

OPINIONS

Finding the perfect roommate



Margaret Lee
Columnist

In college, not only do students have to attend classes on a regular basis, they also must have a roommate. Some students are lucky and live all alone in a dark room for eight months. The rest of us get a roommate.

Some people opt for their best friend from high school for their roommate. Good luck with that.

Who knew that your best friend hits the snooze button 5.3 times every morning before finally getting up?

Warning: Waking up every seven minutes to a buzzer louder than the construction outside will not make you excited to go to class.

For the majority who know the awful truth about rooming with friends from high school, we opt to go potluck for our roommate.

Potluck means filling out a questionnaire of 10 questions for the housing office, which sum up what kind of person we are and place us with our dream roommate.

They want us to live with a stranger and spend hours telling stories ("Did you really flash the entire soccer team?"), help each other with homework ("That sounds like a great excuse to skip class"), and encourage each other in classes ("I know you could handle Calculus 436")

That doesn't happen. Instead, we get roommates who bathe four times a day, or go two weeks without bathing.

We get a roommate whose boyfriend, Rowdy Randy, spends every night moaning in the bunk two feet above you. You get roommates who tape pictures of dead animals around their bed and frequently listen to the local religious station.

But have no fear (says the housing office) because you can fill out a questionnaire and make sure this doesn't happen to you.

Answer questions about how neat or messy you like your room, and the housing office (within reason) promises to make sure your roommate knows how to fold her clothes with creased corners and turns the light out before leaving the bathroom.

The questionnaire asks how you want your roommate to feel about religion. Do you want them very interested, interested, somewhat disinterested, not at all interested or doesn't matter?

I want my roommate only slightly uninterested in religion, so we can stay up late and plot to destroy the world. Which box do I check for that?

The questionnaire allows you to pick whether you want your room-

mate very conservative, somewhat conservative, don't care, somewhat liberal or very liberal.

I want a roommate who won't hold capital punishment rallies in my room on Saturdays or hold Satan worship meetings in the room twice a week. Where can I find the box for that?

These questions don't guarantee you won't get a part-time drug dealer with a gambling problem or an avid reader of philosophy who decides he or she wants to explain logic to you at 4 a.m. on a Thursday.

The questionnaire also allows you to pick your favorite kind of music (only one though, because nobody listens to more than one type). I listen to all sorts of music, except country.

Of course, I'm liable to get a country music lover who practices Shania Twain's latest moves in our 10-foot-by-10-foot room every other Tuesday from 4 to 6 p.m.

Another question asks what you want the weekday schedule of your roommate to be (because everyone has the exact same schedule every day of the week).

Choose between a person who goes to bed early (before 10 p.m.), one with a normal schedule (which would be what exactly?), one who goes to bed late (after 1 a.m.) or a night person.

What if I want my roommate to go to bed directly at 12:53 a.m.? What box do you check? How much pressure can one person take?

Nowhere on the questionnaire can I warn my future roommate that I snore, or how I tell extravagant stories of traveling to Egypt in my sleep?

I can't put down that my cell phone rings at 7 a.m. every morning to the "Dukes of Hazard" theme song or that I get up to use the bathroom three times during the night from drinking two gallons of water before bed.

The last question asks if there are any other factors the housing office should know. In two inches of blank space, you're given the opportunity to sum up your living style.

I listed things like I hate wearing clothes on Fridays, every other word out of my mouth says "like," and I'm a devoted fan of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," who frequently stabs my stuffed koala bear to see if I can hit where the heart would be.

That's all I could fit in the space. I hope with the information I provided, they can find my perfect roommate.

Life at UNCA as a non-smoker

Dear Editor:

I am writing this letter on behalf of all of those people who actually do not like the smell of smoke, who may be allergic and who don't want to say anything to anyone less they be deemed "uncool."

I am sick of having to walk through a cloud of smoke to get into buildings on campus, and I am sick of not being respected just because I am a non-smoker.

I have nothing against smokers as people. I am friends with a great many people who do smoke.

Does this mean that I am a hypocrite? No.

Does it mean that I tend to breathe a little shallower when I am around them? Absolutely.

That is the choice I have made. I have not made the choice to inhale smoke into my lungs every day when I come into any building on campus.

In essence, someone else is making the choice for me to breathe in something I don't want in my body.

It would seem that there should not be that many smokers. According to posters around campus, the majority of students don't smoke.

