

Off-campus living means space to live freely and economically

'You feel more comfortable coming back to a place that you feel belongs to you'

Living off-campus means arranging finances, buying food, cooking meals and cleaning house, but it also means having more room to move around than students who live in dorms. One way to minimize the chores and the cost of off-campus housing is to share a dwelling with others.

Cooperative living comes in as many styles as there are types of students. While one household's biggest concern may be tidiness, another household may focus on freedom of expression.

One student household, called "Stonehenge," is governed by a system similar to anarchy. Michael Hayes, one of its occupants, says he knows of no rules in the house.

Six people live in Stonehenge. The three University undergraduates and three alumni met while involved with

Stonehenge resident, says the household is different from most. "We don't watch TV here, and we don't consume strange foods," she says. (All six roommates are vegetarians.) "We don't fight seriously. It's very free and open — no authority," Kelley says.

Kelley, who used to live in a dorm, says she likes the economic control over the food she buys and eats now. "I was paying for meat in the dorms and not eating it," she says.

Living with a roommate in a dorm can be a gamble because no one knows how things will work out, Kelley says. She adds that getting along in a house is sometimes easier because roommates are not randomly matched up.

But Hayes says always having people around is a two-way street. "You always have companionship, but you're always

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Students For a Nuclear Free Future (SNUFF), now Student Campaign for Disarmament. They have all lived in Stonehenge for at least one year.

"We all have concerns that are distinctly political," Hayes says. "One thing that unites us is our concern for the earth."

Shannon Kelley, another

risking companionship," he says. "If you want solitude, you can't expect it."

Complications also come sometimes from having only one bathroom. However, Hayes says conflict is minimized because roommates are not afraid to be in the bathroom together.

Elijah Hancock, another resident of the house, says she has a hard time studying. "There's constant pressure not to do homework," she says, adding that grades suffer "a little bit" from having distractions around.

Transportation from the house on the hill by the Laurelwood golf course is mainly by bicycle. The household car, which belongs to Christian Nielsen, is used to pick up groceries.

The rent at Stonehenge ranges from \$85 a month for the smallest room to \$115 for the largest. Kelley says expenditures usually run about \$55 a month per person for food. Whoever is available does the grocery shopping, buying the food, which everyone shares, in bulk. Kelley says total cost for living in Stonehenge is about \$1,000 a month for all six people, or about \$165 per person, not including the phone bill.

At another cooperative student household, the operation is somewhat more organized but still fairly relaxed. Tim Curtiss, Jordan Cowman, Brooks Merrifield and Jim Severson have shared the bottom half of a Lincoln Street duplex since September. The neighborhood is quiet and far removed from the busy campus atmosphere.

All four roommates own cars and carpool when they can; although, Merrifield often walks to class, and Curtiss sometimes rides his bicycle.

All are students except Cowman, who quit school to work after winter term. The roommates met while living in the dorms and say they have found many advantages in living off-campus.

Cowman says off-campus housing provides more privacy than the dorms do. "You don't have people barging in all the time, wanting you to do something," he says.

"You eat better here, and it's easier to snack when you want to," Cowman says. "You feel more comfortable coming back to a place that you feel belongs to you."

Merrifield agrees that he feels "a lot more relaxed," and Curtiss adds that he likes having more room. Their half of the duplex has three bedrooms, one bathroom and a large kitchen.

The four men say they have a loose but effective system for maintaining their home. Cowman acts as the banker; he collects money from the other three to pay rent and utility bills.

During the week, the roommates take turns cooking, and



Brooks Merrifield spends a quiet moment with "Dirty Harry Callahan" while house banker Jordan Cowman tends to business.

whoever cooks also does the dishes. On weekends, however, meals are a "free for all," Cowman says.

Housework is delegated to whoever is home and has time. Curtiss says everyone pitches in on weekends and adds that getting housework done is "not that much of a problem." He adds that the kitchen gets cleaned up every night after dinner.

The four pay \$98 a month for rent and about \$100 a month for food per person. Cowman says he and his roommates "eat really well. We don't skimp at all, and we're big eaters."

The four men have had few unpleasant financial surprises, Cowman says. However, he

together outside the house. Curtiss says when one of them goes out to a movie, party or sporting event he usually asks the others along. Cowman adds, "We're more than just roommates; we're all friends."

While the roommates concur on many advantages of cooperative living, one area they disagree on is studying. Cowman says, "You can sit in your favorite chair and do it in front of the fireplace during winter term."

However, Curtiss finds studying is more difficult in the house because he gets removed from the school spirit when he gets home.

Bancroft and Kelley's advice

'You always have companionship, but you're always risking companionship. If you want solitude, you can't expect it'

— Michael Hayes

adds, "Water and electricity always seem to be more than you think."

But Cowman says that before they moved in, he figured out what their expenditures would be, and they have stayed close to his prediction: about \$250 a month per person, including rent.

