

STUDENT LIFE

Stop-Loss spreads awareness of Iraq War



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ryan Phillippe and Channing Tatum's characters are often at odds over loyalty in *Stop-Loss*.

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For all of the talk and attention that is given to the controversial nature of the United States' involvement in the Iraq War, there are very few films that deal with it, and none that do in the way that *Stop-Loss* does.

Stop-Loss is not only one of the most influential movies to come out this year, but it may be one of the most influential war protest films ever made.

Directed by Kimberly Peirce (*Boys Don't Cry*), *Stop-Loss* tells the story of United States Army Lieutenant Brandon King's homecoming from the war to a small town in Texas where he plans to settle down and retire from the army, only to be "Stop-Lossed," or forced to re-deploy to Iraq less than a month after leaving. King, who is played by Ryan Phillippe (*Cruel Intentions*, *Crash*), spends the film resisting his orders and becomes a fugitive that is hunted by the very men he used to command.

King travels from Texas to Washington, D.C. with hopes of the government forcing the army to honor his contract and allow him to retire without re-deployment.

The main plot proves its point remarkably well, and will cause even the most die-hard war-supporter to rethink their opinion on the United States' involvement in the war. It's impossible not to empathize with the struggles of King and his fellow soldiers as the film progresses, which is a direct result of extremely effective acting and adept direction and production.

The combat scene in the commencement of the movie is one of the most vivid since *Saving Private Ryan*, and it gives viewers a look at just exactly what kind of urban warfare the deployed troops are attempting to wage in the cities of Iraq. The ability of the opening scene to be returned to in flashback form is utilized in an extremely effective way that is paralleled only by television's *LOST*.

The main plot of the film turns out to not be the most emotionally charged, though, which is a non-standard characteristic of any film. One of the subplots pits King against his lifetime best friend and fellow Lieutenant, Steve Shriver (played by Channing Tatum of *Step-Up*). Shriver strongly dis-

agrees with King's attempts to be released from the army and to combat their efforts to re-deploy him. This subplot is amplified even further by—of course—the involvement of a woman that causes the friends to fight even more venomously.

This subplot shows the fight that many soldiers express when they attempt to draw the line between loyalty to the armed forces and what may really be in their best interest. It portrays the fight that is going on between Democrats and Republicans on a smaller scale, and could even sway some citizens to vote differently than they have planned when the presidential election comes around. It also shows the way that the war has broken up relationships and families.

Another subplot deals with Tommy Burgess, played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt (*Third Rock from the Sun*, *Brick*), another friend of King and Shriver's who served in the same unit as them during the war. He deals with the horrors he saw in the war by drinking excessively and behaving violently. His marriage falls apart and he eventually becomes suicidal after his actions earn him a dishonorable discharge from the Army.

The movie also focuses a great deal on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), an affliction that has been widely recognized among returning soldiers. Throughout the movie, the main characters go through many episodes where they flash back to certain combative instances during the war and act out on their present surroundings. This aspect of the film is easily the most harrowing and disturbing and is the most unforgettable area of the movie. It forces one to think not only of the physical casualties that the country has suffered during the war, but also the negative mental effects it has taken on the survivors that are attempting to become re-acclimated to society.

Overall, *Stop-Loss* is an immensely surprising film that shows the maturation process that MTV Films have gone through in the last five years, and it is serving to spread the horrors of a war gone astray to moviegoers all over America. It's a truthful portrayal of a war that takes on an entertaining tone instead of a documentary one.

It's scary in a way that only a soldier could know, and it gives the audience a peek at the bravery and consequences associated with war.

Sara's meshes with Presque Isle

By Nick Haller
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Spring time is finally here, and yes, that means a start to nice weather in Erie at last. Well, with the sunny and warm weather many people begin going outside for picnics, games and to enjoy the sunshine. Unfortunately, though, many Behrend students are not aware of the tiny restaurant called Sara's that is located just before the entrance to Presque Isle State Park. Sara's Restaurant's great location makes it the hot spot for great fast food before a day at the park.

Visitors and locals can agree that whether you're setting out for an afternoon of sun and sand or heading home after a day at the beach, it's a must to stop and eat at Sara's.

