

STUDENT LIFE AT NCSS

"This room ain't big enough for the both of us!"

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Staff Writer

Forrest Gump might as well have been talking about roommates when he made the comparison between life and a box of chocolates. "You never know what you're gonna get."

Often the results of virtually random pairings based on superficial questionnaires at application time, roommates are often a fact of life during the high school and college years, and no set of roommates is ever guaranteed a state of tranquil coexistence. The type of roommate you have is largely a matter of chance, and roommates are infinite in variety.

For example, there are ideal roommates whose generally cheerful tempers and consideration for you is exceeded only by the size of their CD collections, from which they actually encourage you to borrow. There are extroverted roommates, introverted roommates, quiet roommates, loud roommates, and often less-than-ideal roommates as well. Each type of roommate makes life interesting or exasperating in some respect.

And then there are those roommates who seem to have ascended straight from the innermost circle of Dante's Hell. Rude, selfish, inconsiderate, or just plain obnoxious, these roommates are frustrating to live with, and rarely have anything to contribute to the well-being of the other.

They borrow things and return them dirty, broken, or otherwise altered. They talk or play music at times when you're trying to study, or, even worse, to sleep. They believe in the divine right to criticize your clothes, friends, and opinions.

These roommates are the ones who cause long-lasting, intense conflicts that can be the source of mutual resentment the whole year and leave both of

you frustrated and angry with unresolved problems ready to boil over at any time. This creates a whole new situation of clashing tempers, beliefs, and expectations.

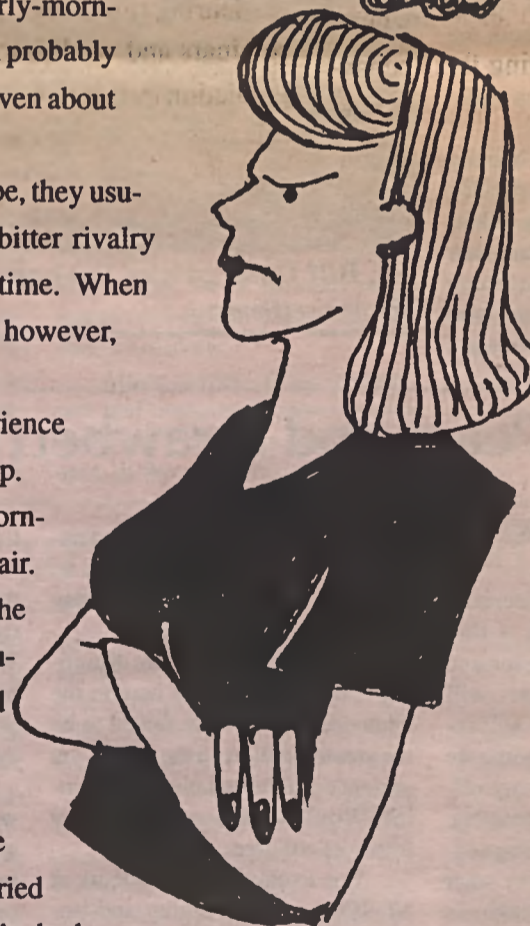
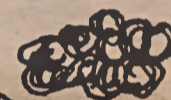
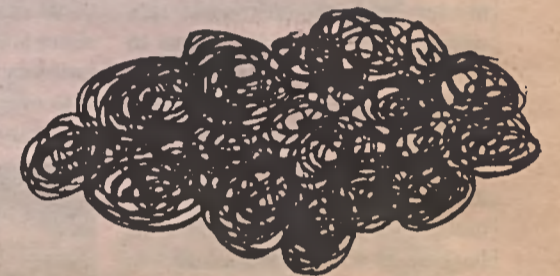
It's true that getting along with a roommate one hundred percent of the time is next to impossible. There are certain inevitable small conflicts to be encountered, such as the failure of one of you to lock the door or wake the other one for an important early-morning meeting or project. There will probably be conflicts about the room, and even about leaving the lights or radio on.

Irritating as these issues may be, they usually don't become the basis for bitter rivalry unless they are perpetuated over time. When these problems remain unsolved, however, trouble becomes imminent.

One junior related her experience with a roommate at summer camp. "My roommate got up every morning to put on makeup and do her hair. It took her about an hour and she turned on the lights and played music while I tried to sleep. I talked to her about it, but she wouldn't stop."

"My roommate at camp one summer was fine - except when I tried to sleep," said another junior. "She had named her feet and had puppet shows with them at night. It annoyed me because I tried to go to sleep, and she didn't change her behavior during the entire time we roomed together."

There are other problems with roommates from hell. Not only do they often inhibit sleep, other things they do are generally rude and obnoxious as well. There's the roommate who leaves his clothes



and trash on the floor when his roommate has guests over for the weekend. Other roommates have serious problems with stealing or vandalism. The sister of an NCSSM junior had this story to tell about a roommate at a two-week residential camp.

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