Arafat and Sharon have similar agendas

Dear Editor:

Sorry Avi Mechanic, but I completely disagree with your article entitled "Israel, Take Action." You make it sound as if Israel is the innocent party to Arab and Palestinian aggression. Such is not the case.

The immediate cause for the current conflict is Israel's leader, Ariel Sharon, who deliberately and blatantly provoked Palestinian anger a year ago with a foray into Palestinian territory. Palestinian anger was met with Israeli brutality, which was met with more Israeli brutality, a vicious cycle which has only escalated since then.

The deeper cause is the Israeli takeover of Palestinian lands half a century ago. It's quite understandable that a people thrown out of their own homes and forced to live their lives in refugee camps would object.

Palestinians should have their own homeland and their own government. They should not have to live under domination by the Israeli army.

That being said, I do not support Palestinian terrorism and bombings. Suicide bombers are murderers and terrorists, plain and simple.

Your call for increased military force by Israel is emotional and short-sighted. As we have seen for

I have noticed these posters for the year and a half that I have been here, and I am also noticing that I am in the minority rather than the majority.

It could be that they just have a tendency to cluster together, so it seems like there are more of them.

For instance, why do they always cluster right around the entrance to every building on campus? Pay attention, smokers.

Imagine for a moment that you are in a nice restaurant. You sit down at your table, order a glass of wine, and sit back to relax.

All of a sudden, the person at the table next to you stands up with his plate, which contains the one thing in the world that you absolutely cannot stand to eat, walks over and shoves it in your mouth, forcing you to chew.

This is how it is every day at UNCA for a non-smoker. So, I am not saying that you are bad people.

I am not saying that you deserve to go to jail. I am not saying that you don't have the choice to smoke.

Next time you are about to light up in front of an entrance to a building, think about what some people might have to do to get through your cloud of smoke.

Jonah Berkey
Junior, creative writing

many years, violence in the Middle East simply begets more violence.

Unfortunately, both Israel and the Palestinians have been poorly served by their leaders. Neither side has made any serious effort to bring about peace.

Arafat has systematically prevented the creation of any sort of real government among his own people. Any individual who shows potential to rival him is removed, leaving Arafat as the only "leader" that the world can deal with.

As the recent discovery of the ship smuggling arms to the Palestinians shows, Arafat is a liar and a terrorist. This is hardly a man who can bring peace to the region. He's simply not interested.

Neither is Ariel Sharon. His idea of "peace" is defined by military domination. He has shown no inclination whatsoever to deal peacefully with Palestinians.

Both Sharon and Arafat are only interested in trying to kill those on the other side. Both are fighting with everything they have. Sharon has an army, Arafat has terrorists. The means are different, but the thinking is the same.

What the region and the world needs are new leaders on both sides. Where are the Gandhis and the Martin Luther Kings of the Middle East?

We will not have peace until Arafat, Sharon and those who think like them are gone. The old ways, Avi, including those you advocated, will just result in more suffering and death on both sides.

Skip Rohde
Senior, fine art

Letters to the Editor

Fight for diversity tiring; anonymous letter sent to AASA

Dear Editor:

It's starting all over again. Ever since my freshman year here at UNCA, the fight to better diversify this campus has been fought by my colleagues and myself.

We've sat in many forums, gone to many conferences and had plenty of meetings with our administration, vice chancellors and chancellor. Yet, the struggle continues.

It seemed to die down a little bit about two years ago, when only seven (yes, seven) black freshmen showed up on campus as part of the class of 2003. There were about 500 freshmen enrolled that year.

A lack of a minority presence here isn't an old story. There still haven't been many improvements since. Many of the black students that come here, end up transferring after their freshman or sophomore years. A few will drop out, maybe one will fail out, and those lucky enough will graduate with bitterness biting at their hearts (like me).

I tire, we tire easily, and it's hard for upperclassmen to keep our heads high when prospective students come to visit the campus. I don't fool them, as I was when I first visited this campus. I let them know that academically, this school ranks very high, but other than that, this is not a healthy atmosphere for black students.

There was an article about three weeks ago in *The Blue Banner* that took a look at the decrease of minority students at UNCA. It mainly focused on black students for statistics, but others were mentioned.

Our Director of Institutional Research, Archer Gravely, was quoted saying that the reason why UNCA doesn't have many black students, is because there isn't a football team and a marching band.

This really upset my colleagues and I. To say that just goes to show how ignorant of black student issues many students, faculty and staff members are.

