

Dorm RAs find challenges and fun on the job

By KAREN KANGAS
Of the Emerald

For dormitory resident assistants (RAs), life is a mixed bag of responsibilities.

Some are serious: "Girls come to me for advice when they're pregnant or when they're curious about drugs," explains one RA.

Some are not so serious: (from a memo on an RAs door) "Is Bob Veale, the pitcher, a black or white dude? There's a \$2 bet riding on it."

Whatever the responsibilities are, most RAs seem to experience personal satisfaction from dealing with them. Sally Smith, complex director for Walton/Carson, (the RAs non-student supervisor) explains: "The staff works hard, sometimes harder than they expect to or want to, but in the end, the job seems to be a rewarding experience."

Part of that work involves facing challenges and frustrations. Keith Jansen, RA in Smith/Walton, says one of the biggest challenges of

being an RA is acting as an authority figure and dealing with the residents' testing of that authority.

He explains, "You have to have patience because you get tested, especially at the beginning of the year. People want to know how far they can push you."

Jansen says his residents have tested him by ripping notices off the bulletin board, exploding fire crackers in the middle of the night and dumping buckets of water on him from the third floor.

"Why do they do that? I guess they want to see a reaction; they want to see if I'll get mad," Jansen says. He confesses that occasionally he does get mad.

The alcohol policy, which forbids alcohol in the dorms, seems to be the hardest housing regulation to enforce.

"People come to the University to get an education, part of which is the social experience outside of the classroom," explains Ann Carpenter, RA in Robbins/Hamilton. "For many people, that social experience involves alcohol."

She says residents continually test the RA's willingness to enforce the alcohol policy.

She cites one example in which the residents of her dorm and her co-RA's dorm were informed the student manager, an administrative liaison between the RA and Complex director, had heard a keg of beer was planned for the weekend. To stifle the plan, the manager intended to keep close tabs on the group.

The residents got mad and decided to retaliate by carrying out their party, complete with beer cups and a keg — filled with apple cider.

Unfortunately for the party hosts, Carpenter discovered the joke before the student manager made his rounds.

Bill Chan, RA in Carson, says residents also test his authority.

"The upperclassmen are very extreme in nature," he explains. "Either they are very mature or they are die-hards. The die-hards use tricks to get away with what they can."

He says he deals with the die-hards by establishing a good relationship with them and by setting a standard.

Combining personal standards with Housing Office standards is not easy, according to Jansen. He claims it is impossible to run a dorm smoothly and follow all of the Housing Office's regulations.

"The RA has to be an in-between for the Housing Office and the residents," Jansen says. "If an RA actually followed all the



Drawing by Jim Payne

rules, this place would be in an upheaval; no one would want to live here."

Peggy Baldwin, complex director for Hamilton/Bean, says she recognizes the difficulty of an RA's job, but says she doesn't ask her RAs to enforce anything she wouldn't enforce.

"An RA's job is hard all the way around," she concedes, "but it's more fun than not." Sharon H. Ryan, an RA in Sweetser/Walton, attributes the frustrations of working with the Housing Office to a lack of communication between the Housing Office and the RAs and the residents.

Baldwin says she believes the Housing Office is trying to make the flow of communication as good as it can be. She says, "We, (the complex directors) try very hard to stay in touch with the students. Communication is a daily, on-going type of thing."

Although the Housing Office may frustrate Ryan at times, she says she still enjoys her job.

"Working with the residents is a lot of fun. From that standpoint, I love my job."

Establishing a rapport with the residents is essential in filling the RAs role as a counselor, Carpenter says. "The residents should feel comfortable enough to come to you if they have problems," she explains.

An understanding of the University and its system help, plus common sense and a good ear are the basics for counseling residents, Carpenter says.

"I just listen to them and they come up with their own answers," she explains. "Sometimes I pro-

pose a few alternatives, but basically I just listen."

Jansen says his residents seem to discuss their personal problems with close friends, but they still come to him with roommate troubles as well as gems of information: (from his memo board) "Mustiness abounds in the world. God help mustoids."

Being a friend and counselor to all the residents has a few drawbacks, however, including the loss of privacy and time.

Smith warns prospective RAs that their grades may suffer because of the job's time demands.

Carpenter says her grade point average was not affected by her job, but Ryan admits her grades dropped.

"But academics aren't the most important aspect of my education," Ryan explains. "It's what I get to know about people and in this job, you get to know a lot about people," she says.

RAs also get to know a lot about paper work. They have to file weekly reports, check in new residents and record chair and refrigerator rentals.

Ryan says that RAs also learn some things about themselves.

"You face a lot of crisis situations in this job and that's where you get to know yourself," she says.

Are the lessons about people, paperwork and themselves enough payment for the challenges and frustrations the RAs must deal with?

Almost. But Ryan brings up one more reason for working as an RA: free room and board.

"Money is always a nice incentive," she chuckles.

FREE CHOCOLATE FONDUE

Large Plate of bananas, apples, peaches, pineapple, pound cake, & chopped nuts served with creamy imported Swiss Chocolate!

Reg. \$3.55 - FREE with 4 dinners purchased together.

