

FOCUS



Three girls, a guy, and a partially renovated apartment

Moving from 'rez' to a sitcom situation isn't easy

BY FLANNERY BROWN

It did not take me very long to decide that a year of residence life would suffice, and that one more year of "animal house" living just might destroy the ounce of sanity I maintain as a university student.

Don't get me wrong, life in 'rez' is a lot of fun, but there comes a time when one must remember the reason for attending a learning institution at all. I'm not quite sure if I can remember correctly, but the last time that I checked, it was not "to party." My parents are investing their hard-earned capital into my education so that I can eventually sport a cap and gown while wielding a diploma that reads (with a lot of luck) "magna cum x." Well, let's just forget about the Latin script, the bottom line is that I must study.

At least, that's how I explained it to my parents when I told them I needed a little financial backing so that I could move out of residence and get my own flat. Yes, flat, apartment, house, alternate living arrangement, call it what you will, but I definitely needed my own place so that I could escape my former sloth-like residence persona and actually study.

My parents actually agreed to the idea, and decided it would be a nice idea to move me into my new apartment in September. However, fourteen hours in the car

with my parents is not exactly what I would characterize as "nice."

September rolled around, my father loaded up the car with enough stuff to outfit a small nation, all the while cursing about the evils of capitalism. A man walking his dog stopped to watch my hippie-turned-yuppie father, sporting khaki pants and a Ralph Lauren shirt, frantically packing and repacking the car. My father pointed an accusing finger at my duffel bags, which were obstructing the rear-view mirror and proclaimed, "when I was in school, I packed everything I owned into my beetle and drove it across the country, and with plenty of room to spare!" The man just shrugged, "it's been a while."

It has certainly been a while since the simplistic college days of my parents, when yearly tuition was eight hundred dollars and all forms of entertainment resulted in long, philosophical discussions over coffee and herbal tea, or insightful critiques on Bergman films. One would think they would have remembered those days, instead of growing tight lipped and angry when my landlord announced that my four bedroom flat was still under construction. One of my roommates and I would be living off the immediate premises for the following couple of weeks. Not a big deal, right? Common, mom and dad, vive la vie boheme!

Well, a couple of weeks have now turned into a month,

and there are few signs of my landlord's architectural plans letting up any time soon. I still have to go outside and down a flight of stairs to use the phone, eat meals and in general, associate with my roommates.

This brings me to my discussion on landlords. We literally can't live with them, nor can we live without them. The landlord/tenant relationship is a fragile one, and probably shouldn't be trifled with. It's a relationship in which no matter how fouled it becomes, your parents cannot bail you out.

For example, it took some sweet talk and some explaining to appease my landlord who was rudely roused out of bed at midnight a couple of Friday nights ago when our neighbours rang him up to alert him of the party we were having. I swear, we weren't being loud!

Along with my new found landlord/tenant relationship, and my brand new commitment to study and academic acceleration, came a workload that was somewhat foreign to me. I'll call this my domestic chores. I knew I would have to cook and clean when I decided to move out of residence, and was repeatedly reminded of this by my mother, who hounded me all summer to learn how to cook. How hard could it really be? I quickly found out. It's harder than I thought.

Prior to actually having to cook, I always associated cooking with the epitome of what I aspire

to never become: a housewife. I told my parents and friends I would never be caught cooking — that job would be reserved for my future househusband. It didn't take me long to figure out that if I wanted to eat in the next say, ten years, I would have to learn how to cook. I'm glad to say that I think I've found my calling. I've discovered I actually love to cook, nor do I find that it runs contrary to my feminist outlook. Meals and cooking has become the bond between us roommates — three girls and a guy.

