

Skyfemme

Harvard: Good education — but no regrets for IU grad 'Skyfemme' gets the skinny from Boston students as she tours U.S. by plane

By Christy Mehrlich
July 18, 2007

Special to the H-T

HTO TALK
POST A COMMENT ON THIS STORY

Story tools:

- Send story
- Save story
- Print-friendly

The Herald-Times
newspaper ads
REAL ESTATE

[RE/MAX](#)

[DuBois Realty Co.](#)

[Keller Williams](#)

[Coldwell Banker
Dunn](#)

[Carpenter Realtors](#)

[Carpenter Realtors](#)

[Real Living Town &
Country](#)

[RE/MAX](#)

[Carpenter Realtors](#)

[Sell4Free Real Estate](#)

[Buyers Plus!](#)

[Donna Hanshew
Realty](#)

[Keller Williams](#)

[Keller Williams](#)

[Carpenter Realtors](#)

[Prange Building LLC](#)

[Smithwood at
Renwick](#)

[Smithwood at
Renwick](#)

[Chief Realty](#)

[Morgan House
Apartments](#)

HeraldTimesOnline

EDITOR'S NOTE: Christy Mehrlich, a 2005 Indiana University graduate and private pilot, is flying her Piper Arrow on a five-month trip through 40 states. Mehrlich, 24, also known as "Skyfemme," left from Monroe County's Kisters Field airport May 2. She is providing trip updates for The Herald-Times. Find out more about her at www.skyfemme.com.

BOSTON — I have a ratty Indiana zip-up sweatshirt that has a hole in the hood from a stray fireplace ember, and it's not quite crimson but faded more to pink.

I tell this because I am a fan of IU, not to mention a recent grad. Yet, I have had those moments wondering if I should have tried harder in high school to apply to an Ivy League school.

After talking to some Harvard undergraduates, grad students and alumni, I was able to answer that question: No. I learned that the distance between a Harvard undergraduate and an Indiana undergraduate is much smaller than half the country, or 250 points on an SAT, or \$120,000 in student loans.

On choosing Harvard

Clarel Antoine II, a sophomore from New York in the five-year music program, was accepted to Oberlin and admits he looked at IU (for its crazy good music school). Now he's faced with needing to change his major, because he's unhappy with the Harvard music program. So why Harvard for music?

"Well, I have immigrant parents," Antoine replied. "And with immigrant parents, Harvard is very much a priority. So if you get in to a place like Harvard, um, you really can't say no. I think it's really that simple, just because it is an elite university and the background of parents are obviously extremely poor and they made the American dream."

Does he wish he'd gone elsewhere? "Everyone here wishes they'd gone somewhere else at one point or another."

Jen Minear, a Wellesley transfer and '93 Harvard alum from Colorado with a physics degree, said she chose Harvard for a very different reason.

"I was like 18 and just out of my parents' house," Minear said. "And I landed in an all-girls school in a dry town, and I was coming into the city every weekend anyway. It just seemed where it was at. I mean, this is Harvard Square. It's fun. There's all this stuff going on, so my reasons weren't academic or career-oriented at all. It just seemed more like a party here."

On Harvard parties

There's no need for the T-shirts that read "Dry campus, my ass" at Harvard. It's a wet campus.

Thomas Dichter, a Massachusetts native and Harvard junior majoring in English, told me, "There is not a big bar scene here, because there is a lot of alcohol available on campus. In fact, the university funnels a lot of money into student social life, so there are like grants (that) people can apply for to throw certain parties. They basically encourage the freshmen to go down to the river and drink, because they want to keep the yard really pristine."

Antoine surprised me even more with something he said: "MIT has better parties than we do; swear to God."

On finding a job

There is a misconception that with a Harvard diploma, you're set. A recent article by Career Builder disagrees, and so do Harvard alums — at least some.

"In terms of being a career success," said Minear, the grad with a physics degree, "I sometimes think Harvard

The Flight

BOSTON — It's been seven blissful days of Boston couch-crashing. No waking up early to beat the weather. No scrounging for food. No paying each night for a motel with a tacky factor of 10.