Offered Apr. 17 - 22 Only.



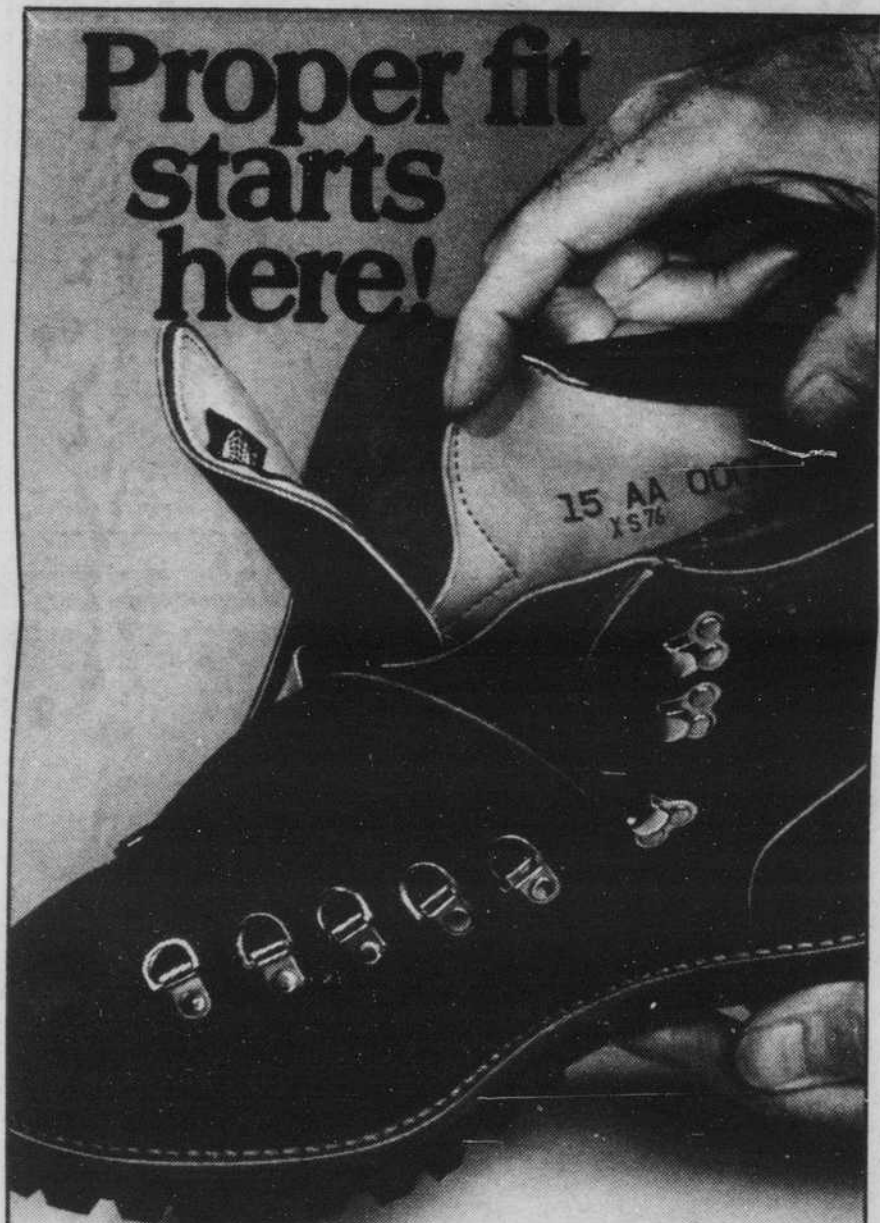
park place

756 W. Park (In Smeede Hotel) 343-9587

Serving: 6-9 pm, Mon. - Thur.

6-10 pm, Fri. & Sat.

Proper fit starts here!



Most outdoor boots come in just one or two widths. But feet don't. So fitting becomes a compromise, using socks and other devices to fill the gaps. Vasque believes in a better way: So they build this Hiker II in six widths—AA, B, C, D, E & EE, in sizes from 6 through 16,* and even offer it in Mis-Mate Service for people whose feet are different sizes. A similar model—Gretchen II—is built on a women's last in widths AAA, A, C and E, and in sizes 4 through 11.* In this way, Vasque's trained fitting specialists can give you a better, more comfortable fit.

*Not all sizes in all widths.

Vasque

the mountain boots

THESE VASQUE DEALERS ARE TRAINED TO FIT YOU.

Berg's Sport Shop

11th & MILL 343-0013

COPIES

3¢

OVER NIGHT
NO MINIMUM

8 am - 8 pm
NOW OPEN SUNDAY
12 - 5

KINKO'S

344-7894
1128-B ALDER STREET
2nd floor Atrium
485-1063

NOW PLAYING STORIES TO BE TOLD
or HISTORIAS PARA SER CANTADAS

By Osvaldo Dragun

"The Man with the Abscessed Tooth" "The Story of the Man Who Turned into a Dog"

"The Story of Panchito Gonzalez"

April 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22
8:00 P.M.

Adm. \$1.25
Arena Theatre

Box Office Noon - Five Daily
686-4191