

Don't panic: There's a reason behind what you're feeling

by Joanna M. Carman
staff writer

"I don't know what's wrong with me," a friend said over dinner a few weeks ago. "I just feel so strange." "What's the matter?" I asked.

She clenched her fists tight and took a deep breath. She played with her fork, tore her napkin to pieces and kept shifting in her chair.

"I feel almost nervous," she said. "My heart is going a hundred miles an hour, my stomach is tingling and it feels like I can't take a deep enough breath."

It gave her some peace of mind to know that I experienced the same thing about a month earlier, and sought out the answer of what was happening to me.

It is a feeling that comes on suddenly. It can go away and come back again just as quick. It is called a panic attack. College is exactly the stressful time of life that can bring about panic attacks and/or disorders.

Medical professionals agree that major life events, such as college graduation or even finals, can bring about panic attacks in students. These attacks may occur when the student is sleeping, walking to class or watching a football game. In addition to a racing heart, symptoms of panic attacks can include chest pains, difficulty breathing, lightheadedness, dizziness, nausea or stomach problems, flushes or chills, trembling, sweating, shaking, tingling in fingers or toes (pins and needles), terror and fear of being out of control or crazy.

The Anxiety Panic Internet Resource (TAPIR) states that people can't predict an attack and may fear the onset of another. In fact, panic attacks come on suddenly, and there may not appear to be a reason in sight.

The American Psychological Association says panic attacks also pass in a few minutes because the body cannot sustain the "fight or flight" response to which the organization compares the attack. TAPIR states attacks may last up to 10 minutes, and in rare cases, they can last an hour or more.

However, even though they last only a short time, panic attacks can recur for hours. TAPIR states that 1.6 percent of the population is affected by a panic disorder. A disorder is different from an attack in that it causes the person constant fear of having another attack. Not everyone who has an attack will develop a disorder.

Panic attacks are not dangerous, but a disorder can completely alter a person's life. A potentially debilitating condition, panic disorder may lead to more serious conditions, such as agoraphobia, fear of the outdoors. APA says a panic disorder may also lead to other phobias. People who suffer from a disorder may find themselves avoiding situations that may trigger an attack, causing a new phobia.

For example, someone who suffers a panic attack in a restaurant may avoid eating out, for fear of triggering another one. TAPIR says one-third of sufferers will have their lives restricted in such a way by the disorder.

PANIC ATTACK QUICK FACTS

1. Attacks can occur at any time.
2. Attacks average a couple of minutes, but in rare cases can last for hours.
3. They are not dangerous, but can feel "crazy" or "out of control".
4. Attacks usually appear during the teen and young adult years.
5. Major life events may trigger attacks.
6. There is evidence that attacks are genetic.
7. Attacks occur in all ethnic groups.
8. Women are twice as likely to suffer from a disorder than men.
9. Coffee, exercise and some medications cause panic attacks.
10. Treatment includes education, breathing exercises and/or medications.

According to APA, people who suffer from the disorder are also more likely to use drugs and alcohol. They also tend to be more likely to attempt suicide and to spend more time in hospital emergency rooms.

Only one in four people with the disorder get the treatment they need, APA says.

Treatment can include cognitive and behavioral therapies, which can teach a person breathing techniques and how to overcome any phobia related to the attacks. Medications are also available to decrease the symptoms of an attack. TAPIR says 70 to 90 percent of people with a panic disorder have been helped to overcome their anxiety with treatment.

ROAD TRIP RECIPE:

Pringles, Italian bread, shopping cart, and Matchbox Twenty

Destination: Pittsburgh, PA
Matchbox Twenty Concert

It's been a *Mad Season* here in Erie this winter. So, my friends and I decided to head for the South during Spring Break. Okay, so it wasn't Cancun or Florida. It was Pittsburgh, PA. But hey, a wise person once told me, "Ainslie, it's not where you are that matters; it's who you are with."

For our road trip, we went to see Matchbox Twenty in concert with Everclear and Lifehouse. Our group of four left sunny Erie (yes- it actually was sunny that day) in two cars. We stopped at the local UniMart for some snacks, as all of us had just come from a long hard, day of work and were starving. But of course, the Uni Mart did not have much to choose from. Deanna, decided to make a loaf of Italian bread and some Pringles her dinner. After this we began our little voyage. Rob Thomas, here we come!

