

# Elm trees undergo pest management

By Michael Hricik  
FOR THE COLLEGIAN

The Penn State Office of Physical Plant (OPP) finished spraying insecticide on elm trees lining the Pattee Mall last week, and officials said students need not worry about the chemicals being used.

Efforts began Tuesday evening with crews spraying from the ground as a part of a two-part procedure, OPP spokesman Paul Ruskin said.

"We used ground application for the bottom half and helicopter application for the top half," Ruskin said.

The spraying is part of an effort to rid the campus's elms of diseases like Dutch Elm Disease and Elm yellows.

Penn State boasts one of the largest elm tree collections in the country.

Elm yellows has affected more than 15 percent of the university's over 200 elms.

Preventing the disease has become a priority for OPP because no known cure exists.

The insecticide used is called Astro, commonly referred to as permethrin, a safe and common spray, said Ed Rajotte, professor of entomology and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) coordinator.

Chris Tutolo, public relations officer for Penn State Eco-Action, said the elms are a fundamental part of the campus scenery.

"They're dwindling. It's unfortunate," Tutolo (sophomore-journalism) said. "They're an integral part of Penn State."

Its major component is the same chemical used to treat children for head lice, Ruskin said.

People walking along the mall were well warned about the spraying, despite the chemical's relative harmlessness, Ruskin said.

Signs were posted beforehand warning pedestrians of the spraying. Crew members were also present to give notice to bystanders, Rajotte said.

Rajotte said permethrin is safe because it has low oral, dermal and inhalation toxicity.

"Once the chemical has dried, it becomes much less dangerous to non-target organisms," Rajotte said.

Despite the protective clothing worn by ground crew members during the spraying, Ruskin said students should not be alarmed.

"The handlers were in close contact with the materials," Ruskin said. "[OPP] likes to keep them safe even though Astro is not hazardous."

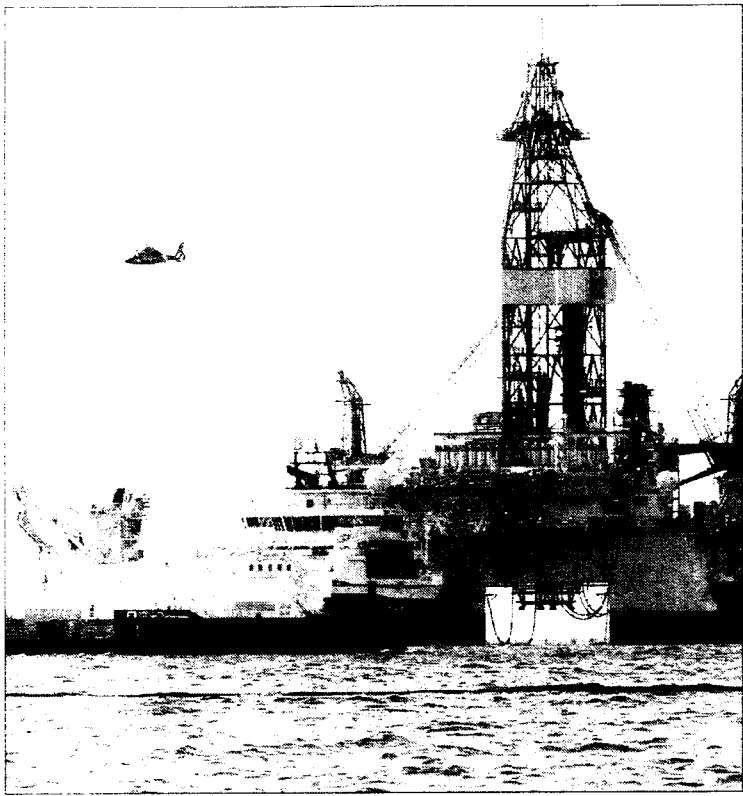
Ruskin said OPP defines Integrated Pest Management as "the coordinated use of pest and environmental information to implement pest control methods that are economically, environmentally, and socially sound."

Pending further exploration, OPP does not plan to spray again during the summer semester unless disease-carrying insects begin to pose a problem, Ruskin said.



