

# The Roomies

Who takes responsibility for what in the communal lifestyle



By R. Carl Campbell III

Late in the semester, situations begin to get tough if they haven't already. Stress causes alot of tension between people, especially roommates

I came home from the weekend to what I thought was the house I lived in. But when I walked in the front door, things were a little chaotic. The living room looked like Jimmy Z's after quarter drafts and the dishes piled in the sink looked like an American Gladiator event. The worse part of it all was that I learned that I was rooming with a six-foot fruit

fly named Grunt. I wanted to handle the situation rationally and not freak out and punch the walls. Besides, I wasn't sure if we had walls anymore. I simply called out calmly, "Is anyone home?" My voice echoed itself for several minutes.

From the basement, my neatest roommate, a eight week old, black lab-huskie, came to greet me. He wagged his tail and I scratched him behind the ear. He looked tired and maybe a little hung over. "What happened here?" I asked, motioning to the pillars of garbage and non-biodegradable containers containing non-biodegradable food.

Goliath (that's the dog's name) just shrugged. "I can't believe these cats you live with," he said, scratching himself. "It was a tough weekend daddy-o." He bummed a smoke off me and returned to the basement

but not before urinating on a pile of crumpled newspapers he uses as bathroom reading. He turned, winked and disappeared down the stairs.

My main concern was who was going to clean this mess. My rock climbing gear and gas mask were in my room and there was no way I was going there without defending myself against beasts of unknown origins. I thought them first to be Dan's (that's the guy who lives across the hall from me) girlfriends, but they were too intelligent and actually wore clothing.

This scenario simply brought out the problem of who is responsible for what. I could now better understand the demise of the Communist Empire. We lived together, up until this point, as a communal unit. We shared food, cars and beer. But I thought that should all change when I saw that they were using my compact discs for games of ultimate frisbee.

Someone had to take responsibility for this and had to clean it up. I sure was not touching a thing, but until things got clean, I had to live in this refuse plant.

It was then that I came up with the idea of dividing house duties into an individual cleaning a different section of the house during different times, in shifts. One day, Dan would do the dishes, Steve could clean the living room, Brad could clean the bathroom, and I could scrub the refrigerator, clean the dining room and make dinner.

However, this would do no good until everyone was here.

It's pretty self-explanatory that nothing gets accomplished unless someone take the initiative. Especially, when it comes to cleaning house. I developed the philosophy that they would come home and see me cleaning a mess that I didn't make, feel bad and start cleaning themselves.

My first task was the dishes. I didn't know where to start. I didn't have a ladder to get to the top of the pile, so I started from the middle. Now in doing the dishes, my fraternity brother, Nate Goodrich has an excellent method, throwing them out. However, as efficient as this may seem, this proves costly and clogs land fills. I took the dishes outside and let the wildlife eat the scraps before I hosed them off.

The next task consisted of cleaning the living room. Luckily, we have an industrial strength shop vac, so it wasn't too much of a problem. Except...Did you ever run over doggy-doo with a vacuum cleaner? Let's leave it at that.

So, my house started looking like a home again, not smelling like one, but looking like one. Everything was clean except for that large smear in the rug, but it was staying put until Dan got home, it's his dog.

In time, everyone came home and I started ranting and raving about how I am never home and every time I am I end up cleaning and



they can't take responsibility for themselves and I am not their mother and I will never touch anything ever again and what do they have to say for themselves.

They looked at each other like I had the plague. Brad rubbed his temple and said that they, too, had been away all weekend.

So I asked, "Who was?" Just then, Grunt came walk-ing down the steps in my boxer shorts. Luckily, murder charges for fruit flies don't stick.

## What you should know about your roommate

A pamphlet distributed by Lifehouse lists several situations that should be discussed with your roommate. Little things can cause big arguments in time, it's better to know than not know and then find out later that you're living with Hannibal Lecter.

1. **Members of the opposite sex visiting the room:** When? How long? How often? How late?
2. **Room cleanliness:** How often to be cleaned? Who is responsible for cleaning various areas of the room?
3. **Studying in the room:** Can the TV/stereo be on? When do you usually study? How late/early do you study? Every night? Do you have a study lamp? Does noise bother you?
4. **Going to bed:** Are you a night or morning person? Light or heavy sleeper? How late do you sleep? When do you like to go to bed? Can you sleep with a light on?
5. **Friends (same sex) visiting:** Do you anticipate having friends in the room often? How do you feel about guests? How will you communicate when you don't want anyone in the room but roommates?
6. **Borrowing/lending possessions:** Do you like borrowing things? Do you mind letting others use your possessions? Please discuss items like food, clothes, TV, computer, stereo, etc
7. **Telephone use:** How much time do you spend on the telephone?
8. **Roommate relationship:** Remember you do not have to be best friends, but you do need to respect each other. Think about: How much time do you want to spend together? Are you already "best friends?" Do you spend time with other friends who do not live with you?
9. **Problems:** How can you approach your roommate? How will you handle situations that arise?

Remember: There are people here to help with any conflicts: R.A., Coordinators, or the Counseling and Advising Office. Never hesitate to ask.

Special thanks to: Todd Firth

Don't be a loser. Be safe. Don't drive drunk.

Happy Thanksgiving!

--The Collegian Staff

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