Upon our arrival at the Mellon, our group played childish games along the highway, including calling each other's cell phones and saying, "Tag! You're it!" By the way, did I mention we are all above the age of 10?

Soon we arrived at the Mellon. We ran to find our seats, but made a pit stop for some beer and the ever-so-popular restrooms. I could hear the only song I know, "Hanging by a Moment" by Lifehouse playing as I waited in the long bathroom line. By the way, why is it that girls have to wait in such long lines for the restroom?

Anyway, we managed to find our seats just as Everclear approached the stage. Although I have never been an Everclear fan, I was very impressed with their performance. They pulled people onto the stage to dance with them, including a guy from Turkey who claimed to be the band's #1 fan.

Matchbox Twenty rocked the stage with songs from both their hit albums. For those of you who have not heard the new CD, I suggest you run right out and get it! Rob Thomas stole our hearts with "Rest Stop," a song about being dumped by the

woman you love at a rest stop in the middle of nowhere.

"I would never do that to you Rob!" I wanted to yell. And while we are on the subject: Ladies, Rob Thomas is extremely hot in person! I must admit that this concert was possibly the best I have ever seen.

After the concert, our rambunctious group decided to hit the bars of Pittsburgh. Of course, none of us knew where they were or how to get there, so we had to make a few pit stops to talk to the locals. They were rather helpful I must ad. We paid a total of \$5 to park for a bar we "talked about going into" and never did. Hey, that's ok. I didn't need that \$5 any way. After all, we were not going to starve. Deanna's bread was there for dinner and for breakfast the next morning. Thanks D.

Finally, we arrived at a place appropriately called "Bar Pittsburgh." I think everyone, Pittsburgh native or not, has heard of this place. As we approached the door, my eyes widened. Honestly, I felt like I was in a scene from *Coyote Ugly*. A guy's dream, a girl's nightmare. Beautiful girls were on the bar dancing. I practically had to pick my guy-friend's jaw up off of the floor. We managed to be entertained though and had a great time.

As we made the long trek back to the car, one of my friends found an abandoned shopping cart and offered free rides to all of us who wore those shoes that "are so cute with this outfit, but kill my feet." At 2 a.m., this was hysterical to our tired little group.

We arrived safely to our sleep station for the night at about 3 a.m. Unfortunately for me, I had to wake up only three hours later to drive back to Erie for my job. It was a "Long Day" jam packed with lots of fun and friends. The concert was awesome and I had a good time. What more is there to life besides Rob Thomas, Italian bread, and your best friends?