Steph Witt/Collegian

The elm trees along Pattee Mall recently underwent pesticide spraying.



Associated Press

A vessel can be seen helping with the oil cleanup off the Gulf of Mexico.

## Cap retaining oil leak

By Long and Harry R. Weber  
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITERS

NEW ORLEANS — The custom-built cap that finally cut off the oil flowing from BP's broken well held steady Sunday, and the company hopes to leave it that way until crews can permanently kill the leak.

That differs from the plan the federal government laid out a day earlier, in which millions more gallons of oil could be released before the cap is connected to tankers at the surface and oil is sent to be collected through a mile of pipes.

Federal officials wary of making the well unstable have said that plan would relieve pressure on the cap and may be the safer option, but it would mean three days of oil flowing into the Gulf before the collection begins.

Both sides downplayed the apparent contradiction in plans.

Retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, who will make the final decision, said the containment plan he described Saturday hadn't changed, and that he and BP executives were on the same page.

"No one associated with this whole activity ... wants to see any more oil flow into the Gulf of Mexico," said Doug Suttles, BP PLC's chief operating officer. "Right now we don't have a target to return the well to flow."

Allen said more work is needed to better understand why pressure readings from the well cap are lower than expected.

There could be two reasons, he said: either there's less oil in the reservoir because so much has flowed out, or oil is leaking out underground.

"While we are pleased that no oil is currently being released into the Gulf of Mexico and want to take all appropriate action to keep it that way, it is important that all decisions are driven by the science," Allen said.

Both Allen and BP have said they don't know how long the trial run will continue. It was set to end

Sunday afternoon, but the deadline — an extension from the original Saturday cutoff — came and went with no word on what's next.

After little activity Sunday, robots near the well cap came to life around the time of the cutoff. It wasn't clear what they were doing, but bubbles started swirling around as their robotic arms poked at the mechanical cap.

Work continued on the permanent fix: two relief wells, one being drilled as a backup. The company said work on the first one was far enough along that officials expect to reach the broken well's casing, or pipes, deep underground by late this month.

Then the job of jamming the busted well with mud and cement could take "a number of days through a few weeks."

Some boat captains were surprised and angry to learn that their work helping with the cleanup will mean less money they're eligible to claim from the \$20 billion compensation fund set up by BP.

The fund's administrator, Kenneth Feinberg, told The Associated Press on Sunday that if BP pays fishermen wages to help skim oil and perform other cleanup work, those wages will be subtracted from the amount they get from the fund.

Longtime charter boat captain Mike Salley said he didn't realize BP planned to deduct those earnings, and he doubted many other captains knew, either.

"I'll keep running my boat," he said Sunday on a dock in Orange Beach, Ala., before heading back into the Gulf to resupply other boats with boom to corral the oil. "What else can I do?"

It will take months, or possibly years for the Gulf to recover. But there were signs that people were trying to get life — or at least a small part of it — back to normal.

The public beach at Gulf Shores, Ala., had its busiest day in weeks on Saturday despite oil-stained sand and a dark line of tar balls left by high tide.

## Café serves as place of interaction

By Paul Osolnick  
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

On most mornings, Joel Solkoff wakes up at his Addison Court apartment, climbs into his automatic wheelchair — which he has used for 15 years — and takes a 10-minute trip to Webster's Bookstore Cafe for breakfast.

Solkoff, a patron and supporter of the bookstore — which will lose its 128 S. Allen St. location at the end of July — is partially disabled due to a spinal injury caused by cancer radiation he received throughout his body in 1976 and 1989 for Hodgkin's disease.

But as the bookstore is preparing to close the doors, Solkoff is preparing to do what he can for his bookstore.

"[Webster's] is really important for a lot of people here in [Addison Court]," Solkoff said. "To resist the temptation to stay in their apartment and try and get out at least once a day," he said.

The 120 E. Beaver Ave. elderly complex caters to the housing. Tonight, Solkoff, 62, will present a resolution to the State College Borough Council.

The resolution states the borough recognizes the importance of Webster's in the community and the services and social environment the bookstore has provided to patrons of all ages, Solkoff said.

