

Photo by Bob Hersh

SPRING WEATHER AT Penn State is predictably unpredictable. A few hours of sunshine often are eclipsed by rain. The bright sunshine of Tuesday afternoon brought many motorcycles out of garages, as shown by the parking spaces on College Avenue, but...

Spring PSU's meteorological circus

By CATHY CIPOLLA
Collegian Staff Writer

Many students abandoned their books for frisbees and footballs Monday when spring-like weather premiered at Penn State. However, students found out Wednesday that it wasn't a long-running show.

Spring term weather at Penn State is a freak show of brief periods of sunshine mixed with lots of clouds, rainfall and humidity. Sometimes winter returns for an encore. Back in 1928, eighteen inches of snow fell in April.

According to Robert Konchak, a graduate student in meteorology at the weather observatory in Deike, spring months here are usually wet. "Last Spring it rained about every two or three days," he said.

Last year's Gentle Thursday celebration began under blue skies on Old Main lawn and later moved to the HUB Ballroom because of a downpour. The year before, Gentle Thursday also began beautifully but was constantly interrupted by afternoon showers.

According to Konchak, high elevation is responsible for the area's strange spring weather. Other areas along the Appalachian chain in New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina also have

this problem, he said.

"A high-pressure area from the north can cause a flow of air off the Atlantic Ocean," Konchak said. He added that this can cause a low cloud deck to move across Pennsylvania. These low-flying clouds are trapped by mountains and valleys, causing cloudiness and fog.

This situation is particularly bad in the spring because winds and air currents are weaker, Konchak said. This means that clouds do not have enough force behind them to pass over the mountains. So, like unwanted guests, they stay around for days.

Konchak said high elevation also is responsible for snowstorms in April because cold air gets trapped along with the humidity. "Sometimes we get a six or eight-inch snowstorm in April," Konchak said.

Yet other cities like Philadelphia, although closer to the coast, enjoy balmy spring weather because of a lower elevation.

Konchak said normal precipitation during the spring is 3½ inches per month. So a little pessimism may be necessary to survive the spring months at Penn State. Don't pack away your galoshes when you take out your cutoffs and sneakers.

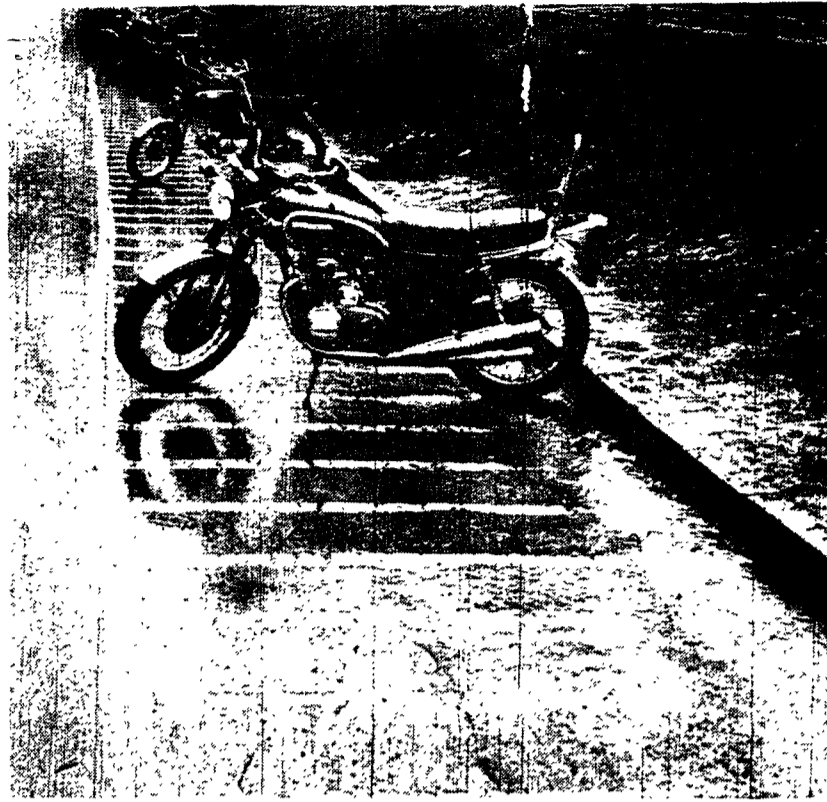


Photo by Bob Hersh

...the sunny weather passed quickly and the rain and cold on Wednesday dispelled the spring feeling, except for a few ardent motorcyclists, as shown by the same parking area on College Avenue.

