

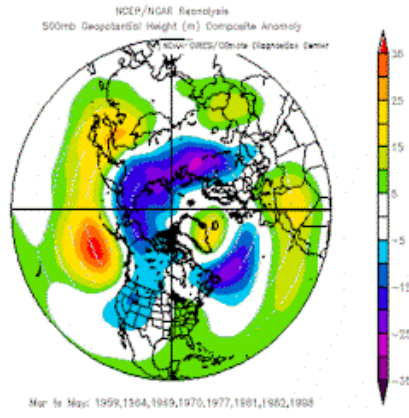
# The Pennsylvania Observer





**PENNSTATE**

A Service to the Commonwealth  
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## FEATURED CLIMATE HIGHLIGHT 1

By: Joshua Markel

Year (October)	Avg Temp.	25 above Ranking 59	Year (February)	Avg. Temp	Ranking
189710	50.4°F	75	189802	25.9°F	84
189810	50.8°F	79	189902	19.5°F	20
190310	49.9°F	70	190402	16.3°F	5
191510	51.0°F	84	191602	20.0°F	24
191610	49.7°F	65	191702	18.9°F	15
192110	49.6°F	63	192202	25.1°F	72
192210	50.2°F	72	192302	17.1°F	9

192410	49.6°F	63	192502	30.0°F	114
192810	50.9°F	82	192902	22.9°F	49
193510	49.7°F	65	193602	16.9°F	8
193610	49.8°F	68	193702	27.3°F	100
193910	49.6°F	63	194002	23.4°F	55
195610	50.7°F	78	195702	28.5°F	107
195910	50.9°F	82	196002	28.0°F	104
196710	49.4°F	57	196802	19.3°F	18
197310	50.9°F	82	197402	22.5°F	44
198510	50.2°F	72	198602	23.1°F	51
198910	49.8°F	68	199002	28.3°F	105
199110	50.5°F	77	199202	25.9°F	84
199810	49.9°F	70	199902	28.4°F	106
200010	49.4°F	60	200102	26.2°F	88
200110	50.4°F	75	200202	29.9°F	113
200510	50.5°F	77	200602	26.4°F	90
201010	49.8°F	68	201102	24.1°F	66
201110	50.3°F	73	201202	30.4°F	115

Above are warm Octobers for period of record (the 25 years just above the mean ranking of 59), table on the left. The table on the right is the following February for each October; lower numbers indicated colder average temperatures. The temperatures are for the Northeast region.

1-30 much below	35-59 bit below	60-88 bit above	89-118 much above
7	4	5	9

The table above illustrates the number of occurrences of average February temperatures after warm Octobers corresponding to their ranking among the period of record.

Year (November)	Avg Temp.	25 below Ranking 59	Year (February)	Avg. Temp	Ranking
189711	37.0°F	38	189802	25.9°F	84
189811	37.0°F	38	189902	19.5°F	20
189911	37.4°F	42	190002	22.6°F	46
190811	37.6°F	46	190902	27.5°F	102
191911	37.3°F	41	192002	20.4°F	26
192311	37.9°F	50	192402	19.3°F	18
192411	37.8°F	49	192502	30.0°F	114
192611	37.6°F	46	192702	27.3°F	100
192911	37.9°F	50	193002	27.3°F	100
193711	37.9°F	50	193802	26.9°F	95
194011	37.4°F	42	194102	22.9°F	49
194211	38.2°F	57	194302	24.6°F	69
195911	37.7°F	48	196002	28.0°F	104
196511	36.9°F	34	196602	24.1°F	66
196811	37.4°F	42	196902	24.6°F	69
197811	38.2°F	57	197902	14.6°F	2
198111	38.3°F	59	198202	23.5°F	59
198411	38.1°F	54	198502	25.3°F	74
198911	36.9°F	34	199002	28.3°F	105
199211	37.5°F	45	199302	17.7°F	13
199311	38.1°F	54	199402	19.8°F	23
200011	38.0°F	53	200102	26.2°F	88

200211	36.9°F	34	200302	20.2°F	25
200711	37.2°F	40	200802	25.4°F	76
200811	38.1°F	54	200902	26.2°F	88

Above in the table to the left, is a list of cold Novembers (25 years just below the mean ranking of 59). The table to the right is the February to follow the cold Novembers, the lower the number the colder the temperatures. The region is the Northeast.

