

Moving guide



Adam Amato Emerald

Mediation can settle roommate conflicts

Students share insights about solving problems with roommates who are too difficult or different

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For most students, getting to know a new roommate is an exciting experience. But for others, it signifies the beginning of a yearlong nightmare.

No matter how hard they try to get along, some people just cannot live together. Whether conflicts arise from scheduling, music choice or cleanliness, some roommates will simply drive each other crazy.

Freshman Danielle Kellar experienced firsthand the difficulties of having a roommate she could not get along with. She recalls her roommate was more of a parent figure.

"She told me when to clean my half of the room and when to go to bed," Kellar said. She added most of their conflicts resulted from scheduling difficulties.

"My roommate was a member of the crew team, and so she went to bed every night at 7:30 and woke up at 4," Kellar said. "She wouldn't let me be in the room while she was sleeping, either."

According to Julia Hill, a resident assistant in Hawthorne Hall, problems between roommates occur when one roommate has unreasonable expectations of the other. She said communication and compromise can help to alleviate these issues, as long as each roommate is willing to empathize with the other and try to understand his or her point of view.

In Kellar's case, she and her roommate were such opposites they ended up separating.

"There was no way to work it out; we were both stubborn," Kellar said. "We didn't click, and our chemistry just didn't match."

Freshman Maria Chipman also had significant roommate problems at the beginning of this school year and eventually had to split up with her roommate when their differences could not be resolved.

"At first, we tried to go to a mediator to solve our problems, but my roommate refused to compromise," Chipman said. "She got up and left in the middle of the mediation session and refused to communicate. She even tried to ban my mom from ever entering the room."

Roommate disagreements are not unique to this University alone. Ben Dolan-Williardson, a freshman at Whittier College in Los Angeles, describes his roommate as possibly the worst he's ever had.

"He's loud, rude, obnoxious and has poor hygiene," Dolan-Williardson said. "For instance, he purposely played his music extra loud at four in the morning when he knew I had to make a 12-hour drive the next day."

Dolan-Williardson said he and his roommate still have not worked out their differences.

"We just don't talk now," he said.

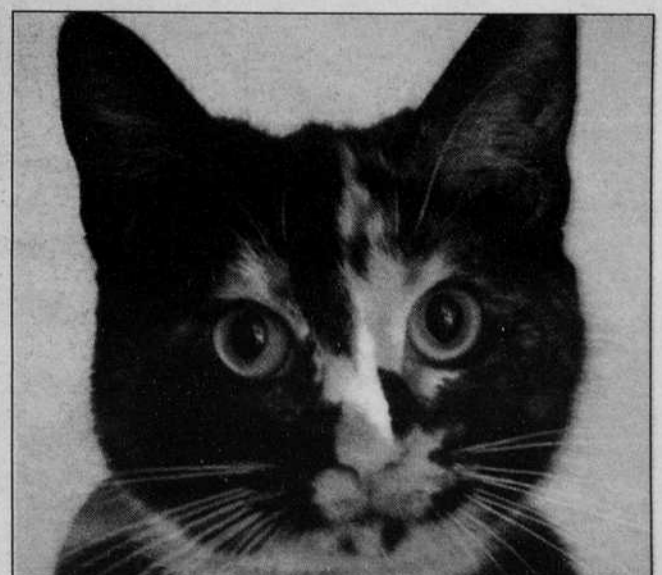
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Low-budget furniture shopping can be easy when students bargain hunt at thrift stores and yard sales / Page 5B



Students find creative ways to decorate their blank walls, by using paint, cultural themes and framed photos / Page 8B



Students who want to take on the responsibility of having a pet sometimes try to hide their pets from landlords / Page 13B