Landlords vs. tenants: irreconcilable differences?

By CATHY CIPOLLA
Collegian Staff Writer

A year ago Bruce Kelly was a well-known spokesman for tenants' rights in the State College area. As president of the Organization of Town Independent Students, Kelly favored rent controls. He also wanted landlords to build "realistic" apartments without wall-to-wall carpeting, balconies, and other luxuries that might raise rents.

Now Kelly is general manager for all apartments owned by Alex Woskob, State College's biggest apartment owner. He occupies a plushly furnished office in Beaver Hill Apartments and favors "escalation clauses" in leases, which enable a landlord to raise rents in the middle of a leasing period.

He says he now has a better idea of what landlords' problems are. "But I'm fighting associational problems," he added. "Nobody trusts me."

Bruce Kelly has fought on both sides of the landlord-tenant battle—a cold war getting hotter, characterized by lack of communication or understanding between the opposing factions.

A year and a half ago at Penn Towers Apartments, several tenants smashed the lights in the stairwells to protest a broken elevator.

More recently at Laurel Glen, tenants confronted the management with a list of 22 demands and threatened to withhold rent money if these demands were not met.

High rents, poor maintenance, and problems with leases and security deposits seem to be the main battle fronts for student tenants in State College.

On the other hand, landlords complain that their property is vandalized by tenants, who are inexperienced in apartment renting and have little understanding of the landlord's problems.

Rising rent is the most common cause of tenants' bitterness towards landlords. Tenants feel they are at the mercy of landlords because of the great demand for housing close to campus.

"It's a seller's market," complained Eastgate tenant Leta Banský. "Students have no where else to go. I think the landlords are making a huge profit."

Landlords blame the rising cost of living for high rents. Kelly said tenants should examine their parents' expenses at home to see how prices have risen.

Kelly said high mortgage interest rates are one reason for high rents at newer apartments. "You also have to build the apartments, rent them, do maintenance, build parking areas, and landscape," he added.

"Energy has caused increased utility costs," Kelly said, estimating that one dollar's worth of electricity will cost \$3.80 next fall.

Jim Williams, president of the Centre County Board of Realtors, said the rising cost of living has caused landlords to lose money. He said he favors escalation clauses for this reason.

Thomas ("Doc") Sweitzer, a former OTIS president, has dealt with landlords for three years and also feels escalation clauses are needed. "Landlords lost money last year when the price of plastics and utilities doubled," he said. "They had to keep their rent the same and this wiped out their profits."

Maintenance problems are another source of bad relations between landlords and tenants. Some tenants complain that landlords do not respond quickly enough when maintenance work is needed.

Jim DeBernardi, a Laurel Glen tenant, said "I've seen holes in walls, kitchen doors falling off, and holes in the roof. This place is three years old and it's deteriorating."

Other Laurel Glen tenants complained that the bus service was unreliable and that inadequate snow removal from sidewalks and the access route to Route 322 caused unsafe, dangerous conditions.

Ron Friedberg, a former Parkway Plaza tenant, said a sewage pipe overflowed in his apartment and flooded it. The pipe was exposed by a hole in the floor.

"The place stunk and we were getting fleas, but it took a while before they would even shampoo the rug," he said.

Maintenance problems can be aggravated by tenants. Sometimes tenants moving out do not clean their apartments, leaving dirt for new tenants to inherit. And more maintenance problems for landlords to inherit.

"Maintenance is a continuous problem," Kelly said. "People think we don't care, but we try to do everything we can."

Kelly said cleaning an apartment causes problems because it sometimes cannot be done all at once. However, he said, the apartment at Parkway Plaza will not be flooded again because the pipe was moved to an outside location.