Gannon student Rob Hersch says, "When the weather begins

to get nice, the first thing I really think of is going down to the beach and then eating outside at Sara's."

For Behrend students it may be a bit of a drive, but the construction of the Bayfront Connector has made it much easier to get down near the beach. Sara's provides a friendly environment that

Sara's is the true 50s experience with old school Chevys and an old-fashioned decor inside that gives good reason to accompany friends and family for fun food, fabulous atmosphere and summertime memories.

makes you want to come back every time.

Sara's stays loyal to Erie by

selling Smith's hot dogs on fresh bakery rolls and juicy ground burgers, along with the crisp fries and homemade onion rings. Also, their milkshakes are thick, flavorful and unforgettable. Sara's is really a complete package that comes with a price tag that is actually reasonable.

Sara's is the true 50s experience with old school Chevys and an old-fashioned décor inside that gives good reason to accompany friends and family for fun food, fabulous atmosphere and summertime memories that will last forever.

So if you are not aware of Sara's it would be a great decision to head down to the beach for the day to relax and take a load off before the dreaded finals week comes. Sara's is a place that many Behrend students should experience before packing up and heading home for the summer, and it will never disappoint.

Upcoming events on campus

- There will be a **cornhole tournament** on Friday, April 11 at 6 p.m. in Erie Hall. There will be free food and drinks provided and prizes will be awarded to the winners. Students can pre-register for \$10 and at the door for \$15. Pre-register by sending an e-mail to Patrick Walling at prw5006@psu.edu with a name for your two-person team. The event is a fundraiser for the mens volleyball club team.

- There will be a **Wii Tournament** Tuesday, April 22 starting at 5 p.m. in McGarvey Commons. Teams can sign up during Senior Salute days on Monday, April 7 and Tuesday, April 8 in the Reed Wintergarden. The event is being held to celebrate 25 days until graduation.

- The **Percussion Group Cincinnati** will perform as part of the Logan Music Series on Thursday, April 24 at noon in the McGarvey Commons. Admission is free to students and the public.

- The **students vs. faculty basketball game** will take place on Monday, April 14 at the Junker Center. The game will start at 6 p.m. Along with the game, there will be t-shirt sales, a Chinese auction and a pie-throwing contest. The game is being held as a fundraiser for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. To sign up to participate in the game call (814) 504-0974.

- **William Witherup** will give an Organ Recital on Thursday, April 17 at 12:15 p.m. as part of the Smith Music Series. The event will be held at the Smith Chapel Worship Space. Contact Christa Morris at cdb12@psu.edu or (814) 898-6609 for more information.

- Two members of the creative writing faculty at Penn State Erie, **George Looney and Tom Noyes**, will read from their newest works at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 17, in the Larry and Kathryn Smith Chapel.

Looney will be reading from his recently released novella, *Hymn of Ash*, and Noyes will be reading from his newly published collection of short stories, *Spooky Action at a Distance and Other Stories*. Both have won the awards for their work.

Admission is free and open to students and the general public.

- Professor of physics and astronomy and director of the School of Science at Penn State Erie, **Roger Knacke**, will host the next Open House Night in Astronomy on Thursday, April 17. Knacke's talk will have to do with the formation of the planet Mercury and will begin at 7:30 p.m. in room 101 in the Behrend Science Building.

Admission is free and open to students and the general public.

Finals Week Library Schedule

Monday, April 21 ---- Thursday, May 8

Monday - Thursday, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

Friday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

Sunday, 10 a.m.-1 a.m.

Friday, May 9

8 a.m. -5 p.m.

• Free • Confidential • No Appointment Necessary •

STD TESTING - WALK IN CLINIC

Erie County Health Department
606 West Second Street
(Corner of West 2nd & Cherry Streets)

Monday 9:00 am - 11:00 am

Wednesday 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm Thursday 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Questions? Call 451-6700

Are you returning to campus next year and interested in writing? Want to report on the goings on of Behrend's campus, the Erie area or the nation? Work for The Behrend Beacon in the fall. E-mail Rachel Reeves (rre777@psu.edu), Connor Sattely (cis5060@psu.edu) or Matt Schwabenbauer (mjs5387@psu.edu) for more information.