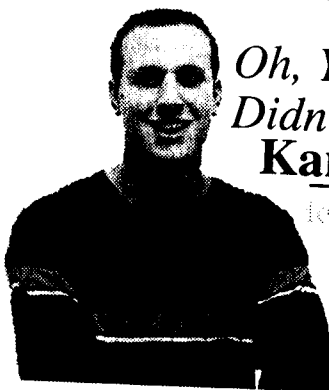
Psst...hey...have you ever committed a crime? Are you going to get caught? Or do you have a trial coming up soon? Do you want me to tell you how to get off scot-free? All right, here's what you do...say you're a celebrity!

You see, famous actors and musicians only get a slap on their wrist when they commit a crime, unlike us normal folk. Yes, it's true. Look at these examples: -Tommy Lee, a member of the band Motley Crue, spent sixteen weeks in jail for spousal abuse. -Former Guns N' Roses drummer Steven Adler spent 150 days in jail for attacking two women in separate domestic violence incidents.

-Actor Robert Downey Jr. was sentenced three years probation for possessing cocaine and heroin, possessing a concealed weapon, and driving under the influence of drugs.

Sadly, the list goes on and on. Why is it that these people are getting special treatment? It seems to be solely for the fact that they're famous.

I may not have been the best history student in high school, but I honestly don't



Oh, You Didn't Know?
Karl Benacci

remember reading about any laws that give celebrities special treatment. Hmm...I must have been sick the day those laws were discussed.

So why are they getting off so easy? Is it because they can hire the best lawyers? Is it because they can use their acting skills to create sympathy? Is it because they're powerful and have friends in high places? Who knows? Not I!

Let's say for instance, you're a celebrity. You have everything that you could possibly want. You have money, nice cars, a nice house, etc. You would probably have the tendency to get a big ego, right?

After all, you get whatever you want and you're pampered wherever you go.

Millions of people look up to you and shell out money to buy your CD or see your movie. You can do whatever you want to do, right? But what happens if you want to do something illegal?

Well, perhaps some celebrities know that they'll get off easy and that is the deciding factor for committing a crime.

Perhaps less criminal celebrities would commit crimes if the judicial system was less lenient on them and treated them as they treat us.

Giving celebrities short jail terms (if they even get a jail term!) isn't exactly sending the best messages to our countries youth. Look at platinum rapper Eminem, for instance. Now don't get me wrong, I like some of Eminem's songs, and I think that he's a cool guy, but I can't even name all of the criminal things that he has done. I'm sure that anyone not living under a rock has heard of the things that he has done. If not, I'd like to welcome you to the 21st century. But I find it odd that prior to Eminem's fame, he had no criminal record

whatsoever.

Many youths in our society look up to Eminem and they try to do anything they can to emulate him. They dress like him, talk like him, and in some cases, they even try to be like him. Who knows what goes on through their minds when they hear about their idol, Eminem, brandishing weapons in public among other things? I'm sure that it isn't a very good influence on the youth of America. If they dress like him and look up to him, I would naturally think that they would eventually start to do some of the things that he did.

When I think about it, there's nothing that I can do to change any of this. I'm not going to write nasty letters to the federal government or march around town with a sign. To be truthful, this issue doesn't even matter very much to me; however, I just find it sad that a country that stresses equality gives celebrities special treatment, even in the court of law.

Benacci's column appears every three weeks.

Fighting over something with your friends? Want to see it debated in the newspaper? Send us your idea and we will debate it in our 'Hot Debate' of the week discussion!
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