

What are we serving tonight? Chicken, or...chicken?



Untitled 21 Ben Kundman

On Monday, November 27th, (my 22nd birthday!) I received an email informing me I had won tickets to Thrasher's Skater of the Year Party (SOTY). SOTY is basically what you would get if you combined the Emmys with a high school kegger but replaced the snooty actors and actress with a ton of famous skateboarders and gorgeous women. The only obstacle I faced was the fact that the SOTY was in San Francisco that Friday, and I had no transportation. Fortunately, I am a Sagittarius, and I attack problems with the ferocity of a drunk monkey. By Thursday, I had found cheap tickets, a place to crash, and a ride from the airport.

I began my journey at 10 a.m. Friday. I purchased a 35mm point and shoot from Best Buy, and as I was sprinting out the door, the bag split, sending my camera tumbling to the ground.

I arrived at Pittsburgh Airport one hour early, and my flight arrived one hour late. The man at the airline counter assured me I would make my connecting. ("Making up time in the air" is a cruel hoax perpetuated by Satan and people who work at airline ticket counters. Worm Holes exist on Star Trek, BUT NOT IN REAL LIFE!) I paid \$4.50 for a Murphy's Irish Ale. I boarded my flight. I arrived in Cincinnati at the same time my connecting flight was to leave. I sprinted through the airport, but still missed my connecting flight. I called the woman at the "help" desk mean names. (mind you, my flight was originally scheduled to arrive in San Francisco at 6:18 p.m., and the earliest I would be arriving was 10:48 p.m., causing me to miss a significant portion of SOTY) I left a message on Brian's (my ride and partner in crime for the weekend) voice mail to inform him of my new flight arrangement. I sat in a bar at Cincinnati's airport for four hours with Anthony, the guy who sat next to me on the flight. I finally boarded my flight to San Francisco. I had an aisle to myself. I had a high school age couple directly behind me who bickered incessantly in that awful high school manner.

I arrived in San Francisco four hours and thirty minutes late. Brian was not at the gate. My cell phone battery died immediately after landing. I proceeded to the baggage claim. Brian was not there. I proceeded to the gate. Brian was not there. I paged Brian for an hour and a half. No Brian. I called my aunt and uncle who lived 30 minutes away. No answer. My phone card ran out. I quickly ran out of change, had no small bills, and phone cards were \$20 for 40 minutes. A cab ride to San Francisco would have been a million dollars. Cab fare to my aunt and uncle's would have been \$50 or \$60. I slept in San Francisco airport, Delta Airlines baggage claim 16, until 7 a.m., when Brian showed up.

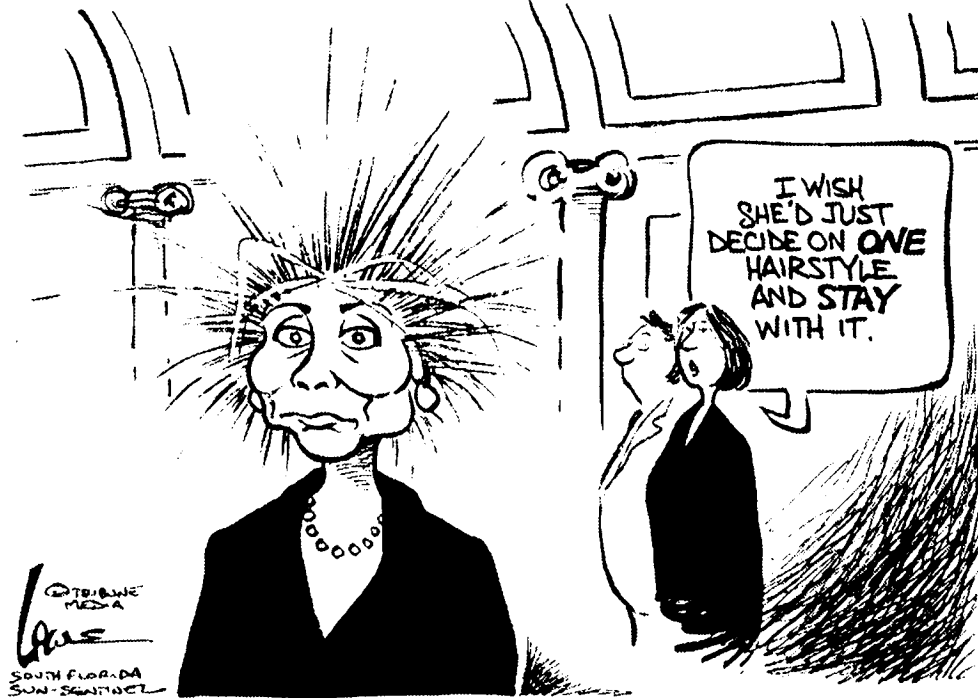
Brian thought my flight number was 1609, not 1619. 1609 was supposed to arrive at the same time, was a different airline entirely, and was canceled. Brian waited for the flight he thought I would be on. Which I wasn't on. Brian drove back to Monterey (an hour and half.) At 4 a.m., he called my parents. He assumed I was still in Pittsburgh, that my flight had been canceled. My parents paged me, and I told them the situation. They called him back, and he drove back up to San Francisco. On the way back up, he ran out of gas and had to walk 45 minutes to get gas for his car.