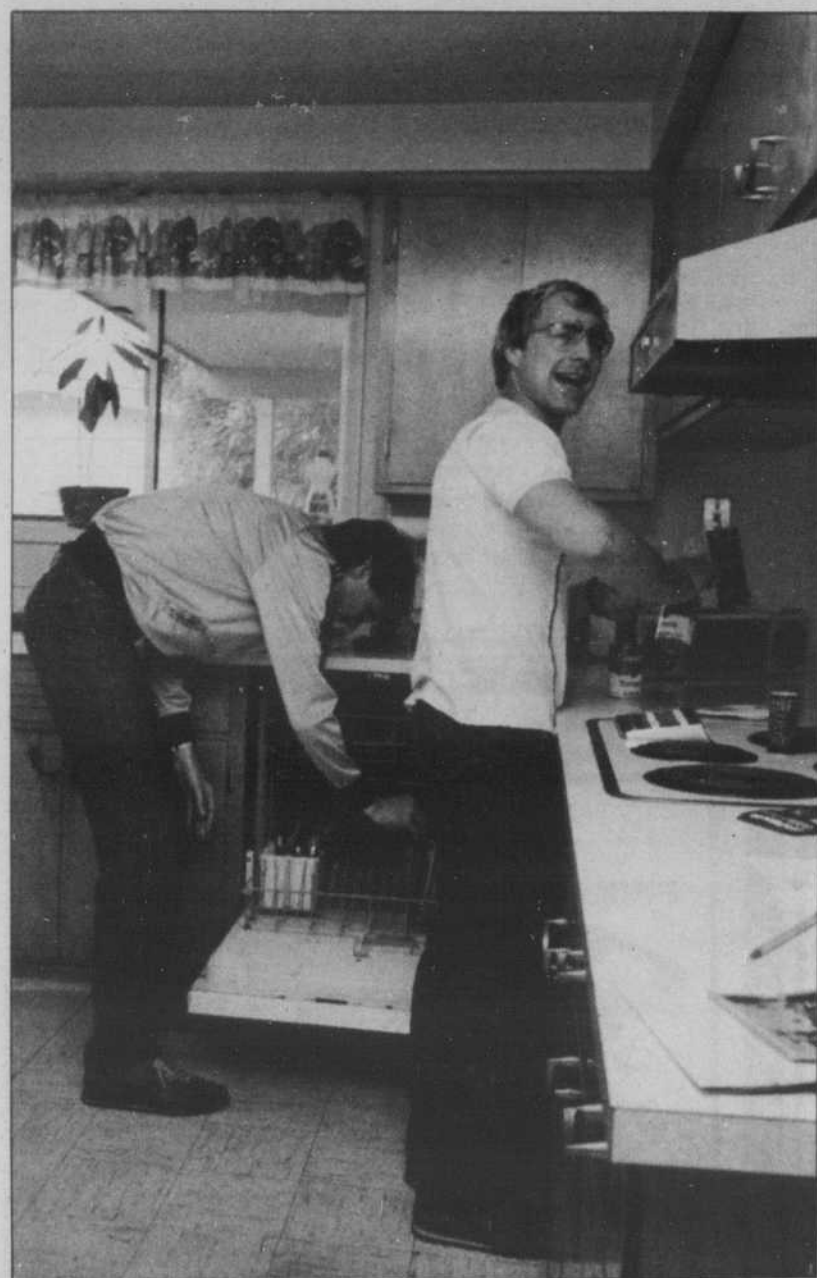
One major off-campus moving expenditure is furniture; this household dealt with that by borrowing from family and friends.

Curtiss and Cowman say the four spend a lot of social time

to people who are thinking about moving in with roommates include knowing the eating and smoking habits of potential roommates, and, as Bancroft says, knowing "how picky they are about material things." Kelley says, "If someone's tight with their possessions and someone else isn't, it can lead to conflicts."

Kelley adds that the location and setting of the house contributes to the overall comfort of the residents.

Story by Tom Hill
Photos by James Marks



Tim Curtiss and Jim Severson share kitchen duty after a meal at the Curtiss-Severson-Merrifield-Cowman residence on Lincoln Street.

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Many housing alternatives are open

Among the housing options open to University students, organized cooperatives — Parr Tower, Janet Smith, Campbell Club and Philadelphia House — are probably the least expensive. They range from about \$585 to \$690 for fall term (some of the cooperatives' rates go down for winter and spring terms). The costs include rent, three meals a day and utilities, cooperative members say.

Apartments in Eugene range from \$100 to \$160 a month for studios, \$140 to \$190 for one-bedroom apartments, \$180 to \$275 for two bedrooms, and \$250 and up for three bedrooms. Apartments close to campus generally charge more than ones farther away,

according to the off-campus housing department.

Houses and duplexes are probably the most difficult type of housing to find, especially those close to the campus.

House rentals average about \$140-\$190 for one bedroom, \$230-\$300 for two bedrooms and \$275-\$500 for three or four bedrooms.

The proposed 1985-86 rates for dorms range from \$2,265 a year for campus multiples to \$4,029 for single rooms in the University Inn. These fees cover meals and utilities, according to University Housing Department pamphlets.