

NEWS

Student displeased with landlord

By Stephen Fenton
contributing writer

Mark Maggs of Beech Creek, Pennsylvania is just one of many people who have had troubles with their landlord. Like all the tenants before him, Maggs finds himself fighting an uphill battle with his landlord over issues that have been a problem in the past.

Maggs, being a college student, needed a place to live for the 2006-2007 school year. When his search led him to Wattsburg Road, he said that he didn't know what he was getting himself into, which was an apartment that was already falling apart.

In the past, renters of this apartment have encountered problems with drainage, flooding, rust and insects. According to Maggs, the landlord had knowledge of these problems before and refuses to fix them, charging the tenants for every problem with the apartment. The apartment, which is located in the basement of a hair salon studio, is a two-bedroom, one bathroom apartment with a living room and kitchen. The owners of the hair salon did not want their names used in this story because they did not want to hurt their business, but did provide some input in the situation. They said that the apartment had been sprayed for insects numerous times, and that the walls have been prevented to not allow water in, thus blaming the tenants for all problems. But according to Maggs, every single time it rains or snows, the entire apartment floods. After flooding many times, Maggs noticed a faint odor in the air and became concerned about it, thinking it might be mold growing under the carpet.

Past tenants have reported similar problems with flooding and have tried to contact the Board of Health to come in and review the status of the apartment, but somehow the landlord fights their way of the situation time and time again. Maggs said, "There could be some virus or something serious being emitted into the air." Knowing that this could become serious, he contacted the Board of Health also and scheduled a meeting to review the apartment. But once again the landlord intervened and told the Board of Health that the problem was being taken care of and that nothing like this would happen again. Past tenants have said that the landlord tries to "nickel and dime" them for their money to pay off their personal rent for the hair salon. Maggs said, "These people are ridiculous, if there is going to be so many problems with this place, then why should they even rent it out?" Maggs planned on taking this situation to court and try to get his rent money back, since he was on a tight budget being a college student. But there is only three weeks of school left and he doesn't want to go through the hassle, because he could end up spending more money in court fees than money he would actually get back.

Other problems include a lot of insects, rust on most water pipes, improper window sealing and of course, the flooding issue. By looking at the apartment, one would not suspect anything to be wrong, because it looks clean and in shape.

Maggs does not plan on returning to this apartment next year, and has contacted the Board of Health secretly so that future tenants do not encounter the same problems he and many other have.

The day the music died

By Nicole Raffle
contributing writer

From Penn State Behrend to Mercyhurst College, Parade Street proudly displays why it is the original main street of Erie. Driving up Parade St. each house, building, and alleyway seems to scream out, "I have a story to tell." One building on the corner of Parade St. and Pine Avenue has an enormous story to tell. Outside, a single, green sign hangs, swaying in the wind, Herman's.

Inside, the long bar extends from the wall all the way to the entrance, surrounded by a wall of booths meshed with tables, all waiting patiently to be filled. Opened in 1950, and still owned by the original owner, Herman Marquard, each seat has its own story to tell. The first booth just sits there, reserved for its special regular that will never fill it again. Walter Hendl started sitting in his booth back in 1976, leaving it on April 10, 2007, when he passed away.

In 1976, the talented young man walked through the doors of Herman's with his wife, Barbara, wanting a glass of white wine and a shot of vodka. Hendl was starting the beginning of his long career

as the new director of the Erie Philharmonic, later retiring in 1990. Hendl began his career in New Jersey in 1929, enlisting in the army by 1942. The army didn't stop Hendl from living his musical dream; he formed a jazz and marching band on the New Castle Army Air Base in Delaware. The "Jive Bombers" went to Wilmington to help raise money for war bonds. Discharged two years later, Hendl went on to write and conduct the music for the Broadway musical, "Dark of the Moon."

Hendl became the conductor of the New York Philharmonic, and from there traveled all over the country conducting and assisting Philharmonics from Dallas to Chicago. Hendl's national fame brought him international fame. Hendl traveled from Moscow to Asia, then to Vienna before heading back to the states as a professor at the Julliard School of Music.

When Hendl landed a job in Erie, he drove down Parade St. and ended up at Herman's. "He stopped by for a drink on his way into town, and sort of never left," said Jack Donahue, bartender at Herman's for the last five years. Donahue went on to talk about all the stories Hendl had told him over the years, laughing as he tried to recite them all.

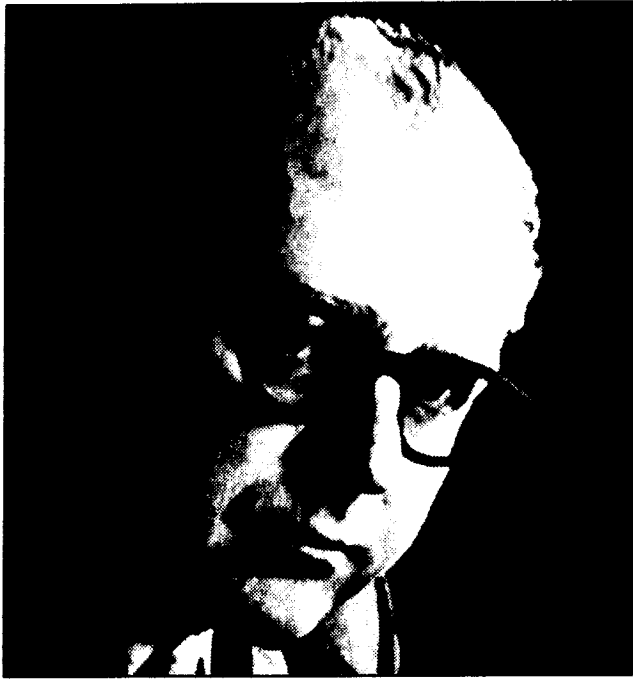
Even at 90 years old, Hendl still had the same quick wit he did back in 1976, when he first started wooing the ladies and entertaining the men. Along with his quick wit, Hendl started suffering from heart and lung disease.

Arthritis and old age might have stopped Hendl from playing his music, but his "personality and stories still made him on hell of an entertainer," said Donahue.

On Tuesday, April 10, 2007, Walter J. Hendl died of heart and lung disease at the age of 90, after battling it for many years. "He was a really great guy," said Donahue, "he is really going to be missed."

Herman's is still there, and the memory of Hendl seems to linger at the booth where he and his wife sat for so many years. Hendl's booth is one of many inside Herman's, and his story is just one of a million waiting to be told.

Herman's has been a staple and foundation for the history of Erie and Parade Street. It only seems far that his historical monument would be the place where this historical man would sit for over forty years. While Hendl might not be able to sit in his booth anymore, the empty booth still sits there, patiently waiting for another regular to fill it, adding their history to Erie.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Walter Hendl led the Erie Philharmonic for many years.

Quotes on Civility

"We cannot always oblige; but we can always speak obligingly."

- Voltaire

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