

The Happy Valley Diary

Notes From A Time of Short Days and Long Nights Or Back from Babylon

By Damion Strommer

(Strommer is a senior English major who spent six semesters at University Park before coming to Delco.)

People who go away to college and don't spend any time in the dormitories are a rare breed. I know people who have done it and are glad they could avoid university housing, but I have a feeling their college experience has a big hole right in the middle. Dormitory life seems like a necessary evil, but it can have its rewards.

Main Campus has a dormitory system so extensive it's outrageous. North, South, East, West, Pollock, and Center halls are spread out around campus to accommodate the incoming student body who are too confused and innocent to make it on their own. Each 'Hall' unit consists of secrecy dormitory buildings that pack you in two, sometimes three, to a room. And each 'Hall' unit has its own cafeteria serving up food that seems.... well, synthetic. It's definitely edible, but you'll just have to try it yourself.

Dorm Life

Perhaps you've heard of East Halls. If not, I'll fill you in because there's a good chance that's where Housing will stick you. East Halls is a group of about twelve or thirteen dormitories, a place so huge it has three cafeterias (that I know of), a small store, its own MAC machine and a radio station with a signal so weak you can't even pick it up right next door. WEHR is notorious for its lame DJ's and probably the smallest music library on earth. I won a can of soup and a CD single from them one time, so maybe I'm being too harsh. The big problem with East Halls is its location. Tucked way up in the northwestern corner of campus, its residents must walk to any building on the west side of campus, and believe me, that's a long

walk to make in the middle of February. You might be better off taking the LOOP, the campus bus system that used to cost a quarter but now is probably up to about thirty-five cents. Each LOOP bus is

Police, a relationship that had been straining for some time), I knew right away I had a place to live. A girl I knew had moved out of her house, so I immediately jumped in her spot. I had the best deal going: my own

and go as you see fit. Apartments tend to be small, ugly and overpriced, and the new trend is in tight security. This can make it hard to enter and leave a building, even if you live there. Who wants that? You'll have more room in a house, and you may even have one with a porch. Porches are a good thing to have in a college town.

Ideally, you want to find a house that is owned by a single person, not a realty company. I was able to do this. It makes for an agreeable tenant-landlord relationship. Those Realtors are rotten bastards who hate college students but love their wallets and would throw you out on the street in a heartbeat for spilling beer on the carpet. It's better to deal with humans than sadistic robots programmed to act like real estate agents.

Wherever you decide to live, try to live with the right people. Friends (I stress friends) from home are usually a good choice. You know each other well already. There's nothing more repulsive than discovering someone's disgusting habits. If there are no friends from home, then pick people with the same interests as you, whether it be drinking, fighting, or even academics. I trust your judgement. And remember, it's only shelter. The real action is happening elsewhere. Selah...

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equipped with 'LOOP puke dust', for those wild weekends.

No Pets Allowed

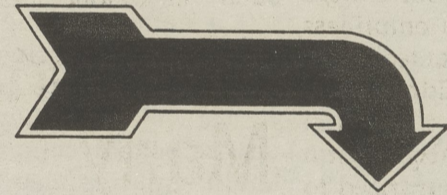
Dormitories are where you meet many of your friends. Most of the friends I made in my four years at Penn State are people I lived in the dorms with. That's why they are valuable to me. But obviously I wasn't very valuable to them. I was kicked out of University housing for good when my eight-foot long python escaped into the heating unit of the building I was living in. It wasn't the crisis they made it out to be because my snake came back within a week. They still kicked me out. Put me on trial and everything. It was really pathetic. The Student Hearing Board consisted of some really uptight people who couldn't believe it was possible to lose an eight foot snake. But it is.

After I was booted from the dorms (it probably wasn't just for the Python Incident, but rather the snake deal was the culminating event in my relationship with University

room in a house with a washer and dryer for about two hundred bucks a month. Beat that. And the girls. I lived with four girls for the last two years of my college career. While there were disadvantages to this, I would definitely have to say that the pros outweighed the cons. But that, my friends, is a whole different column.

Off-Campus Housing

I won't beat around the bush: houses are the way to go. There are different types of off-campus housing, but houses are the best. You'll have your own room (unless you're a sucker), and you can come



FEBRUARY CAMPUS EVENTS

- February 10 Speaker on the Cultures of Africa
12:30 in 101 Main
- February 17 Dr. Judith Thomas,
12:30 in 101 Main
- February 22 Freedom Theatre Performance for
Black History Month,
12:30 in 101 Main
- February 26 Tony Ten-Fingers Speaks on Native
Americans,
12:30 in 101 Main



<p>REN Happy, Happy! Joy, Joy! STIMPY</p>	<p>LAYLA You got me on my knees. ERIC</p>
<p>DIANA You are as breathtaking as a mountain view on a clear spring day! ANDREW</p>	<p>BOBBY B. I will always love you! WHITNEY</p>
<p>LORI I think you ought to know.... ...I love you! MIKE</p>	<p>HILLARY I'll always be faithful! BILL</p>

