

Erie rock city: not!



Oh, you didn't know? **Karl Benacci**
Features editor

I hear the same question raised by Erie's politicians more and more frequently, and every time I hear it I get madder and madder. The question: Why do the young people of Erie leave after they graduate college?

I feel this is self-explanatory, especially because the politicians in Erie were young once, as we now are. So what do we want?

Hmm, I wonder. Ask anybody under the age of 25 and they'll tell you there's nothing to do. Not only is this true, but in this town, there are less and less things to do, due to businesses going under and/or having to move because the city wants to build a road in its place.

Let's make a list of some of the cool places in Erie that have either been torn down or left due to the lack of business: Children's Palace (old school), Hooters, the Dairy Queen on 12th Street (they knocked it down in a stupid confusion), Hooters, the movie theatre on 12th and Pittsburgh Avenue, Hooters, etc. There are many more I could add, but I don't want to sound...repetitive.

I decided to write this article because the few cool things in this town have disappeared for good, and I don't want to see the trend continue.

Heck, in Erie's "wonderful" newspaper, it explained the drive-in on Peninsula Drive (near Waldameer) is going to be torn down, and in its place a welcome center for Presque Isle will be built.

Moving on, if one hasn't noticed, Erie basically consists of an airport that is going under, a mall that many people attempt to avoid, and lots of bars, pharmacies and gas stations.

The only really cool things to visit in Erie are the Seawolves, the Otters, Presque Isle (minus the damn Nature Center), and a few more special places.

The supervisors of the city of Erie (minus Millcreek - no one wants to build a business there because they're quite unjust) have begun to offer low-interest loans and tax breaks to certain businesses. This is a good idea, but they should also aid any new business owners, also.

After all, many of us "Erietes" (such a stupid term, why am I using it?) can remember the "entertainment tax" idea. How selfish is this? Crazy. If an entertainment tax hits the Beacon, one might want to cease reading this newspaper or else a person will probably have to shell out cash for enjoyment...sad, sad, sad.

When we get down to it, one realizes this town needs to not only expand the construction of cool places, but it also needs to preserve the cool places, such as the drive-in theatre on Peninsula Drive. I can remember when Erie had plenty of drive-ins, including the drive-in on the West Side of Millcreek, which is now Wolf Run. There are only a few remaining.

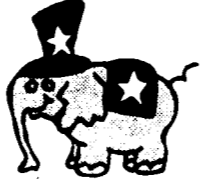
Now the Erie politicians know what to do. They can't say we didn't warn them, because the only thing the "city hall" members seem to care about is generating money, especially tourist money. Well, it sounds like the Presque Isle Welcome Center will be a big hit with the "out of towners" (God forbid). Hmm, maybe THEY can work for the center, because if it keeps going the way it is, there won't be anyone left in Erie to work there. They'll all be in different towns, where there are things to do!

I hope Mayor Filippi works on these problems because they need to be addressed. He seems to want to improve Erie. I wish the guy luck, because there will be lots and lots of things for him to work on! It will be nice to see the few special places kept intact, for they hold a certain sentimental value for many of us "Erietes."

Benacci's column appears every three weeks.

Taxes, taxes, taxes

The Elephant says...



After the wonderful tax cuts of last year that will be phased in over the next 10 years it is difficult for me to really get excited about a debate on tax cuts.

I can't believe I just said that. However, one tax burden that I would like to see eliminated or reduced is the capital gains tax. This is the tax you pay on the increase in value of an asset you own when you sell it in the future; stocks are an example of this type of asset. Currently, assets sold one year or less from time of purchase are taxed at your marginal tax rate and assets held over a year are taxed at a 20 percent rate, unless you are in the bottom 10 or 15 percent rates and then it is taxed at 10 percent.

The benefits of eliminating the capital gains rate would make it easier for investors to make investment decisions because they would not have to factor in tax consequences into their investing plans. You would be able to adjust your portfolio by selling securities and buying others to reflect the mix you want without being forced to hold onto stocks that have appreciated over many years. Many people contend that this type of tax cut will help the rich more than the lower income earners and they're right. However, it would help more people invest and would really be a boost to those saving for retirement, especially the lower income earners. These people would no longer rely on contribution limits imposed on IRAs and 401Ks that lock their money away for decades. Also, the wealthy are the ones at this time with the discretionary spending available to stimulate the economy. The taxpayers in the lower brackets are stretched already and most cannot spend more without taking on more debt, which is not a good idea. I think the time has come for the elimination of the capital gains tax rate.

