

Eye on Our Generation

♂ He Said

New Jersey Shores and Snores

She Said ♀

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When I think of the best states in the union, New Jersey isn't at the top of the list. It's not exactly Jay-Z of states--hell, it's not even the Ludacris. But Pennsylvanians thoroughly enjoy thrashing the Garden State as though it's the anus of the earth. I promise that an honest look at the state will prove such analysis to be not only incorrect, but just plain silly.

To do this the right way, I need to ask for a favor. I know how Pennsylvanians look at Jersey: with one eye on Wildwood and the other on Camden, and if they're a really advanced Jersey-hater, then sometimes they cast a sidelong glance at Trenton, too.

We'll need to get past that in order to do some real justice to Jersey, so here are my concessions: Wildwood is no good; it's a town that's largely unclean with an overrated beach and serves as the summer catch-all for testosterone-loaded frat kids and overly loose prostitute look-a-likes. And Camden?-Camden is an example of what happens when you jam a bunch of poor citizens into one place and expect safe, prosperous living. In other words, it's the reality of lower class urban living, could happen anywhere, and would be identical to Philly should all of the Philadelphian wealth move away.

It's actually not so hard to defend Jersey, and (in fact) Jersey can likely even trump our Keystone home! Don't believe me?--fair enough, let's get down to business.

Census data shows that the median income of Jerseyfolk is about \$20,000 higher than that of Pennsylvanians. Also, a higher percentage of students in Jersey receive their high school diplomas and, likewise, a higher percentage of Jersey students receive their bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, Pennsylvania

produces five times the toxic chemical release of that produced by New Jersey (scorecard.org). Hmm...seems as though "Dirty Jersey" (as my sister called it while I typed) produces wealthier and smarter people and exposes those people to far less chemical dangers than the poorer, dumber people of Pennsylvania.

In terms of output, Jersey ranks higher than Pennsylvania as far as entertainment is concerned. The best musical talent from this state includes Christina Aguilera, Hall & Oates, Patti LaBelle, and Poison--not too shabby. However, they surely are trumped by the superstars of Jersey, including Jon Bon Jovi, Whitney Houston, Frank Sinatra, and Bruce Springsteen--ever heard of them? Consider actors: Jeff Goldblum, Bill Cosby, Michael Keaton, and Will Smith hail from PA, but Jersey comes strong with Danny Devito, Joe Pesci, John Travolta, and Vera Farmiga. Although John Updike surely pulls majors respect for Pennsylvania, I'm chalking up entertainment to a Jersey win.

But maybe money, intelligence, clean air, music, and television simply aren't for you. Maybe you need something else to solidify the reality of New Jersey's respectability. How about Atlantic City, which hosts the annual Miss America pageant, the world's longest boardwalk and served as the inspiration for Monopoly, the world's most popular board game?

So there it is, New Jersey isn't half bad. Next time you consider the state, don't get caught up in the mindlessly repetitive insults about how it's filthy (ever seen Arch Street?) and how it's full of Snookis, because Avalon, Sea Isle, and Cape May are gorgeous, and that bimbo--well, she's from New York.

I know that it's terribly cliché to despise New Jersey but I just cannot help to think that the state in its entirety is completely ridiculous. I don't even know why it is called the Garden State when all I see in New Jersey are chain-link fences, above ground pools, hairspray, and landfills. I cannot take a state seriously that prides itself in being the homeland to Bon Jovi and lists "horse" as their state animal. I also cannot really place my trust in a shoreline littered with filthy STD infested needles.

New Jersey has been getting a lot of hype lately particularly because of MTV's latest installment The Jersey Shore and their recent approval of the medical marijuana bill. I could touch base on the show and talk about how "Snookie" completely deserved getting punched in the face or how ugly "guidos" and "guidettes" are, but frankly I think the show is highly overrated and I do not watch television that often. On the topic of passing the medical marijuana bill--what's the big deal? Is it really that shocking that New Jersey is one of the first states to pass it? No. The whole point I am trying to imply is

that absolutely nothing exciting happens in New Jersey.

Being that a few of my relatives reside in New Jersey (I know, I know) I was forced to visit quite frequently when I was younger. I can recall a particular event where I told my parents that I felt that going to New Jersey was like going through a time warp of fifteen years. Strictly speaking in a pop culture point-of-view everything about the state seems obsolete and outdated, from the fashions and the hairstyles, to the lingo and the landscape.