1-30 much below	35-59 bit below	60-88 bit above	89-118 much above
7	3	8	7

The table above illustrates the number of occurrences of average February temperatures after cold Novembers corresponding to their ranking among the period of record.

## **FEATURED CLIMATE HIGHLIGHT 2**

This article is courtesy of the Cooperative Program Manager, Paul Head, at the State College Office of the National Weather Service. He shares his insights into winter driving in the Northeast...

In 1976 I got out of the Army and started college at Lyndon State College in Lyndonville, VT. During the first winter there, I totaled a Ford Pinto under the 213 bridge, on our way to my in-laws for Christmas. We needed a car quickly, so we bought a 1974 Malibu Classic with posi-traction in the rear end. It was a high powered car with a heavy front end. Tire companies were selling a new breed of tire, called the "All Season Radial". I bought four and we drove home to Vermont.

The first winter we had no problem. The roads were constantly covered with snow that winter. The tires did well. My wife and I had both been brought up in New England and were taught to drive by fathers, who brought us to parking lots, where we were taught how to control skids. There was also no freezing rain that winter, just snow.

We took the manufacturer at his word and we drove on those tires through our other two seasons, mud and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. By November, when winter returned, we had 11 months of driving on those "All Season Radial Tires". The winter of 77-78 was much different than the previous one. To be sure, there was still plenty of snow. This new winter season introduced something that is rather unusual in Vermont; freezing rain.

The same fear that grips Pennsylvanians when the S word is mentioned, strikes the same fear into the heart of Vermonters, when freezing rain is mentioned. I was not seasoned enough yet to appreciate what freezing rain can do in the heart of snow country, when the temperature has been near zero Fahrenheit for several days. So, I got my physics book, my calculator, and my notebook and I drove

up to the college to study. It wasn't raining when I made the short drive up the hill to the school, but it was when I came out. The temperature was 18 degrees, up from 3 above that morning.

Instead of taking the main road, I went out the back gate and started down the back hill. Any Lyndon Alumni know this road. On early fall days there is a beautiful view of the valley, filled with colorful leaves. The particular day in question, not so much. When I reached the crest of the hill, I decided I would sand the steep hill in front of me. I put the car in park. Shut the car off. Took the keys and opened the trunk. The driver side door I left open. In 1977, cars did not have latches to open the trunk. You had to physically get out of the car with keys and open the trunk with a key. Every Vermonter worth his salt carries a sand bag in the trunk. When I lifted my sand bag out of the trunk, the car started down the hill.

I am standing at the top of the hill and my car is leaving without me. Driverless auto pilot cars were still 36 years away. The heavy front end was a major problem, and so were the "All Season Radial Tires". I started running down the hill trying to catch the car, slipping and falling twice, before realizing if I ran in the snowbank I'd have more traction. To this day, I am still a fast runner. (My grandkids are amazed.) But I could not catch that car. The 3000 pound sled stayed on the road all the way to the five way intersection at the bottom. There it did a 360 and a 180 and ended up facing me. My physics book and notebook I found a hundred feet into the woods. My calculator is space junk. These were launched by the centrifugal force and the opportunity of an open door.

When I showed up at the bottom of the hill dragging my sand bag, a Vermonter in bibbed overalls and a wad of chewing tobacco between his cheek and gum, walked up to me, spit a brown glob into the salted slush, and said, "Studded snow tires, son. And this won't happen again." Without waiting for my defense of these new-fangled "All Season Radial Tires" he got into his truck and drove slowly away. His tires made that now familiar clacking sound on the slush filmed road surface.

I can tell you that despite the vastly greater amount of snow that falls in northern New England than across most of Pennsylvania, it is much more difficult to drive in Pennsylvania during the winter than in northern New England. The reason for this is we get a lot more mixed precipitation events than they do up north. For this reason, studded snow tires are needed more here than they are in snow country.

So, when a person asks me if they should go to somewhere from anywhere during a winter storm I ask this question. Do you have studded snow tires? Almost universally I hear the same response, "No". I shouldn't need to say anymore, but they defend their need to be on the road. I also ask, can this trip be made later? The other question: Is my vehicle equipped for winter driving? If you do not have studded snow tires, the answer is no.