- David Sandy

The Donkey says...



For the first installment of the editorials 'Donkey Says' and 'Elephant Says' the Young Democrats and College Republicans have agreed to discuss the issue of taxes and tax cuts. As a taxpayer this topic is important to me and truth be known, I enjoy paying taxes. Perhaps I should have my head examined, but I like paying taxes. When I pay my taxes, I receive a rush that is similar to the rush I get when I vote. This rush lets me know that I am participating in our democracy and that I am contributing to our society. I equate paying taxes to investing in our government and our future. I trust our federal government to invest my taxes responsibly and efficiently. I have faith that the government will spend my taxes on reasonable programs that benefit society, for example: Social Security, Medicare, defense, education, or paying a bureaucrat's salary. Our taxes or investments ensure that we have clean air to breathe, clean water to drink, security, education, a safe food supply, and a variety of other goods and services. We give a small amount in taxes, but our investment pays enormous dividends.

I do have a complaint, and that complaint is giving tax cuts to the rich before the federal budget is balanced. I feel the current "W" Bush tax cuts that are to be distributed over 10 years are not a sensible policy. No one knows what the economy, let alone the world will look like in 10 years - so why should we give tax cuts 10 years in advance. I agree with President Bush, our economy is stumbling and tax cuts would probably help. However, President Bush and I are in disagreement on where the tax cuts should go. I feel tax cuts should go to the working middle class which is large in number and small in the wallet. The Republicans constantly try to give the wealthy tax breaks while throwing a \$300 bone to the working middle class, all the while creating huge deficits. I am not against cutting taxes, but I believe that we should at all costs avoid deficits and strengthen government programs before we give the rich a tax break. Once the federal budget is balanced and everything is paid for, then give the surplus taxes back, if there are any. Should we automatically give tax breaks to the wealthy, (who might have the ear of certain members of Congress, Senators, and Presidents), before America's bills are paid?

-Stephen Webb

The Hot Debate of The Week

Are we treating the Camp X-ray detainees fairly?

POWs in Cuba are being treated extremely fair, despite the current threat these men pose to the United States. There is much speculation about the treatment of these prisoners, but I believe they are being treated humanely considering who they are and what they are capable of.

Many human rights groups complained the prisoners' beards and long hair were cut off. This humiliated and degraded their culture, and the prisoners felt they were being robbed of their identity. However, the reason for the removal of their hair was to facilitate, but to sanitize because their beards and hair were full of lice.

Another concern was that the prisoners were being fed bagels and cream cheese, which is a Jewish food. Since these men detest Jewish people, many thought feeding them a food they are not accustomed to is a disgrace to their culture.

Yes, they probably do not like bagels and cream cheese. Yes, it may be a form of mockery but at least they are eating decent food. These men are prisoners; men who hate America and what it stands for. It doesn't matter what they are being fed as long as it keeps them alive.

These men are terrorists. They hate everything the United States values most: freedom. These prisoners would not think twice about causing harm to our nation, so why should they be treated as if they are kings and queens? I think they should be restrained at all times to avoid another prison uprising, such as the one that killed an American CIA agent. The United States must treat them as human beings but citizens should trust that prisoners are getting adequate attention and care provided by the government to sustain prisoners' lives.

- Emily Linendoll

The events that took place on Sept. 11 will ring in any patriotic heart, and have drastically changed the way everyone looks at the world, and for that matter, each other. Letters will dot the textbooks, and cut-out articles with pictures of the Twin Towers will yellow away for years to come. Drastic times always called for drastic measures, but to what degree does humanity lay a boundary?

The prisoners are being treated unfairly. They are being held in eight by eight-foot cages, smaller than normal zoo regulation size, and are treated with the lowest level of compassion.

Though it's understandable that what they participated in was a crime, and should be charged as criminals, but they are merely sentinels of an authority figure. They were following orders, much like the veterans were in Vietnam, or the boy that made your Big Mac for lunch yesterday. Hooded? Gagged? Why?

Cutting off such sensory imagery is as primitive as beating people with clubs. Granted, a scapegoat is always needed in an tragedy at such a grandiose scale, but you have to cut the weed from the roots, and bullying some terrorist peons is not going to raise the dead.

