

## Roomies! Through thick and thin

by Heather Conrad  
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Ricky Surles: "I slipped my kayak under the bottom bed, and returned to the car to get more things. When I got back to the room, there stood this big guy—he was huge, with a red shirt, a red face, and a real short military hair cut. He stood there, and his parents just looked at me. I was thinking, "Oh my God..."

Robert Cooler: "The first day the dorm president escorted me to my room. When I told him who my roommate was, he started laughing. I began to worry. So I get to my room and see this boat under my bed. I really started having second thoughts..."

Ricky Surles and Robert Cooler giggle as they reminisce about their first day at Brevard College, three years ago.

For Ricky and Robert, Brevard College turned their lives around. For Brevard College, Ricky and Robert are the only two people known to room together for three consecutive years. And as different as North and South—Rickey and Robert have stuck together through the Brevard experience, unlike any two before.

Robert from Savannah, Ga., informs, "I wasn't sure if I could handle a large university just out of high school. At Brevard, the size is small and theres a lot of personalization."

Ricky, from Stockbridge, Ga., was attracted to BC for similar reasons. "It's small and is a junior college, which is what I was looking for", he says "It was real personal, and close to the outdoors. I went to summer school before my freshman year here and fell in love with the place."

Introductions done, the two set up all the necessities. "Rob brought the entertainment system, and I brought the refrigerator and girlie posters says Rick. Later, other more personal similarities were discovered. Says Robert, "Trust is important to me. And trust is a big part of Rick and I's relationship."

Ricky agrees. "You can't live with someone if you don't trust them." He scratches his chin. "And I guess the great thing about us is that we each can do our own thing and are still good friends. If we happen to end up doing something together, well then that's cool."

The dependency on each other is loose, Rick and Robert feel, while the caring for each other is strong, as it became evident their sophomore year. Events occurred in Rick and Robert's personal lives, causing a few problems in living with each other. Robert butts out his cigarette, and stares straight ahead. "In the summer of '87, I entered the Marine Corps, in hopes of being part of the reserve. I had a problem in boot camp, and ended up on Parris Island in a special platoon. Still disappointed, I went back to Brevard in the fall." Robert set himself up with goals nearly impossible to live by. "I figured this would be my year to go to class every day, exercise constantly and take 19 1/2 hours of classes." says Rob. He shakes his head.



In your face! For three years, Ricky Surles and Robert Cooler have been roommates all that time. BC won't be the same without these two.

"It lasted about a month. I collapsed mentally, spiritually, physically. Rick tried to help me, and I closed him out."

Rick meanwhile was going through personal setbacks of his own. "I was confused, I didn't know what I wanted to do with myself, and had other relationship problems."

Nearly a year passed before Rick and Rob realized that something in their lives had to change. But how could they change and resolve the many personal problems and other disappointments? A third year at BC became the answer.

Rob remembers, "I was coming out of a deep depression, nothing I hope anyone else should ever have to go through. I needed to set a goal I could accomplish. Graduating from Brevard was it. It isn't automatic for me, I have to shoot for it." He smiles a little. "And I hope to do it."

"This year," Rick began, "We both came back, fired up about graduating together. Neither of us had no other who we could better trust."

We know all of our close friends would be gone. I even stopped at the front gates, and thought about turning around."

But Rick and Rob agreed that changes had to be made. "We had always done things half way, says Rick. "This year, grades are important to me. I can't settle. I'd always been weak in grades, now I want better." Rob added. "Yeah, he's a new man now. 80 percent of the time in the library. He won't settle!"

"I think Rob and I have finally learned the art of control," admits Rick. "Our first year, we were too wild. Now, things are more balanced, we've struck an equilibrium between class and fun."

"Yeah," agrees Rob "We've got this college thing down."

Ricky leans forward, a more serious look appears on his face. "I want people to get as much out of Brevard as I did, but not go the same route as I did. My first year here, people acutally cared, and they wanted me to do things with them, they wanted me to be a part. I want to carry on that tradition."

Ricky worries, however, that the traditional closeness and caring at BC may become a thing of the past. With enrollment up, Ricky and Rob have watched the administration change, and tighten up on rules, and attempt to better organize student life. But in the process, Ricky and Rob feel the close, more personal contact previously existant between student and the BC administration has deteriorated.

Ricky comments, "I understand that a bigger number of students is good for the school, but I'm not really sure if its good for the students of BC themselves. Rob adds that more skepticism seems to exist between the students and administrative body.

"Every school has its faults says Rick. "I just hope Brevard doesn't forget what they're about-closeness. We need not to forget."

Ricky and Rob suggest that perhaps more interaction off campus is a solution.

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