

The City from Another Universe Does BU Student Deserve Tar & Feathers or To Be Ridden Out on a Rail (If Binghamton Still Had Rail Service)?

By Paul Juser
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If you're here with me in Binghamton, you may have gotten yourself involved with the flap surrounding the graduating Binghamton University senior who, in a *Pipe Dream* editorial, gave the city a nasty parting shot on her way out of town. The article circulated Facebook like a flu, with endless rebuttals and insults. I'll admit, I didn't read the full article. I skimmed for highlights, and I do think the piece was better written than she has been given credit. But my initial reaction was disgust. How dare she focus on a nightlife that exists on one single vomit-smear street while poo-pooing or ignoring everything else the city has to offer? Much of the anger came from her comments calling Binghamton a "shithole" and talk of the "creatures north of Main Street." At first, this turned me red as well, but it was the comment that also changed my thinking.

I call Binghamton a shithole all the time. That's because I frequently find human shit on sidewalk. Clearly someone doesn't know shit goes elsewhere. If I had a nickel for every time I talked about mutants and creatures walking the Binghamton city streets, I would be able to cover the Party Mayor's bar tab for a full week.

Have you not seen the shambling examples of misshapen human beings wandering through downtown? We have our own cowboy, and he's one of the biggest celebrities in town! There have been multiple cross-dressing vagrants, and I'm not talking about the bald guy wearing miniskirts and high heels at Flashbacks. Did you know raw sewage used to dump directly into our rivers? That's why you see so many giant carp when you walk across the bridges, and any other fish that come out of the water are covered in open sores.

Our turn-of-century buildings were majestic before absentee landlords in Long Island and New Jersey left them to rot for years. Now most aren't even fit for the homeless colonies hiding inside. Less than five years

ago, the building on the corner of the busiest intersection in town collapsed from within only one block from city hall. For years prior, broken glass tumbled from the upper windows as plants growing inside forced their way to freedom. When the building was demolished it shut down the intersection for months, killing several businesses. Hundreds of pigeons that had never seen the light of day flooded the city streets. While this was great news for our famous family of peregrine falcons that can be heard screaming atop the Security Mutual Building, it meant plenty of new guano for the rest of the bipedal residents. Looking ever-backward, preservation groups fight to keep these buildings standing until that date they can no longer support their own weight and kill a passerby upon collapse.

The optimists claim there is plenty to do in Binghamton, but on any given night, you will be hard pressed to find anything that doesn't involve drinking or shopping. Sometimes a bar will feature an innovative new band, but if the drunk sound guy doesn't make the music sound like crap, the band members will all have formed new bands next week anyway. Every month, First Friday presents a collection of artists that shuffle between the galleries, but the stagnation in new blood has made numbers dwindle each month. If it wasn't for free Franzia and Yellowtail, First Friday would have faded away years ago. Of course there are carousels! I have my button for riding them all in one day; do you have yours? These are the same carousels used by Rod Serling when he set so many stories here. Even so long ago, Rod could see Binghamton was a city from another universe.

There is a theatre scene, and if you manage to find a show not written by Neil Simon, you will be treated to a collection of lines as the actor remembers them, or even better, as an actor improvises them to cover another actor's flub. When I was part of the line-flubbing scene, new writers would constantly blame audiences for not understanding the play they saw. No matter how much I

stressed it was always the writer's fault and never the audience, new writers would repeatedly blame viewers for not seeing what I could see was not present. One aspiring writer even suggested the audience would need to read the play before watching so they could understand what they saw. I never explored if I should be distributing scripts
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Sports of All Sorts Jon "Bones" Jones Loses First Decision!

UFC light-heavyweight champion and Endicott native Jon Jones suffered his first defeat in over two years on May 19th. The early-morning bout pitted Jones, at 6 feet 4 inches, 205 pounds, versus a 30 foot, 700 pound utility pole. The pole hails from the corner of Helen Street and Grand Boulevard in Binghamton. Though roughed up, the pole stood its ground and went the distance, winning by the unanimous decision of Binghamton police officers and Broome County sheriff's deputies who officiated. Matt Ryan, best known as Jon Jones's future father-in-law, is also mayor of Binghamton but had no comment.

As it happens, the site of the bout was only three blocks from the headquarters of the *National Police Gazette*. Ordinarily at that time of the morning on a Saturday, *Police Gazette* editor and proprietor William A. Mays can be found speeding through the stop signs of that intersection chasing down obnoxious drivers. But with Jones coming the other way, Mr. Mays was fortunate to have been in western New York State that weekend exploring the possibility of sending a person over the middle falls of Letchworth State Park in a barrel. Upon hearing the news Mr. Mays said, "If you're thinking of looking for Jon's totaled \$200,000 Bentley at Gary's U-Pull-It, don't bother. I already tried."

Traditionally, the only people alive capable of besting utility poles are the caber tossers of Scotland (see photos page 4). Get a dozen pints—imperial not U.S.—of McEwan's in these highlanders and the pole doesn't stand a chance. We hope that Jones will keep this in mind and pick only human opponents from now on. Along those lines, Jon Jones's next scheduled bout is against the very human—though Scottish—Dan Henderson at the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas on September 1st. The utility pole on Helen Street has no upcoming bouts on the calendar, though it has issued several challenges to the school buses coming from Thomas Jefferson Elementary.

Tommy Dreamer Wins at Xcite Wrestling

American Legion Post 80 in Binghamton saw the return of Endicott's Xcite Wrestling crew on May 4th, and they again provided a knockout show. Former WWE legend Tommy Dreamer defeated Southern Tier native IB Green in the headlining match, while Steve Corino won against Axel Lennox. But the most excitement came when Chainsaw Joe Gacy began randomly annihilating people left and right. Justin Credible felt his wrath, as did WBNG-TV producer
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LEONARD MELFI AND THE MISTREATMENT OF A LEGEND Part 8: A Hospital's Deadly Negligence

In Part 7 (May), the body of American-theatre legend and Binghamton native Leonard Melfi was finally on its way back home for a proper burial more than five months after he'd mysteriously died and disappeared. This month, his brother John tells what the family pieced together after years of investigation. Also see photo on page 4.

By John Melfi with William A. Mays
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It had been a long journey for my brother Leonard from time of death to his proper burial. He died on October 28, 2001, and was not laid to rest until April 18, 2002. In the first seven parts of this series I talked about what we went through to unravel what had happened to Leonard and his whereabouts. Now, after years of investigative work, I can tell you exactly what happened to him during that five-month period between October 2001 and April 2002.

On October 28, 2001, at 1:05PM, an ambulance is called to respond to 2508 Broadway in Manhattan. This address is the Hotel

Narragansett, the last place Leonard called home. At 1:08PM the emergency medical technicians arrive and Leonard, still conscious, explains to them he fell down, couldn't get up, and that he's feeling dizzy. The EMTs do the normal initial-treatment procedure and prepare to transport him to Mount Sinai Hospital—directly across Central Park—for further care. At 1:36PM they leave 2508 Broadway, arriving at Mount Sinai exactly 10 minutes later. Before departing the hospital, the EMTs provide emergency-room staff with a complete, detailed report. This report includes Leonard's name, address, social security number, date of birth, insurance information, and person to contact with that person's phone number. The report also includes all the treatments the EMTs gave Leonard, along with warnings that the patient is potentially unstable and should be watched carefully. Hospital staff sign the report, EMTs provide them with a copy, and they leave the hospital at
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