So what is it that makes New Jersey in a sub-cultural standstill? Why is New Jersey the armpit of America? I believe it is the fact that the people who grow up in Jersey typically stay in Jersey. Since there is little that is appealing about the state very few outsiders look to settle down there let alone visit. With little outside input the state is not subject to change or innovation. This causes the state to be a time capsule of 80's hair bands like Poison, Coogi sweaters, and the infamous fist pump. After all, New Jersey doesn't pump their gas - they pump their fist.

It's a Go-Go for Co-Co - Conan Gets Hosed

By David Hoffer - *Lion's Eye Staff Writer* - deh5081@psu.edu

With the star studded ensemble of Max Weinberg and the Tonight Show Band, Beck, Billy Gibbons, Ben Harper, Will Ferrell and Conan O'Brien laying down the classic Lynyrd Skynyrd track Free Bird, the 7th month experiment, also known as the "Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien," came to a close. This came after weeks of speculation and doubt on the futures of not only O'Brien and the Tonight Show itself, but also former Tonight Show host Jay Leno and his show as well. With the end of Conan's last show, NBC now looks forward to the 2010 Winter Olympics to cover the past 2 weeks of ridicule by O'Brien; the media and audiences far and wide that have given NBC a black eye.

The nightmare began in early January when reports started surfacing across the internet that NBC, worried about declining ratings for the Tonight Show and the Jay Leno Show, was now considering major changes to its primetime and late night lineup. The rumored changes involved moving the Jay Leno Show from 10 o'clock to 11:35 and shortening the hour long program to a half hour. With Leno moving back to his old timeslot, O'Brien's Tonight Show would be pushed from 11:35pm to 12:05am and remain an hour program (thus pushing Late Night with Jimmy Fallon to 1:05am). On January 12, O'Brien issued a heartfelt statement on his take on the matter, "It was my mistaken belief that, like my predecessor, I would have the benefit of some time and, just as important, some degree of ratings support from the prime-time schedule. Building a lasting audience at 11:30 is impossible without both." Conan continued, "I sincerely believe that delaying the "Tonight Show" into the next day to accommodate another comedy program



Photo courtesy of http://bostonist.com/attachments/boston_caroline/110807-conan-o-brien.JPG

will seriously damage what I consider to be the greatest franchise in the history of broadcasting. The "Tonight Show" at 12:05 simply isn't the "Tonight Show." Also, if I accept this move I will be knocking the "Late Night" show, which I inherited from David Letterman and passed on to Jimmy Fallon, out of its long-held time slot. That would hurt the other NBC franchise that I love, and it would be unfair to Jimmy."

Over the next week and a half, O'Brien continued on with his show as usual but with a twist. He did not

shy away from the controversy, but took shot after shot at himself, Leno and of course NBC. "And I just want to say to the kids out there watching - You can do anything you want in life, unless Jay Leno wants to do it too."

The jokes did not stop there. Conan often begun shows with quips that he would soon be available for children's parties and had just interviewed with Lady Footlocker. In his final week O'Brien debuted sketches that focused on introducing new bits that "aren't so much funny, as they are crazy expensive" in a way to jokingly bleed NBC dry before being removed from the air. The sketches included debuting purchases Kentucky Derby winner Mind That Bird and a new Bugatti Veyron, dressed as a mouse. The sketches alleged NBC lost millions just for a few seconds of unnecessary and nonsensical comedy.

On Thursday January 21 a conclusion was finally reached. NBC would pay O'Brien and his staff \$45 million dollars to walk away from the show and NBC, allowing Jay Leno to return to the Tonight Show following the Olympics. Conan held his final Tonight Show taping the next day and gave a very sentimental speech about leaving his dream job. "Between my times at Saturday Night Live, the Late Night show, and my brief run here on The Tonight Show, I've worked with NBC for over twenty years. Yes, we have our differences right now, yes, we're going our separate ways, but this company has been my home for most of my adult life. I am enormously proud of the work we have done together, and I want to thank NBC for making it all possible, I really do." Conan will be contractually free in September of this year and is expected to host a new show on Fox or possibly a cable network.