-Anthony Chiocco

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

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

Quitting by the gross

**Knight Ridder/
Tribune News Service**

Show someone a product decorated with color photos of rotting gums, cancerous lungs or diseased brains, and the reaction will be yeccc!

Precisely. That was the thinking of Canadian health officials when they required tobacco manufacturers to decorate cigarette boxes with graphic warnings that cover the top halves of Canadian cigarette packs both back and front.

Not all the new Canadian warnings are of the gross-out variety. One features a picture of a drooping cigarette and the frank message: "Cigarettes may cause sexual impotence due to decreased blood flow to the penis. This can prevent you from having an erection." That should give male smokers something to think

about.

Have the new labels had any impact? Yes, according to a new study by the Canadian Cancer Society. It found one-third of the Canadian smokers who tried to quit in 2001 were influenced by the shocking labels; half of the smokers said the labels increased their motivation to quit.

So let's try it here.

The United States is actually the first country to introduce warning labels on cigarettes. But attempts to toughen up the words-only U.S. warnings died in the Senate last year under pressure from pro-tobacco forces. A new bill calling for Canadian-type warnings is being pushed by U.S. Reps. James Hansen, R-Utah, and Marty Meehan, D-Mass.

U.S. health groups should fight for this bill, armed with the new Canadian research results.



My mom hates my tattoos

My mom hates my tattoos.

When I came home with my first tattoo, the first thing my mom said to me after beating me up was, "Now if you ever commit a crime it will be easy for the police to identify you."

Well, there goes my dream of being a professional serial killer but it's nice to know that my mom had such high hopes for me. It used to be that tattoos were only seen on bikers and people in prison. However, tattoos are popular today among many walks of life, including college students. For many, tattoos are a sign of freedom, a form of expression, and according to my mom, a great way to ruin your life.

So for any college students (and maybe teachers) thinking about going

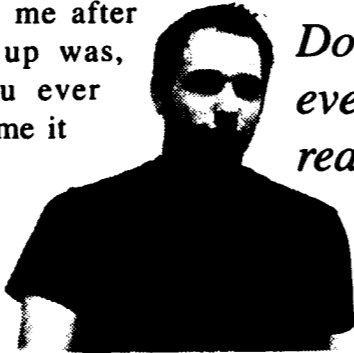
under the gun, here is my "expert" advice.

Tip 1: Don't get a tattoo if you are a wimp.

Don't believe everything you read

Kevin Fallon

Asst. News Editor



stabbed with a large needle for a few hours felt great. For a moment I thought I was at a Japanese massage parlor. It tickled. Of course, it hurts.

A common myth is that it doesn't hurt after awhile because you go numb to the pain. This is definitely false. It actually hurts more the longer you get tattooed. Believe me, after four hours of torture I was begging for death to come and put me out of my misery.

By the way, small tattoos are for girls. If you are going to get a tattoo,

be a man and get something big.

Tip 2: Don't get something stupid.

Remember that tattoos are for life. You do not want to get something you will regret. Being impulsive is not a good idea when it comes to tattoos.

The best idea is to get something with personal meaning. For example, most of my tattoos have a religious theme. My faith is a big part of my life and my tattoos are a way to express that.

One bad idea for a tattoo is Taz chugging a beer. It may seem funny at the time but you will be kicking yourself in about a week.

Another bad idea is your girlfriend's name. You may be in love now. But when she does a keg stand at the next TKE party and ends up sleeping with your best friend, you will be trying to rub her name off your arm with steel wool.

Tip 3: Know the artist and the studio. This person is going to put something on you that will be there

for the rest of your life. You want to make sure that artist is actually good at art and not just some dude with a tattoo gun. Most artists have pictures of their work. Check those out to make sure you like their work.

Also make sure the studio is clean. If you are not careful you can end up with more diseases than a cheap hooker. Any respectable studio will have an autoclave machine. This is the same type of machine doctors use to sterilize their tools. Make sure the studio has one of these. If they do, you are safe.

Tip 4: Don't get a tattoo on your head or neck.

All of my tattoos are covered when I wear a shirt and tie. Unless your career plans include being a rock star or Country Fair employee, neck and head tattoos are a bad idea.

Tip 5: Don't show your mom.

Fallon's column appears every three weeks.