

As Dennis would say, "And I am outta here!"

by Mark Owens

I've let myself go these past couple of weeks. The laundry isn't done, the dishes are piled high in the sink and I've gotten a restraining order forbidding the bathroom from going anywhere without our permission.

But that's okay; in two weeks I'm moving out for good.

Since I graduate this May, I won't be returning to apartment 901 ever again. Instead, I'll be living in a place where the landlord doesn't recommend hanging posters or pictures with toothpaste.

Which brings me to the point of this column. By looking into the Slob Managerie (my apartment), I'll be able to illustrate how my plan for moving is better than one conceived by, say, some who has consumed the first two rows of drinks on that "Mixed Results" poster.

By following this amazing and revolutionary strategy, you

will be able to move out of your apartment or dorm room efficiently, easily and with minimal artillery support.

My plan is broken down into a simple room-by-room search and destroy format:

Living room: This will be the staging for all other operations; therefore, it is essential this area be secured first. Some sturdy boxes, latex gloves and an industrial-strength vacuum should be enough.

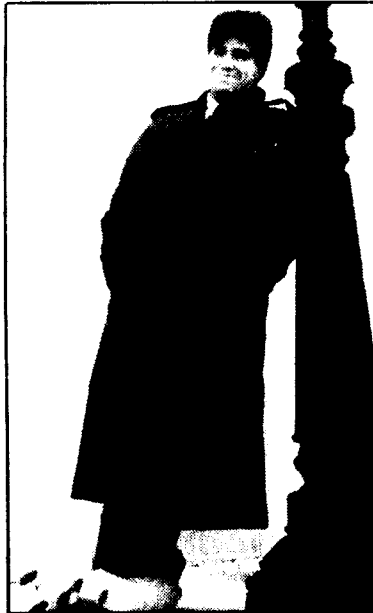
Kitchen: This room will be a little tougher; so get help. You may have to sacrifice some dishes and Tupperware containers for the cause, especially the ones that fight back when thrust into the sink.

As for the refrigerator, just weld it shut and run away. Last year we lost a roommate to a container of ham loaf that had been in the fridge since August. It wasn't pretty. To this day I get a little misty-eyed every time I pass the deli counter at Giant Eagle.

Bathroom: Remember

Aliens? That's our bathroom. 'Nuff said. I recommend sealing the door with that "Caution: Crime Scene" tape and letting it be.

Bedroom: Since I'll be moving into my next place the same way I moved into 901 -- dumping everything onto the floor -- I'm not going to pack



The Missing Pieces

neat. Throwing everything into 15 small boxes will work just fine. Another reminder: use toothpaste to fill in all those little holes in your walls caused by posters, nets, rejection letters, etc. If it's good enough for Housing, it's good enough for us.

It's almost 2:30 in the morning as I write this week's column. I'm sitting in front of a Macintosh hammering on its keyboard. There's a six-pack of Mountain Dew and a bag of pretzels sitting on my left, a stack of papers on my right and the latest Red Hot Chili Peppers disk playing on the stereo. In other words, business as usual.

Except tonight I'm a little sad as I peck at the keyboard. This is the last time I'll be writing Pieces, the last time I'll be stretching line tape, the last time to tell the security officer I'll be outta the office by 3 a.m., well... maybe 4 a.m.

This May I'll be graduating

and moving on to the next big adventure. Like many graduates, I'm pretty nervous about the whole deal: uncertain about which career path to take, which apartment to rent, which pair of underwear is clean. Sti-- hold on a second...

Sorry about that. It was the security officer, asking what time I'd be done. I told him three, maybe four. He just smiled and closed the door.

I'm going to miss Behrend. I've made many friends and memories here. Over the past four years the school and its people -- friends, students and professors -- have taught me a great deal about myself, letting me become more than the shy, quiet (really!) guy I used to be.

I'll always be grateful for the encouragement they gave when I made mistakes and their candor when I didn't want to admit I made them. Thanks for reading.

From the hip

Hey--Can you rewind that?

Check input meters. Turn on EQ. Cue leader tape. Clear counter. Press RECORD.

That's practically a daily ritual for me; one that has become almost as natural as brushing my teeth. It's a trait my roommates have silently endured all year, as they tiptoe across the room, fearful of the skips (and the glares they inspire) that heavy footfalls send through my touchy CD player.

I've been obsessed with music for some time now, but it wasn't always this bad. When I moved into Perry Hall four years ago, for example, my meager music collection consisted of only a handful of CDs and a Nike shoebox full of cassettes.

So never mind the fact that I've since bought two CDs for each classroom credit I've earned at Behrend, and please disregard the bank of cassettes that now lines the wall of my apartment bedroom. (Honest Mom, all that money went toward food and laundry -- I swear.)

The CDs, of course, draw people's attention first, but it's the tapes that really mean something to me. You see, most of them are home-made copies, and each brings back memories of good friends sitting in front of cheap speakers.

There's the Blues Traveler from an ex-girlfriend at State College, the Arlo Guthrie tape my roommate accidentally doused with hot potpourri two years ago, and the fine nature recording (that's right, a full hour of a recorded thunderstorm) that our sports editor tossed my way during one particularly rough study session.

There's also the Third Degree demo I snagged after last year's Battle of the Bands and the Phish tape my friend Chas ("Dude, you gotta' review this for the paper") nagged me about all year.

And, of course, there's still the John Lennon tape I was playing when I wrecked my Dad's car, the Black Crowes import I found in Chicago during Spring Break last year, and the Grateful Dead bootlegs (with original cover art, thanks to an old Perry alumnus) from our trips to Pittsburgh, Richfield, and Hamilton, Ontario.

The tapes themselves don't mean much; it's the story behind each one that counts. So, as I get ready to leave Behrend, taking with me a few new ideas, a few old friends, and a lot of new music, I have to worry. I have to pick up the slack in case my next roommate doesn't have the latest Scottish bagpipe hymn collection on disc.

After all, there's a lot of memories left out there, and this tape's just about through.



Robb Frederick, a graduating communication major, has been a member of The Collegian editorial staff for over two years. Don't even think about buying him blank tapes for graduation.

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