Had I charged my cell phone battery, paged the entire airport, called Brian's correct number (I dialed his old number when I was in Cincinnati), rented a car, scheduled a flight for Thursday rather than Friday, yelled when I was in Pittsburgh to get a different flight directly to San Fran, or any one of other things, I would have made it to SOTY.

Much props to Emusic for the free tickets, Jake Phelps for throwing a killer party, Lindsey at High Speed for the free Thrasher gear, Best Buy for having crappy bags, Delta Airlines for sucking, my Aunt Loretta and Uncle Jim for putting me up with three days notice, and Brian for enduring some of the same hell that I did.

Kundman's column appears every three weeks

THE PARDON SCANDAL TAKES ITS TOLL ON THE JUNIOR SENATOR FROM NEW YORK...



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'The Hot Debate of The Week' Kids will be kids?

Should we have sympathy for the kids who commit school shootings?

Every time a school shooting happens in this country, we waste no time asking questions about what to do with gun control. We ask where the parents were and why a student could be so messed up that he/she would go to a school and start shooting people.

We see the media interviewing the friends of the victims, meaning the ones that got shot, so that this country can see how much pain has been caused by these "mad" and "crazed" gunmen. However, the shooting at Santana High School in California has brought up a different question. What was the real cause for this shooting?

The cause was none other than daily occurrences of torment inflicted upon Andy Williams. Sure, a rough family life may contribute, but Williams wasn't shooting bullets at his parents...he shot them at his classmates.

We shouldn't condone what Williams has done. He was wrong. But we shouldn't look at all these students at Santana as victims who were at the receiving end of something they couldn't control. Maybe the students we see on television, crying for what has happened were the same ones that called Williams a homosexual, or stealing his skateboard and shoes.

Is Williams to blame for the murders? Yes. But would he have done this if his life wasn't made a living hell? No. It is because of cruel classmates that these deadly intentions enter the minds of students that were never given the chance to fit in.

Why should kids who shoot other kids get sympathy instead of punishment? In almost all of the school shootings in the past four years there have been numerous people that have been killed. And we are supposed to pity them because they were picked on and teased?

While sometimes cruel and mean, teasing is something that almost every kid has been through. And while millions upon millions of children manage to make it out of high school and into society every year, we are supposed to feel bad for the ones that couldn't handle it in the proper way?

All of the kids that have committed shootings have been of an age where they know the difference between right and wrong. And all schools offer something called guidance counselors who will listen to problems and usually try to help. And if they can't talk to the counselors how about a priest, a parent, and friend, or any number of the eight hundred numbers that offer help? There is no excuse for this sort of violence in school.

Instead of coming in and shooting up their schools these kids should be looking for another outlet for their anger. Sports, or exercise or anything! Take them on the Maury Povich show; just don't go around killing people.

While our human minds will automatically try to place the blame for this sort of tragedy on something, it is misplaced when pity is taken on 'bullied kids'.

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

Friends don't shake hands, friends gotta hug



Attitude Problem Paige Miles

Besides the nine days of separation from midterms and having to trek through six feet of snow to class, I anticipate Spring Break most because I get to spend time with my best friends. One goes to school five hours away in the sticks of Ohio, the other lives only 15 minutes away, but has a conflicting schedule. But for those nine days, I get to spend countless chaotic hours with two of my favorite people.

I have been friends with both of them for about five years now. We all met in preseason/hell week of soccer in high school. One I became close friends after I kicked her hand and put her in a cast for six

weeks—hence, I was obligated to carry her books, help her with her accounting homework, and apologize a thousand times over (She's still waiting for the perfect moment to kick the crap out of me so I know what it's like). From that point on, we spend every weekend going to Otters games and chasing down the hot goalies. Eventually, we both got jobs and didn't see each other outside of school very often, but while in school still managed to cause enough trouble between Spanish and English class. Now, we have both gone our separate ways. We talk once in awhile when one of us is in crisis, whether it involves boys, school, or family problems.

Both of us have changed tremendously. I have never seen her wear makeup or anything besides a baggy T-shirt in my life—last week I first saw her wear a baby tee and lip gloss. Chances are, if we were still in high school and both of us had gone through these changes, we wouldn't be friends. But now, as we both have grown up a lot and also become more immature in some ways,

we know that our friendship has stood the true test of separation and time. No matter what happens to me, she will be there to take me to a hockey game or go shoe shopping (running shoes only) to make me feel better.