Yes, it's great to know people in cool cities. I am staying with my IU roommate. She has an apartment in "Southie" to herself for the summer. We stay up late watching reruns of "Six Feet Under," "Weeds" and "Sports Night," and we binge on pad thai, crab cakes and frittered French toast. Not all at the same time, of course.

We go to movies and shop, which is more of a tease than anything for me, since I really can't buy anything, knowing I'd have to drag it around the country for another three months.

It could be that I have lost my survival skills, reverted into what I call a "potato state" — listlessness brought on by a prevalence of food and television.

I'm sure I will be cured the second I take off for Newport, R.I.



Clarel Antoine II, sits on a wooden park bench enjoying a smoothie, discusses his perspective on life at Harvard. Christy Mehrlich, Courtesy photo



handicaps you, because it gives you false expectations, an inflated sense of yourself.”

“This is a bit of a generalization, but sometimes there is more of a focus on intellectual ideas, so you put that in the business world. ... People from other schools, there’s a little more grounded sense. They’re not in their lofty head-space.”

Big picture

I think everyone can see a bit of themselves in these Harvard people.

So Harvard perhaps delivers a better education. But at a state school, well, you have to go out there and find it. The point is, it’s available. It’s all just what you make of it.

I have nothing against Harvard. All I’m saying is, to each his own. Indiana University, like my faded sweat shirt, fits me well.

No regrets. Hoo Hoo, Hoosiers!

Story comments

No comments on this article yet.

Post your comment:

Name to appear with this comment:

Your comment:

Some HTML allowed: <a> <i>

submit comment

HTO comment policy

HTO encourages readers to engage in civil conversation with fellow subscribers.

We will not edit or alter your comments, but comments which violate the points listed below are subject to removal without notice.

When posting, do not enter comments which:

- Contain libelous statements such as accusing somebody of a crime, defamation of character, or statements that can harm someone’s reputation
- Contain obscene, explicit, or racist language
- Contain personal attacks, insults, threats or harassment
- Contain commercial product promotions
- Are intended to impersonate another individual or group

HTO reserves the right to remove any comment for any reason whatsoever without prior notice.



Thomas Dichter, a Harvard Senior majoring in English, weighs the pros and cons of graduate school. Chrysy Mehrlich, Courtesy photo



Jen Minear



Chrisy Mehrlich

More stories

- [Batchelor principal moves to human resources post](#)
- [Pedaling for change](#)
- [Fund set up for burial of drowned boy](#)
- [Big tracks revive talk of big cats](#)
- [Presidential debate producers tour IU](#)
- [Sheriff's son to get bench trial in arson case](#)
- [61-year-old disabled man reports attack, robbery by intruder](#)
- [Teen accused of exposing self at apartments](#)
- [Indiana teen arrested after newborn found in trash](#)
- [Lottery numbers](#)

Links

- » [more local & state news](#)
- » [Today in photos](#)
- » [Site map](#)

**PUT
YOUR
LOAN
ON THE**



MORTGAGE
Fixed Rate
Variable Rate
Second Mortgage
Jumbo
Mobile Home

VEHICLE
Auto/Truck
Motorcycle/RV/ATV
Personal Watercraft

PERSONAL
Signature
Home Improvement
90-day One-Pay
Share Secured
Line of Credit

IU Credit Union

Great Rates/Great Service—Pick Two!
www.iucu.org | 855-7823

■ [HTO user guide](#) | [Search HTO](#) | [Site map/Table of contents](#) | [View all stories for a date:](#) 1 | 1 | 2007 |

[Area business profiles](#) | [Privacy statement](#) | [Contact web staff](#) | [Advertiser kit](#) | [RSS feeds](#)
© 1997 - 2007 Hoosiertimes Inc.

No commercial reproduction without written consent.
Electronic reproduction of any kind forbidden without written consent.