At the time Friedberg's apartment was flooded, the night manager lived in Bellefonte. Kelly said he has since been moved to a closer location so he would be more accessible to tenants.

Laurel Glen changed hands a few months ago when the Equity Finance Company took over its ownership from



The Landlord-Tenant Duet

former owner Bert Rudy. According to rental agent Lois Nelson, the new management is trying to improve the quality of maintenance.

Presently Laurel Glen employs four maintenance men for its 511 occupied units. Nelson said they plan to hire more before summer.

She said bus drivers presently shovel the walkways between runs to campus, but "there's only so much you can do."

Alice Clark, manager of S.C. Sun Corporation, said their tenants can do their own maintenance and deduct it from their rent. "If a complaint is too bad, Dr. Sun will go personally to check it out," she said. "But it's hard keeping up with everything."

Vandalism compounds maintenance problems and also contributes to higher rents. According to Kelly, last year's damages to halls, stairways, and other "common areas" in the Woskob apartments totaled over \$100,000.

Replacements for the damaged equipment are hard to obtain, he said. Last year, when someone tore the controls out of the elevator at Park Hill, the management posted a sign asking the person to return them. Kelly said it would have taken four months to get the

new parts.

A year ago, Alpha Fire Chief Ron Ross said students in apartments endanger the lives of fellow students because they disregard good safety rules and create hazardous conditions by damaging equipment.

Tenants are also concerned about this problem. Sherrie Spangler, a Penn Towers resident, complained that elevators were usually broken again soon after they were fixed.

"A lot of tenants have a lot of growing up to do," said Laurel Glen tenant Frank Flynn. "They break things, then expect the management to fix it."

Sometimes a tenant's problems begin even before he moves into an apartment because the lease is misunderstood. According to Yates Mast, Penn State's legal adviser for students, the standard lease used by most apartments is four pages of fine print and legal jargon.

Consequently, Mast said, it is misunderstood by many tenants and even unread by others.

A few landlords have tried to simplify the lease. According to Harold Zipser, co-owner of Schlow Enterprises Apartments, "If the lease is understood, many of the problems evaporate."

Zipser said Schlow Enterprises gives tenants a "rules and regulations" sheet that explains all terms of the contract. "I make sure tenants understand everything word for word," he said.

Kelly said he is in the process of changing the lease used by the Woskob apartments. "I've rewritten the whole thing," he said. "And it's very specific. It sets up just what is expected of the tenant."

Several apartments have converted to a 12-month lease, drawing opposition from student tenants who go home during the summer months.

Apartment owners said the reason for the change is because apartment costs are fixed and must be paid year-round, regardless of whether tenants are living in the apartments. So landlords usually lost money during the summer when there was little income from tenants.

Kelly said the Woskob apartments offer both nine-month and 12-month contracts. However, the rent under the nine-month plan is 15 per cent higher than that of the 12-month plan.

While leases cause misunderstandings before tenants move in, security deposits cause problems when they move out.

Most landlords charge fines for apartments left damaged or dirty. These are deducted from the tenant's security deposit, which is paid before the tenant moves into the apartment and is usually equivalent to one month's rent.

According to Mast, problems with security deposits occur because it is difficult to distinguish "natural wear and tear" from deliberate or careless damages left by tenants. "In matters of cleanliness and damages, landlords run up a huge bill," he said.

Consequently, tenants often suspect that landlords are taking too much out of their security deposits.

Zipser said an outside firm is contracted to clean a dirty apartment and a receipt is sent to the tenant along with the remainder of his security deposit.

"We used to use our own personnel, but tenants would accuse us of taking too much out of their security deposits," he said.

"Eighty per cent of our tenants get all their security deposits back," Kelly said. Most deductions are less than 10 per cent of the total amount, he added.

Problems and misunderstandings between landlords and tenants will probably always exist in State College. One reason for this is student transiency. Students live in apartments for less than three years and usually see their landlords only when paying rent or complaining.

Transient students are apathetic," said Jim DeBernardi. "If you're a no nazi, you don't care about anything."

Most college kids have not been taught to complain," Sweitzer said. "They just get mad at the landlords and don't know what to do."

