

COOPERATIVE LIBERTY

With an emphasis on sharing, University co-ops offer a living atmosphere like no other



Adam Amato Emerald

Chessie Woodruff and Sara Albee (above) chat in the frog room, named for the frog mural on the wall. Samantha McCoy (below) takes the spiral staircase to her room. The general consensus around the house was that the Lorax is, "an amazing place to live."

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Imagine living with 30 other people under one roof and sharing one kitchen; imagine having the liberty to paint anything, anywhere and anytime. Imagine walking in the door after a long day of lectures and note-taking. You paint a sun, moon and Kenny from South Park in the hallway while the president of the co-ops walks by and says, "You should paint something in the bathroom too."

A few of the luxuries of living at the co-ops include: sharing a bathroom with 30 people, creating unforgettable moments and having the license to splatter paint anywhere inside the house.

"When you move in, you have 80 instant friends. I find myself playing Twister or Risk in a group of people shooting the shit," said the co-ops president and chairwoman Robin Brandt, who lives at the Lorax on Alder Street. "All ways of thinking and ideals live here, and it's accepted. People agree to disagree."

A wide cross-section of people live in the co-ops, from religious to non-religious, punker to folk and low-key to hyper. The atmosphere is busy, much like a beehive. Residents come and go at all hours, and activity never ceases.

"The best part about living in the co-ops is that people spontaneously come out of the woodwork, and you have 15 people talking," Brandt said. "The weirdest thing was sitting on the toilet and having a heart-to-heart while someone was brushing their teeth."

The assortment of personalities living in one house creates unique memories that are sure to linger. The most bizarre moment for Betsy Hunt, the social coordinator of the Campbell Club, was the "hide and seek lingerie party. Even the boys wore [lingerie]."

Brandt said the ideal co-op consists of a group of people who

live together to cut costs and create a specific community for specific purposes for students.

"The people tend to be liberal, but not exclusively liberal," she said.

With all of these college students under one roof, who takes charge? The answer: no one.

"Students are in equal control; it's unhierarchical," said recruitment coordinator Ben Cutler. "There's no landlord. Any person can participate in the process and say what they feel."

In addition to providing inexpensive living, the co-ops also

with people."

Each person has a specific role in order to take care of the necessary duties.

"We all pitch in for chores and jobs," Brandt said. For example, Nance rides a six-foot long bike with another nominated person to carry 1,000 pounds of organic groceries every week from west Eugene. Also, there are designated granola, hummus and salsa makers. Everyone contributes to the housework in turn.

In a tour of the Campbell Club on Alder Street, the kitchen is the first stop. The cooks chat and

bikes crowd the corner of the living room. Echoes of guitar riffs and bantering fill the air. A "free pile" sits at the top of the third floor.

"If someone doesn't want their clothes or other stuff, and you want it, you take it," Brandt said. "You'll get the coolest clothes."

Nance's room, also known as the "frog room," displays a collection of healthy plants, schoolbooks and CDs. "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything" proclaims a sticker near the cream-colored ceiling.

The position of the flat-surfaced roof allows the horizon to meet the eye. It is an escape for those who enjoy gazing at galaxies.

Eighty people live in the co-ops, but there are still some openings. Singles are \$1,110, smaller singles are \$970 and doubles are \$833 per term. The money includes meals and toiletries such as "tampons, razors — basically everything you need," Brandt said.

"You can even make food requests," Cutler said.

The Eugene co-ops consist of the Campbell Club, Lorax Manor and Janet Smith.

"All three houses are all very socially active," said Brandt.

"The Lorax is an environmental house," Cutler said. "They put on benefit concerts; it's a mel-lower house."

He said that Janet Smith is an academic environment.

"We are trying to encourage it to be a quiet house to recruit people more focused on studying," Cutler said.

"Campbell Club is socially active," Brandt said. "It tends to have students that are new, and it tends to have more parties. It's boisterous."

Cutler said the Campbell Club will host open mic nights and serve coffee and food starting in a few weeks.



host huge parties and generate profits in the process.

"It's really cool when we can throw a party and bring people together, and use proceeds to get solar panels or support good causes," said the co-ops maintenance czar Arjon Nance. "I really like the principles of people living together and sharing resources. It makes sense. It's empowering for people to meet on a certain set of ideals socially, environmentally and economically. I'm learning about group dynamics and ways to get along

dance. Thirteen loaves of bread stick out of the wooden side shelf. Purple, blue, yellow and other hues of paint decorate the walls.

"Paint is provided for anyone who wants to paint their room or something like that," Brandt said. "You can paint anywhere."

Bins full of ingredients stock the kitchen. Stickers plaster a huge metallic fridge, among them: "Join the Army: Travel to exotic distant lands, meet exciting unusual people and kill them."

Cozy couches and chairs cover the living room floor. Stationary