Solkoff said the bookstore provides a way for older and disabled State College residents to interact with younger people, whether it's children, teenagers, college students or middle-aged adults.

"My primary concern is about the result — the closing of Webster's is a serious blow to those of us that are disabled and are elderly that live in downtown State College," Solkoff said. "The elderly and the disabled have special needs and those needs include having a place downtown where we can go to and mix with people in other generations."

Solkoff said the proximity of Webster's provides an accessible location for those who cannot travel far, but who still like to interact in the community.



Solkoff

"There is no place like [Webster's] in the community," Solkoff said. "It's really sad if that's not going to happen anymore."

Carol Ames, another resident of Addison Court, said Webster's catering provides the means to have the members of the retirement community gather together.

"I just think it's a very good place to have for thinking people to have and converse and maybe eat something," Ames said.

Solkoff said the bookstore's level of interaction between the elderly and other groups will be difficult to replace if lost.

"On a regular basis, there is no co-mingling of the generations," Solkoff said.

"For the most part we are left to ourselves."

Solkoff said he has talked with borough council member Peter Morris and said he expects him to support the resolution that Solkoff will propose.

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## Law proposal drawing criticism

By Associated Press Writers

LANCASTER — A state lawmaker's proposal for Pennsylvania's counties to absorb municipal governments and be made responsible for local services is drawing fire from local government officials.

State Rep. Thomas Caltagirone, D-Berks, sponsored legislation earlier this year under which Pennsylvania's 67 counties would assume all responsibility for local services, including road repairs, police and fire services, and zoning.

The proposed constitutional amendment would eliminate townships, boroughs and cities.

Caltagirone said he does not expect such a bill to pass but wanted to start a serious discussion about the cost inefficiency of the current fragmented system

of local government that includes some 2,566 municipalities.

"Take a place like Lancaster County, with 60 units of local government," Caltagirone said. "How many local government employees are there, and why shouldn't they all be under one health care plan? And think about bulk purchasing — wouldn't that save money?"

Pennsylvania's atomized system of local government also makes the state less business-friendly, he said, pointing to southern and western states organized at the county level that are growing and attracting business.

A proliferation of local governments, he said, "adds a layer of bureaucracy, and a layer of cost."

Dozens of Pennsylvania townships, however, have passed resolutions "opposing forced local



Courtesy of www.pahouse.com/caltagirone

Caltagirone works during session.

government mergers and consolidations."

Local officials say municipal mergers are fine when they happen voluntarily, but the measure would put the county in charge of local government matters at a time when government closest to home governs best.

## Report reveals numerous medical errors

By Associated Press Writers

HARRISBURG — A Pennsylvania state agency has released a report examining what it calls "disruptive behavior" by health care workers can pose a danger to patients.

The Pennsylvania Patient Safety Authority, which studies medical errors and "near-misses" at Pennsylvania health care facilities, said it found 177 incidents of disruptive behavior by health care workers during a 31-month period ending last October.

The incidents cited, which mostly involve doctors, include a surgeon storming out of the operating room, leaving others to finish the job, or dropping instruments on the floor and using the

items on a patient, ignoring an offer of replacements.

No names or places are revealed.

"I think the problem is real. I think any hospital or health system that says they don't have a problem with disruptive physicians is probably not stating the truth," said Dr. Nirmal Joshi, vice president of education and research at PinnacleHealth System.

Many of the incidents stemmed from conflicts between doctors and nurses, while some having the physician often ignoring a concern raised by a nurse or was uncooperative when asked to clarify a written order, the report said.

"I think this type of human interaction happens in all work-

places," said Mike Doering, the executive director of the authority. "Unfortunately, when it happens in a hospital environment, you have a patient who can suffer because of it."

The authority said such incidents may result from a hospital hierarchy that allows high-ranking doctors and staff members to get away with disruptive and intimidating behavior, which can leave other employees feeling ignored or afraid to point out errors or raise concerns.

"There is a history of tolerance and indifference to intimidating and disruptive behaviors in health care, and organization leaders may fail to address health care clinicians' disruptive behaviors for many reasons," the report said.

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