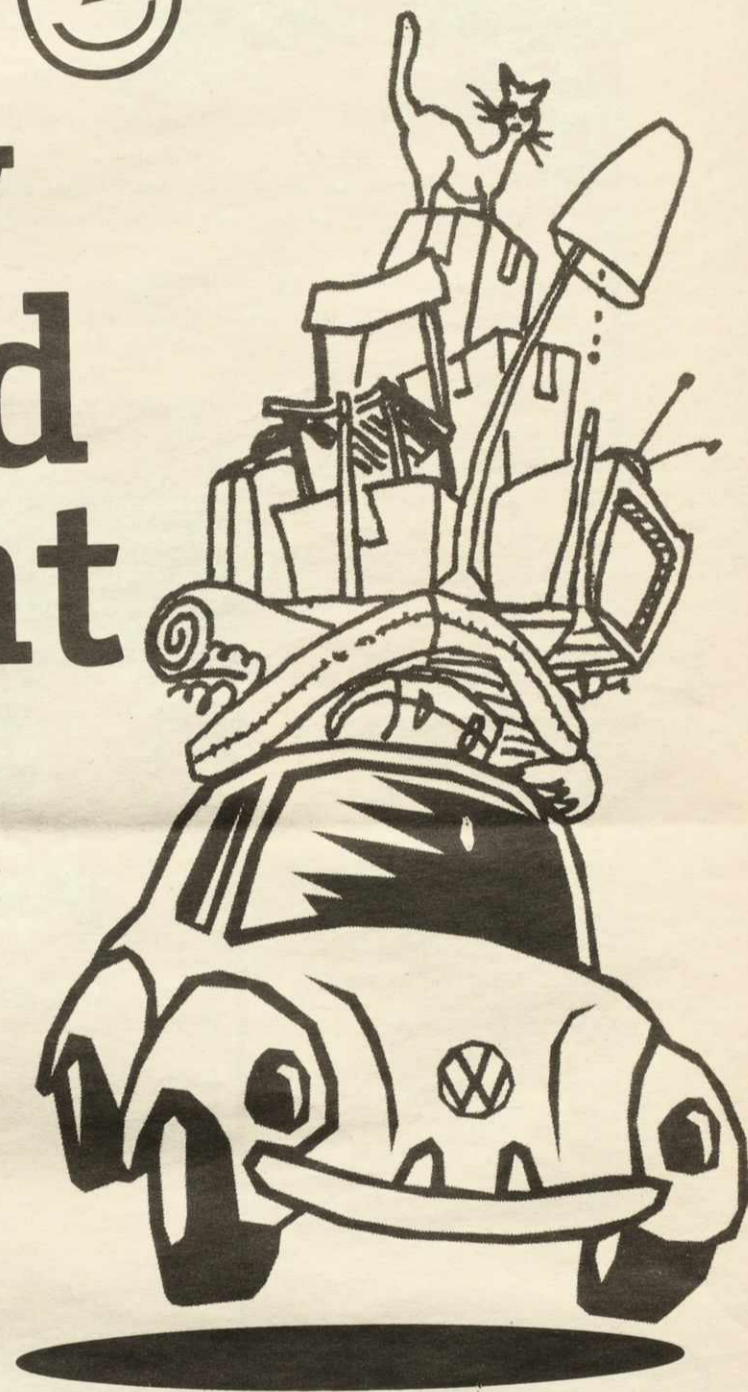
Responses differ between guys and girls when they hear about our living arrangement. The most common female response is, "poor guy, pretty soon, he'll be getting PMS."

The male response is quite typical, and of course is only

directed at my male roommate: "cool, are they all single?"

Anyway, it really isn't that different living with a guy, except that he helps to balance out all the oestrogen in the house. Who could ask for anything more?

I'm extremely happy living off campus, and that seems to be the general consensus among all of my friends that have moved out of residence. As for my friends that have decided to remain on campus this year, life is still great. But, the best thing about moving out is so simple it's almost trivial, like how to bake muffins, or how grocery shop within a budget and how to catch a mouse with just peanut butter and a card board box. Hint: this is impossible. Now if I can only remember why I attend this fine learning institution in the first place.



A little bit of friendly advice: don't whiz on the electric fence. Betcha didn't know we even had any electric fence here at Dal. Well, now you've got something to do this weekend. But don't whiz on it. Trust us on this.