

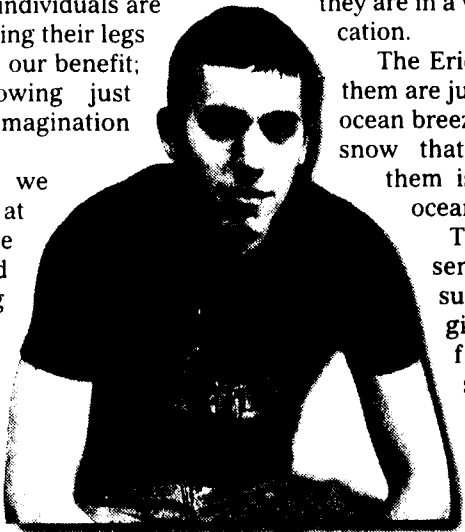
MY VOICE

Wearing shorts in winter

Every day as I walk to class in at least 3-4 layers of shirts, sweatshirts, jackets and coats, I am always greeted with a sight that always makes me smile (and just a bit warmer inside): some guy that's dressed in just a sweatshirt and shorts, or a girl that wears skirts as if the weather couldn't be hotter. Sometimes I wonder how these people got as far as college, but then I check myself: We should look at these people with appreciation. Here we are, trying to brave the Erie winter weather, and for the most part, the chill still reaches us, and the glumness of winter continues. Yet these individuals risk the cold and chance of frostbite just to bring us out of our snowy sadness by making us feel better, for even though we are still freezing, the

wind and snow aren't whipping around our bare legs. But these individuals are not just turning their legs blue just for our benefit; they're showing just how much imagination they have. You see, we have all at some time daydreamed about being on a beach somewhere in Florida surrounded by beautiful, single women (at least I have), but these "short-wearers" take it to the max. They imagine that they

are somewhere warm to the point that they actually believe they are in a warmer location. The Erie winds to them are just a gentle ocean breeze, and the snow that falls on them is the cool ocean mist. These noble sentinels of summer also give the freshman something to aspire to. Too often, unprepared freshman fall pray to Erie's arctic hell-escape. The fluorescent poles you see lining the pathways? The landscapers



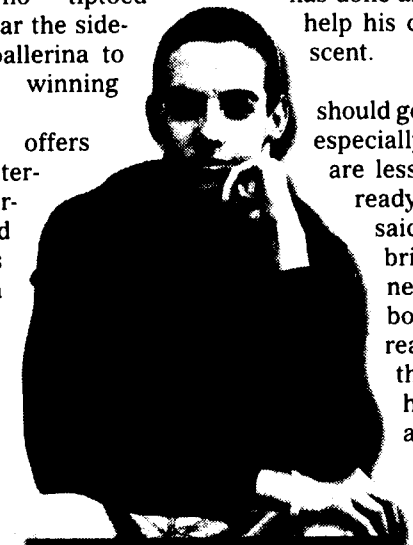
ERIC PEIRCE
staff writer

use them to find the bodies of find the bodies of frozen freshmen. Our friends in the khaki caravans give the freshman something to aspire to. Some- day, if they work hard enough and survive, one day I can be like them. Now this can be good and bad. The good is that they are looking on the bright side of winter. The bad, however, is that it may take them awhile before they realize that their legs are just blocks of frozen ice. So if you know one of these people, these nomads of the Nike shorts, just go up to them and remind them politely that this is Erie, it is winter and that no matter how much they try, those beautiful women in bikinis aren't worth losing your legs over.

MY VOICE

Super Bowl 2010

It's that time again: the Super Bowl! But before getting into this year's match-up, let's look at previous ones. The stories of Super Bowls past read like fairy tales. It goes as far back as Super Bowl III, when Joe Namath guaranteed victory and was true to his word in Hollywood style. Last year, we saw the heroics of Ben Roethlisberger as he threw a strike to Santonio Holmes, who tiptoed gracefully near the sideline like a ballerina to catch the winning touchdown. This year offers plenty of interesting scenarios and storylines, as well. Even for the casual fan, each team has a storyline that can be appreciated.



BRANDON BOYD
senior writer

The New Orleans Saints march into this battle strong and mighty, but it wasn't always that way. The father of Colts quarterback, Peyton Manning, Archie manned the Saints for 10 years, beginning in 1971. They had losing records in all 10 of those seasons, and it set a foundation for the next 20 years. The base of the franchise changed in 2005, when Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans. Many stranded people gathered in the Superdome, home of the Saints. The city of New Orleans rallied together around the Saints as they worked on rebuilding, giving them a gleam of hope in stark surroundings, eventually becoming a reflection of the city's rise. Now, just a few years later,

the Saints head to battle in Miami representing the soul of New Orleans and making their long awaited Super Bowl debut. The Colts, on the other hand, have been on this stage before. They have Peyton Manning, who could go down as the best quarterback of all time. The earthquake in Haiti has dominated the news lately, and Colts wide receiver Pierre Garcon has been directly affected by it all. A Haitian himself, he has done all he can do to help his country of descent. "Nobody should go through that, especially people who are less fortunate already," Garcon said. "It's just bringing awareness. Everybody's been really showing their hands and helping us out, and I really do appreciate that." Garcon not only has brought awareness to Haiti, but also to his football career. He represents a feel good story, coming out of little known Mount Union College to make the Colts team. With the injury of fellow wide receiver Anthony Gonzalez, Garcon took the chance to start and ran with it, having 765 receiving yards and four touchdowns. He and the rest of the Colts look to win their third Super Bowl in franchise history this Sunday. If you are neutral as to who you want to win, maybe the stories of two cities affected in some way by natural disasters can spark a temporary alliance. Either way, both represent a solid reason to cheer for either team, or perhaps just a great game for all involved, including us fans.