My other friend and I have completely conflicting personalities; the only thing we share is that we both hate our hometown and the high school I attended (and she still attends). Between practices, we spent all our time sacrificing Happy Meal Barbies to the boredom gods, creating chalk masterpieces in her driveway, and throwing various objects and the band camp crew. When she goes to Slippery Rock in August, she may also very well change tremendously. Yet again, the true test of our friendship is if she can come back for Spring Break and we can still hang out like we have. If I were to be stranded on an island, these are the two I would want there with me (along with the male cast of *Temptation Island*). These are the two that I would want in my wedding if I were to get married (heaven forbid). These are the two that keep me sane when everyone else has

decided to snub me. The other realization I came to over Spring Break was that as long as I have a few good friends that I can trust, I don't need the other who plaster fake smiles to my face but quickly turn around and stab my back. It much reminds me of fifth grade when we would kick each other out of our cliques because their clothes just weren't good enough or they weren't as athletic as the rest of us. These people all have become acquaintances or completely forgotten; they no longer matter in my daily life. If I was to dwell on all of the petty little things that some of my former friends have done to me, I would be an absolutely miserable and bitter person.

Those who choose to act in a second grade manner although they have become adults will play no role in my life once I leave this campus. Hopefully, I will never cross paths with these people again. In the end, it is my good friends who will still be there for me to chase hockey players and throw sacrificed Barbies at the band camp.

Miles' column appears every three weeks.

Let me sleep for the love of God!



Oh, You Didn't Know? Karl Benacci

Question: What do the Lost Ark and the average college student's free time have in common?

Answer: Both are very sacred. For most of us, college life is busy enough. Our lives consist of tests, homework, and studying, so we often see ourselves having to adapt to things, since we don't have a lot of free time.

It would seem obvious that one would understand the value of the little amount of free time that we have, right? Evidently not. Now, I don't know about the rest of you, but I am often bothered by...the credit card companies. Who do I blame for this great annoyance? Penn State.

It seems as if every major credit card company is trying to get my name on their card. How do they attempt this? 1) They send tons of mail to my Penn State mailbox, 2) They set up a little booth in the

Reed Union Building, 3) They call me (the worst by far). The companies seem to use a different ploy with each attempt. I will outline them for you.

The first method, the mail method, is definitely the most feeble of the three. The credit card companies constantly send pamphlets to students that explain how easy it is to obtain a credit card.

Some of these pamphlets even show pictures of students; but not just any students, these are smiling students. Oh, they're so happy because they have a card that can buy them pizza, CD's and clothes, however, the pamphlet doesn't tell or show the negatives of credit cards such as debt and overspending. Hey Visa, after I file for bankruptcy, can I trade my card in for a nice cardboard box?

As I said earlier, the second approach that credit card companies use is to set up a booth in the Reed Union Building. I have noted that the booth is either manned by employees of the credit card company or by Penn State Behrend students (damn fundraisers!), but one thing is always constant, they try to give a person crappy gifts so they sign up for the card.

If I were to rack my brains and rank the three stupidest gifts that I have ever seen, I would definitely have to go with: 3) A water bottle, 2) A waterproof hand radio (It

was so cheap!), 1) A shirt that says Visa on it. Question? Why would anyone want a shirt that says Visa on it?

Now, I may not be the next Karl Kani, but I am pretty darn certain that I DID NOT see Visa card t-shirts in the summer issue of *Style Magazine*.

Most of the individuals that are working the credit card booth are well aware of my above observation, so they'll do anything that they possibly can to sucker an individual into signing up for a card. Such attempts include begging, flirting, and peer pressure.

How can peer pressure be used? Well, once a few students that were working the credit card table observed my friend and I and called us over. They made small talk and asked us a few questions, and then they asked us if we wanted to sign up for a credit card. We declined, so they started pleading "come on, order it, you can cut the card up if you don't want it." What did I do? I had to remember everything (pertaining to peer pressure) that I had learned from watching after school specials on TV. Thank you stop sign method, if it weren't for you, I may have been swayed and signed up for a credit card.

Last, and worst by far, are the phone calls. I don't know about the commuters, but all on-campus students get phone calls

from credit card companies. I always receive the calls (no matter what day of the week it is) at approximately an hour after I have woken up (which is always forty minutes before my first class). It's as if the credit card companies know when they should call me. Thanks Penn State.

I always know when a phone call is the credit card company. How? They mess up my name. It goes something like this: (Phone rings) Me: Karl world, may I help you?

Credit card company employee: Hello Mr...Benachyeyeeeee, you have been approved...

Me: Oh, did I say Karl? Oh silly me. Karl now tours with Britney Spears. He doesn't need a credit card. She buys him whatever he needs. And they are going to get married and have lots of kids and... (Pause...I hang up the phone).

I'm going to break it down now. Students go to college to get an education. We are busy. We don't need to be bugged by credit card companies.

I think that it's wrong of Penn State to allow credit card companies to mail us, call us, and bug us on campus. I don't want a darn credit card, and if and when I want one, I'll let you know. Until then, buzz off!

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! behrcoll2@aol.com