Communication problems are usually worse in large apartments. "In large buildings there is a loss of identity and people don't feel responsible," Kelly said. On the other hand, Zipser, who supervises a smaller number of apartments, said he has a "tremendous relationship" with his tenants.

Two student organizations have emerged as spokesmen for the tenants. One, the State College Tenants' Union, relies on strength in numbers to deal with landlords.

According to Union organizer Cliff Wiggins, the strength of the union must be in the local branches at each apartment. However, he said, interest in the union has waned since its beginnings last fall.

Yates Mast said the tenants' union needs a majority of tenants to be successful. "If students worked together, they could elect seven councilmen and write their own ordinances," he said.

Another group, the Organization of Town Independent Students, acts as a mediator between tenants and landlords. According to OTIS member Bob M. Jews, the organization has succeeded in clearing up the majority of tenants' complaints.

OTIS has tried to open communication lines," Sweitzer said. "One of the problems is: I'm really starting to communicate and I'm leaving."

Kelly and Sweitzer, both former OTIS presidents, say they now understand the landlord's situation. Sweitzer estimates that 75 per cent of the apartments are decent places to live.

If there are problems, landlords want to help," he said. "Landlords want a fair shake, too."

Landlords have indicated a willingness to communicate. Kelly said he has tried "to let tenants know we care" by calling them back to make sure repairs have been made and by sending out letters and memos.

"The landlord-tenant problem is an ongoing one," observed Zipser, "and anti-landlord propaganda continues."

"But if you look into this town," he continued, "most of its people have gone to school here and have come back to settle. If it weren't for the University, this town wouldn't be here. People don't want to kill the goose that lays the golden egg."



JIM CEFALO, pride of the Lions.

Football fame and solitude play similar roles in Cefalo's life

By RICK STARR
Collegian Sports Writer

Pittston, Pa., is a town of 8,000 citizens where 20,000 people once showed up to watch the local high school football game, the kind of town where everybody knows everybody.

Penn State freshman football player Jimmy Cefalo grew up in Pittston, in an all-Italian household on an all-Italian street, and to this day his parents don't completely understand exactly what it is their son does so well.

"My parents don't understand football at all," Cefalo said. "It was kind of odd when I was recruited. I don't think they completely understood who the people were that were coming to visit. My father knows a lot more now, but my mother is still lost."

The quilts on Cefalo's and his roommates beds were made by Cefalo's grandmother, who has been married to Cefalo's grandfather for 64 years.

"They don't understand football either," Cefalo said. Despite the fact that nobody understood him, Cefalo was a statistical nightmare on the football field for Pittston Area High.

According to Cefalo, he wasn't used very much during his sophomore year—"only" 100 carries for about 1000 yards. But the next two seasons he made more than 500 carries.

"The town kind of adopted me..." Cefalo said. "There were certain embarrassing situations. When I go home now I take my mother out to dinner. Sometimes someone will come over

to the table and try to pick up the check."

But the big contest didn't start till the gun signaled the end of Cefalo's last high school football game. After almost every major college football power or hopeful in the country made its recruiting pitch, Cefalo took Penn State's scholarship.

In April of Cefalo's senior year, sports writer Neil Andur asked him to do a story for the New York Times detailing his recruiting adventures. Cefalo, a communications major, agreed to the story, and agreed to write a story for the Times after each season until he graduates from Penn State.

"I agreed to write one every year," Cefalo said. "But I'm kind of nervous about what I say because I'm not a very developed writer. And no matter what you write, people take things differently."

To Cefalo, Penn State presented new situations. A new life style. New people and friends. Academic challenges. And Penn State women...

"I haven't dated many girls up here," Cefalo said. "I've dated one fairly steadily. It's a different situation with girls at Penn State. Nobody's telling you to do this or that, telling you what time to come home. The girls here tend to be more mature."

"Maybe it's because of the football program that I've met so many people and made so many good friends," he said. "People are the heart of the University...I think you can come to Penn State and get lost—in a good sense. You can just be a student."



Photo by Eric Falick

CEFALO. AS A freshman wingback and flanker, ran for 344 yards, caught six passes for 144 yards and ran nine kick-off returns for 159 yards during the 1974 regular season.