POINT COUNTER-POINT

Smoking on campus: Yea or Nay?

JOHN MOORE
staff writer

I know I should quit. It would show strength, goodness, self-awareness, etc. It would be a real step forward in my maturation, right? The problem that arises is how much I love it. Do I love standing outside my classes, huddled in 30-degree weather? No. Cancer? No. Acting "rebellious"? Not in the least. I'm too much of a literature nerd. And reeking of cigarettes? I can't smell smoke on myself, but I do like it. Cigarettes are like coffee taken black, so no wonder the two go so well together. I smoke American Spirits. The box is light blue and I currently pay \$6.22 for a pack every couple of days; it's my own private philanthropy. About half this price is made up of state and federal taxes, funding everything from roads to health care and education. What have you done for your community lately, slept in a cardboard box on campus one night? I'm no saint; I just want to help—for the children. If I could smoke inside, I'd do it constantly. I'd go back to buying cartons. I love it, the repetition, the certainty, the action, the smoke, the communal enjoyment; there is an unspoken understanding between smokers, and that's why the response to, "Hey, can I bum a cig?" is usually a hesitant, "Yeah, sure thing." It's comforting to know there's an entire community of people that understand the drive to

breathe fire. All I want is somewhere warm to sit with a cigarette and do homework—to get away from the doors where non-smokers have to shuffle through my poison. I don't want nonsmokers to breathe my smoke. I pay too much for it. On campus, the powers that be have drawn lines for smokers to stay behind, and we abide, standing directly behind them. Decades ago, smoking used to accompany one's daily routine, my parents could smoke while doing homework. It would help them focus, being warm and indoors all the while. Today, smoking has become a time-out, a "break." I have to stop whatever it is I'm doing, smoke and then return to my life. Whenever I'm on a smoke break, bundled for the arctic tundra, I think of the studio theater pretending it's big enough to be called a playhouse. I imagine an independent coffee shop there instead, not run by the Nazis in housing, mind you, but a late night study cabin where smoking is permitted. There are 24-hour computer labs that go unchaperoned, wouldn't this work for a smoker's studio? The aesthetics would outdo Bruno's in a heartbeat for open-mikes; the idea of it almost brings me to utopian tears. Audacious as this notion is, I think it's logical. Though, this will never come to pass, as nonsmokers' right to clean air is somehow held above my right to smoke. An-

other, more realistic notion might be those space-heaters that look like lampposts. The smokers would leave doorways instantly, moving to the warmth like vagrants around a burning trash barrel. If smokers look homeless to you, it's only because we're painted as such. In a society increasingly focused on political correctness, it is somehow still acceptable to reprimand smokers. People I've never met say, "You know that's bad for you," in passing condescension. Thank you, I hadn't heard. I understand it's unhealthy; I recognize that quitting is necessary at some point. I realize that it will be difficult, not because I will need a cigarette, but because I will want one. One day a doctor will probably tell me to stop drinking coffee as well, and sweets will probably be off-limits at some point too. When that time comes I will listen to the man in the white coat, but right now though, I just want a cigarette. By treating smokers as human, and giving us places to smoke versus simply drawing more lines in the sand, everyone wins. The situation is currently negative all around, nonsmokers are, rightly, angry about second-hand smoke, and smokers whip about in Erie's demonic weather. Now imagine leaving the Kochel building without passing loitering smokers. They're gone, all over on the patio by the Library warmed by a heatlamp, smiling. Yes, smokers smile. We're not that stoic.

NEIL JAMES
opinion editor

Smokers aren't the only ones with vices; I drink caffeinated beverages religiously. If I don't drink at least one every 12 hours, I'll get a screaming headache. I also know how it feels to spend a ton of money each week for a guilty pleasure that won't last. Where smokers have to spend \$7 per pack, I spend nearly \$30 a week on comic books, and I can't stop. So, in a very distant manner, I know how they feel. I do not smoke, but I am an asthmatic, so I do have strong feelings about public smoking. Let me be clear that I am not against people smoking. If you want to, that is your decision. However, please remember that others have to deal with it. It's no different than someone stinking up a room with his/her swamp-ass. I understand that smokers can't smell the smoke on themselves, but think about the dude who sits beside you in class who doesn't shower and reeks of body odor. It's not pretty, but that's the best analogy for how non-smokers feel in your presence. The biggest problem with smoking in public is that you are affecting the people around you, and I'm not even referring to regular people with healthy

lungs. I'm referring to asthmatics and people with lung disease. While smokers might not care, and regular Joes just get annoyed, second-hand smoke is a serious health risk for those with respiratory illness. Imagine walking around wearing a continuously tightening turtle-neck sweater. That's how it feels to be an asthmatic and walk through a smoke cloud. I hear lots of smokers say, "It's my body and I'll do what I want." The fact of the matter is I don't care what people do nately smoking without caring who might be around is the same as punching someone else in the throat. Second-hand smoke can hospitalize a person with respiratory illness. Smoking is a personal life choice that the individual must make. I won't tell you how to live your life. However, if you are going to choose that path, I would ask you to step outside yourself for a moment. A smoker may not care much about cancer, but think about your future children or grandchildren. I never got to know my grandfather. I remember vague snippets of him, but nothing substantial. I've heard wonderful things of him and would give anything to get to know him. Sadly, he smoked Lucky Strikes, and they didn't pull any punches. It's not that I have a personal problem with smokers on campus. My sister smokes and I don't mind at all, simply because she is courteous about it. If we are ever together and she needs a cigarette, she lets me know and stands downwind from me. She respects my asthma and I reciprocate the respect by not throwing a fit about it. I might not like second-hand smoke, but I'm not going to be a dick and make a scene. All I ask is that you be courteous of others' needs, and they will be courteous of yours.