To know that after all that has been "talked" about in our past meetings and such, and to see that nothing improved from them, makes me resistant to join back up in helping to make UNCA a better place for black students.

I know I should help to leave UNCA a better place than how I found it, but to me it seems like the campus community really could care less. There was no support from much of the campus community for the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, and the same thing happened when Black History Month came and went.

Granted, publicity could have been better, but still, the African American Student Association, in conjunction with the Multicultural Student Programs office, has been doing programs like this every year.

This campus knows that something is going to be done during those times. So as I see it, something needs to be done about it, but who really is going to care and help out?

Times like this confuse me and I don't know what we are to do next. What are our next steps?

There are only about 90 black students, out of some 3,000+ students enrolled here. And out of that 90, only 40 live on campus. Our time and patience is wearing very

thin.

Another reason for sending this letter is because sometime last week, while our African American Student Association president was in our office, someone taped a note, written on the back of some miscellaneous piece of paper, responding to our outrage about the decrease of minorities on this campus.

This note was filled with grammar and spelling mistakes, i.e. using "there" for "their" and vice versa, and "apond" instead of "upon."

An anonymous person who claimed to be a black student here wrote this letter.

This person stated that he/she was happy to be in college and we should stop complaining about there being no scholarships available for us to attend college. This person said that instead of complaining, we should get off of our "bee hinds" (her/his words to be exact) and go look for them as he/she did.

They also quoted miscalculated statistics about the black population in N.C. and in Charlotte.

This letter really angered me. I do not believe that a black student here wrote this letter.

But, I still have yet to be proven right or wrong.

To the author: First off, you have no clue as to what you are talking about. No one said that they weren't happy to be in college. I know for a fact that I am damn proud to be in college. I'll be the first person in my family, other than my father, to graduate from college.

Also, we didn't say that there were no scholarships available for us. It's quite apparent that you don't know what is going on with the issue of scholarships and its involvement where black students are concerned.

I challenge you to step forward and show your face. I don't want to start any trouble with you; I just don't want you to remain ignorant to the issues of black students on UNCA's campus. I do not appreciate your note and the things that you said and the cowardly way you went about expressing yourself.

It is your right to express yourself as you did, but your information was incorrect and needs to be corrected. Please come by the AASA office to chat with us. I know that I will be more than willing to sit and discuss anything that may be on your mind, and to help clear up any wrong thoughts or ideas you may have.

I extend that invitation to UNCA as a whole. This campus really needs to dig deep, and each person here needs to ask him or herself if they really care about diversifying this campus.

This has to be an entire campus movement. You can't keep calling on the same 10 black students to do everything, and to speak for all minorities on this campus.

Don't make assumptions about people here. Yes, there may be some students here who are black, who do feel the same way as the student who wrote that letter. But first you need to get the facts right and talk to people.

Leaving an anonymous letter like that doesn't help to make things better. It just goes to show how ignorant some people can be.

I believe UNCA can and will become a better place for black students. Heck, all students.

Unfortunately, that won't happen by next May, but I will continue to fight to make this campus an environment that is comfortable for black students, both academically and socially.

LaTashia Atkinson
Senior, multimedia arts and sciences

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Summer Programs at Math N' Art 252-8215
Teens in Town---ages 12-18---Different themes each week for 10 weeks-- full or half-day options.
Magical Mathematical Mastery---ages 8-12---Learn basic skills in creative ways---2 or 1 week programs---full or half-day.
Youth Play Days---ages 5-8---math/art/games/lunch.

The Literature Department at UNCA invites the University and surrounding community to the senior creative readings of: Chris Sempa, Charles Corriher, Melody Lindsey, Rachel Cook, Carrie McCallus & April Weeks.
Sunday, April 28th at 3pm,
Laurel Forum (Karpen Hall)

William Hughes, Senior Lecturer at Chester College in England, will speak on Music and Literature, Tuesday, April 23, at 1:15 in the Laurel Forum. His topic is the ways in which composers have been influenced by poets and novelists and what happens when you set words to music. There will be musical illustrations.

UNCA'S CHAPTER OF PHI ETA SIGMA NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY IS HOLDING A CAMPUS WIDE SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION THIS SPRING. APPLICATION FORMS MAY BE OBTAINED AT WWW.UNCA.EDU/PESIGMA. CLICK ON "CAMPUS-WIDE SCHOLARSHIP." THE AMOUNT OF THE AWARD IS \$100 AND THE DEADLINE IS 24 APRIL.