-Ainslie Ulmer

Hot Spots in Erie

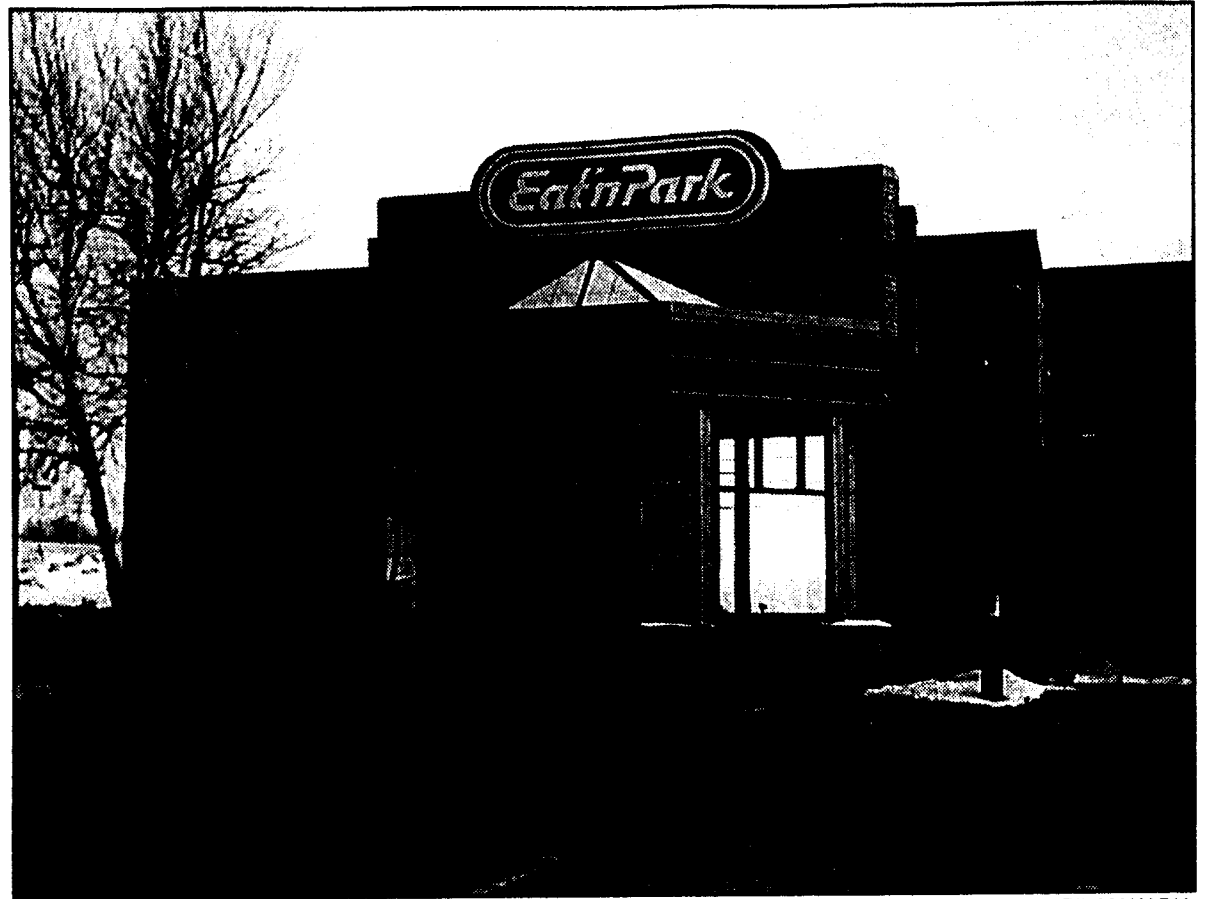


PHOTO BY NEIL MAKADIA

Eat N' Park has two locations, one on Peach Street and one on West 12th.

'Eat N' Park'

by Karl Benacci
features editor

Many college students often wonder what has become of the members of their high school graduating class.

Well, for those of you that are Erie-ites, you can enjoy a late night class reunion at Eat N' Park, the place for smiles.

Eat N' Park has two Erie locations, West 12th Street and

Peach Street.

What seemingly would be a quick stop for some burgers or some late night pancakes can easily turn into a two hour stroll down memory lane with your high school pals.

Believe it or not, running into a member of your graduating class is almost inevitable when visiting an Eat N' Park location on a Friday or Saturday night.

Eat N' Park is also a good

place to meet new people including college students from Gannon, Mercyhurst, and even Edinboro.

But even if you aren't an Erie-ite, you can enjoy good food at great prices at Eat N' Park.

Combining good food and high school reunions is always a great match, making Eat N' Park a definite *Hot Spot* in Erie.

Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 Sack material
 - 7 Wish undone
 - 10 Drop heavily
 - 14 Anxious
 - 15 Shuttle destination: abbr.
 - 16 Vex
 - 17 Believe in
 - 18 Recovers from
 - 20 Little nipper
 - 21 Muhammad Ali
 - 23 Mata Hari or 007, e.g.
 - 24 Triumph
 - 25 Enemy
 - 26 Lowest place on Earth
 - 29 Extend across
 - 33 Low points
 - 36 Scathing review
 - 37 Sound quality
 - 38 Crop up
 - 39 Comic
 - 40 Carried along
 - 41 Color shade
 - 42 Squeal to the screws
 - 43 Flitted
 - 44 Fragrance
 - 45 "___ in Gaza"
 - 47 Alphabet start
 - 49 Night before
 - 50 Dunderhead
 - 53 Estimate based on probabilities
 - 58 Allow to
 - 59 Slightly over the top
 - 60 Wobble
 - 62 Blackthorn fruit
 - 63 Personal pronoun
 - 64 Will contents
 - 65 Watch over
 - 66 Large shoe width
 - 67 Third-party contract

- DOWN
- 1 Smackers
 - 2 Open roughly
 - 3 Thin-voiced
 - 4 Young man
 - 5 In a manner of speaking
 - 6 Damon's friend
 - 7 "The Avengers"

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Solutions

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- 48 Kind of rap?
- 50 Place for sacrifice
- 51 Take care of
- 52 Scatter
- 53 Supporting players
- 54 Competent
- 55 Member of the pride
- 56 Suffer heartbreak
- 57 Quaker pronoun
- 61 And so forth and so on