

Pranks abound in campus dormitories

Stacey Simmers
Capital Times Staff

Penn State Harrisburg might look like it's all business--classes in a former Army Air Force base headquarters, students struggling to learn and earn at the same time.

But some intrepid souls make sure they have classic collegiate experiences, like hanging out and playing practical jokes in the dorm.

On any given night, there is someone having a few beers, playing darts, or more creative games like Strip Uno.

One pair of pranksters--who, for reasons that will become obvious, declined to be identified--lived on the third floor of Church Hall. Throughout the fall semester of 1991, they did their best to keep their neighbors on their toes.

The pranks began simply. A towel or two missing after an innocent man goes into the shower; a phone disappears after a student runs down to the pop machine, leaving the door unlocked.

After a while, the pranks get a little more creative--and some students say--more disgusting.

"My girlfriend stepped into a pile of [feces] when she left my room one night to go to the bathroom," said one resident, who also chose to remain anonymous.

Later that month, a furnace on the third floor was producing an incredible stench. The resident assistant was notified of the problem, and began his journey to find the source of the problem.

After searching several rooms, he discovered that one of the heaters had been

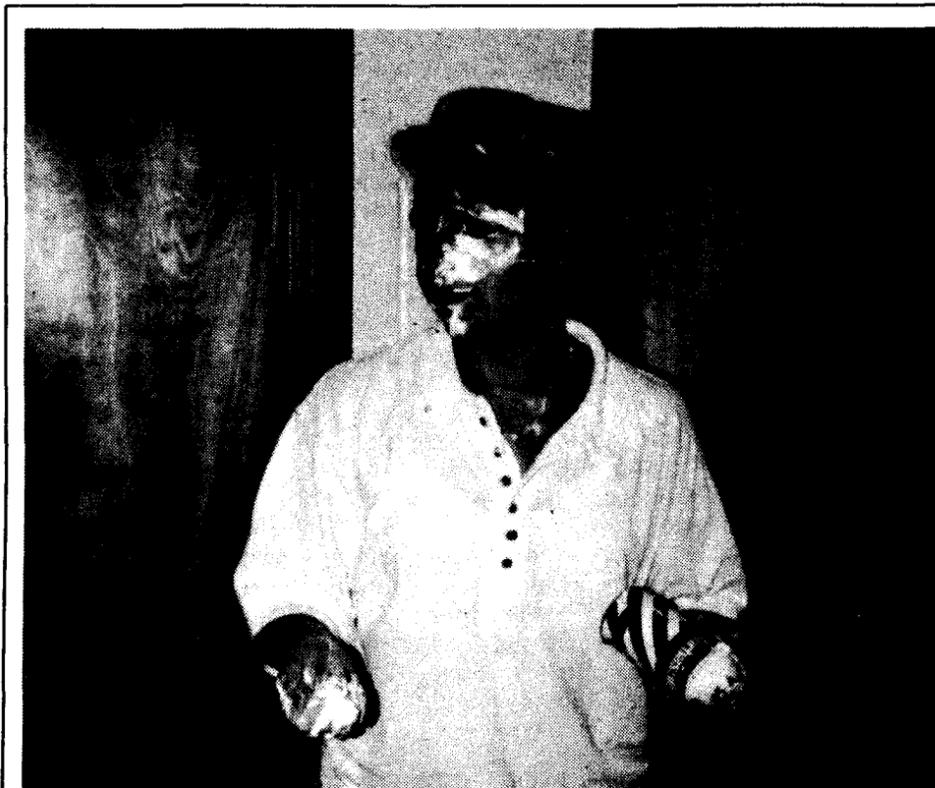


Photo by Stacey Simmers

Tracy Sypeck, a junior from Church Hall, flaunts battle scars incurred during a shaving cream fight with her neighbor in the dormitory. The residence halls are a frequent site of pranks and practical jokes.

opened. In it sat a pile of what seemed to be human excrement.

Could the pranksters be responsible for these oh-so-similar gags? Well...

"Yes, we pull a few stunts here and there," an accused prankster said. "We have to. Almost every guy on this floor is an

engineer. We get pretty tense. We have to do something to keep these guys aware of the world around them."

He insists, however, that they know their limit.

"We do try to liven things up around here but I can honestly say that neither one of us would [defecate] into a bag or someone's furnace," the prankster added.

Do not think that the pranks are limited to the men's floors. The women get just as wild--maybe not as disgusting--but definitely out of control.

The week before Thanksgiving vacation, a shaving cream battle was waged on the second floor of Church Hall.

"I had to do something to her when she threw a bowl of water in my face," said Tracey Sypeck, a junior from Church Hall. "I couldn't just stand around and drip."

Sypeck and her neighbor were covered with Barbasol after a fifteen-minute battle. The war did not end with a shower, though.

After Thanksgiving break, Sypeck decided that she ought to attack her neighbor again, even though the neighbor was innocent this time.

Sypeck and neighbor Brenda Forwood decided that powder would do the job. They entered room 209 with a bottle of baby powder and a hair dryer.

A few minutes later, the unsuspecting neighbor returned to her room to find a quarter inch of powder covering everything she owned.

Sypeck and Forwood were hiding next door, waiting.

"We heard her alright--so did everyone else in the dorm," Sypeck said. "We thought she'd think it was funny. I never thought she'd be that mad at us."

They offered to help clean everything but the victim refused.

"It was supposed to be a joke," the victim said. "If they have to clean it, too, how funny is it? I've decided to leave it there, that way when they come to visit me, they can sit in it and see how funny it really is."

There were no hard feelings after any of these pranks. That's just how it goes. Everybody will do something to someone sometime before he or she leaves the dorms.

Any way you look at it, a prank is a prank. The more work the students do, the better the pranks get. As long as professors continue to pile on the work, the residents will have to pull these pranks. No harm is done and residents are always on their toes, watching and waiting...

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