

Large freshman classes force colleges to crowd dorm rooms

by Scott Williams
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Three's company in many college dormitories this year.

A housing shortage at some Milwaukee-area colleges has forced students to accept more roommates than usual, breaking from tradition and introducing a new lifestyle arrangement on campus.

Ryan VanDeLoo, a freshman at Carroll College in Waukesha, Wis., is sharing his dorm room with two roommates this fall. What's more, all three are stocky college football players.

"It's pretty crowded," VanDeLoo said of the 12-foot-wide room typically assigned to just two students. "We're hoping that our parents stop bringing stuff."

Marquette University in Milwaukee has rented an entire hotel to manage its largest freshman class in 14 years.

While housing crunches are nothing new at colleges and universities, some officials say the problem seems to be worsening.

"We haven't had to do anything like this in a long time," Marquette spokesman Ben Tracy said.

Marquette has rented the entire 40-room Executive Inn to handle overflow temporarily until rooms open up in campus housing.

Wisconsin is not the only state where colleges are in a pinch.

Gary Schwarzmuller, executive director of the Ohio-based Association of College and University Housing Officers-International, said housing is scarce in several parts of the country.



KRT PHOTO BY WILLIAM MEYER/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

Ryan VanDeLoo, left, Mike Behl, top, and Joe Jarosz relax in their dorm room at Carroll College in Waukesha, Wisconsin

Not only are high school graduates flocking to colleges and universities, displaced workers and other non-traditional students are driving enrollment higher during these tough economic times - increasing the demand for housing even more.

"Some places are having enormous, explosive growth," Schwarzmuller said. Carroll College officials considered renting hotel rooms when they realized that the

Waukesha campus this fall would welcome 700 new students - a record high for the 156-year-old school.

But administrators decided that packing students into campus dorms was more in keeping with student expectations than loading them onto a bus and shipping them to a hotel.

"That's not the kind of experience that we feel is a positive one, especially for freshmen," said Dean Rein, Carroll's senior vice president.

This is not the first time Carroll has been forced into triple-occupancy, and officials hope real estate acquisitions around campus will allow them to convert other buildings into new dorms.

For now, however, most freshmen are in dorm rooms adapted for three people. Bunk beds have been installed, and a third loft-style bed leaves room underneath for dressers or desks. Students also are being urged to consider economies of scale, so their rooms are not cluttered with three TV sets, three computers or three mini-refrigerators.

In exchange for any inconvenience, Carroll is offering each triple-occupancy student a \$700 rebate on the usual \$2,400 annual housing bill.

One or two students opted to enroll elsewhere when told of the housing crunch, officials said, but most are taking it in stride.

VanDeLoo and his roommates - Mike Behl and Joe Jarosz - said the arrangement is working out well so far. The fact that all three play football means they keep the same hours and do not disturb one another with different wake-up times.

"It's pretty nice," Behl said. "We all have to be at the same place at the same time." Jarosz said he is finding no significant inconvenience. And he looks forward to the \$700 rebate.

"I basically got some free money," he said.

Names in the news

by Gayle Ronan Sims
Knight Ridder Newspapers

The covered wooden bridge made famous by the movie "The Bridges of Madison County" has been severely damaged in a fire, and authorities are investigating whether it was arson.

Only a charred shell of the 119-year-old Cedar Bridge remained after the Tuesday night fire in Winterset, Iowa. The decking collapsed into the creek below.

Madison County has just five covered bridges remaining, all on the National Register of Historic Places. Cedar Bridge was the last of them open to traffic, and thousands of people have visited it since Robert Waller's book, "The Bridges of Madison County," was published in 1992. The 1995 film based on that novel featured Cedar Bridge.

DAMON, AFFLECK HELP FRIEND

Matt Damon and Ben Affleck have landed bit parts in Massachusetts politics. The two actors are helping high school friend Marjorie Decker, a Democratic city councilor from Cambridge, with her campaign for state representative.

Damon has taped a phone message that urges voters to support her. Affleck is featured in Decker's campaign literature, talking about the Little League team they'd played on together.

Decker and Affleck, both 30, were classmates at Cambridge's Rindge and Latin School. Damon, 31, attended the school a year ahead of them.

JOURNALIST TO TROT ON STAGE

What's it like to walk the Miss America runway? Perform a talent routine? Wave to fans from the Boardwalk Hall stage? Only former contestants know for sure. But this year, a journalist will find out. Olivia Barker, a reporter for USA Today, will take part in two nights of preliminary competition leading up to the pageant in Atlantic City, N.J. Her talent: a dramatic monologue. She'll appear in the talent and eveningwear competition, introduced as a representative of the newspaper, but not in the swimsuit competition.

Barker, who is in her 20s, will be interviewed by judges, like the other 51 contestants, but will not appear onstage or compete for the title in the nationally televised Miss America Pageant, which airs Sept. 21 on ABC.

NO CLINTON TALK SHOW

Former President Bill Clinton said he had no plans to start a career as a TV talk-show host - at least not soon. Asked on CNN's "Larry King Live" program Tuesday if he wanted such a gig, Clinton said: "I don't think so." But he did not rule out such a career move.

FORD'S A LUCKY GUY

When actor Harrison Ford was a young man in Wisconsin, he flipped a coin to decide whether to try his luck in New York or Los Angeles. "It came up New York, so I made it two out of three," said Ford, when asked about his choice. "My luck has held since then."

Ford was in France at the Deauville film festival to accept an award for his roles as Han Solo in "Star Wars," "Indiana Jones" and the "Fugitive." His new film, "K-11: The Widowmaker," was screened before the crowd.

A few moments earlier, Ford had emerged from his limousine with actress Calista Flockhart, and the two signed autographs for fans who lined up along the red carpet outside the theater. Ford and Flockhart, 37, who starred in "Ally McBeal," walked into the theater hand in hand.

WHO IS PRINCE II'S MOM?

Michael Jackson's former wife, Debbie Rowe, insists she is not the mother of his latest child, Prince Michael II. Rowe told the New York Post she is going crazy with the press hanging outside her place in Franklin Canyon in Beverly Hills.

PAINTINGS VANISH

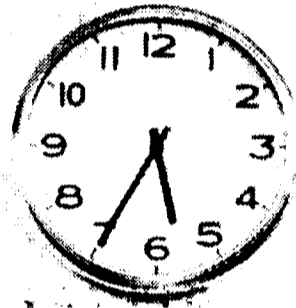
About \$700,000 worth of artwork, including paintings by Frida Kahlo, Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse, were apparently stolen from the home of a San Antonio doctor. Police said the 15 works were taken while Richard Garcia slept in an upstairs bedroom earlier this week.

Garcia, who said the paintings were not insured, is known in San Antonio as an arts patron who frequently gives parties at his home for artists and musical stars.

A BABY BACKSTREET

Get ready for the newest Backstreet Boy. The wife of singer Brian Littrell, actress Leighanne Wallace, is expecting a boy at the end of the year. The couple has been married for two years.

(Philadelphia Inquirer wire services contributed to this report.)



**IF TIME IS MONEY, HOW COME
I HAVE SO MUCH OF ONE
AND NOT THE OTHER?**



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