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UA12/2/1 Housing Guide

WKU Student Affairs

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Comfort animals play diverse role on the Hill

BY SHANTEL-ANN PETTYWAY
HERALD.FEATURES@WKU.EDU

Walking across campus, you might see people walking their dogs, rocking cockatoos on their shoulder or holding a cat. Does it ever cross your mind that some of these animals live in the same residence hall as you?

Savannah Jolly, Hardinsburg junior, might be one of those people you’ve seen across campus.

“A lot of people think I’m just taking Peanut for a walk, but she lives with me,” Jolly said of her pet Chihuahua.

Jolly said she loves animals. Peanut, a family dog, was found on the side of the road. Although Peanut loves the rest of the family, Jolly said the dog was always more attached to her.

“She was always drawn to me. I know my family misses her a lot, but they have other animals to keep them company,” Jolly said.

Save for fish, WKU doesn’t allow pets to be kept in residence halls. However, “professionally trained service dogs and companion animals are not considered pets,” according to the Residence Hall Handbook.

These pets are like family members for some students and are essential to their college experience.

Sophomore Chelsea Denhard of Thompkinsville and her yorkipoo Boo Boo live in Minton Hall.

“I owned Boo Boo’s parents, and I was right there when she was born,” Denhard said.

“She’s my baby.”

Though Denhard has had Boo Boo since she was born, she has only been living with Boo Boo for a couple of weeks.

Boo Boo is currently adjusting to her new living arrangements. While Boo Boo doesn’t growl or bark at people, Denhard said the dog sometimes gives humans questioning looks as though curious about what they’re doing.

Jolly, however, said she can’t say the same thing about Peanut. Jolly said she never knew how aggressive a little Chihuahua could be before she got Peanut.

“Peanut is shy, but she is very overprotective when people come around me,” Jolly said.

It might seem cool to have a pet in your dorm, but comfort animals are designed to help their owners according to their needs.

“Emotional Support Animals are used in Animal Assisted Therapy to improve the physical, social, emotional and cognitive condition of the patient,” according to PetTravel.com.

Denhard lives with Boo Boo to help ease her anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

“For me personally, if I get stressed or start freaking out, holding her calms me down,” Denhard said.

For Denhard the “calm, compassionate and caring” feelings Boo Boo projects transfer to her. Boo Boo has helped Denhard refocus when college life becomes difficult for Denhard to handle.

“Having this constant sense of peace helps me focus my attention off of the situation and on her, and it calms me down,” she said.

On the other hand, Jolly believes Peanut helps her to be more social than she normally would be on her own.

“When people come up to pet Peanut when we’re out, it just starts conversation with people I wouldn’t normally have,” Jolly said.

Louisville sophomore Kaylie Connors also has a companion animal. Her pet ferret Mulder, whose name was inspired by Fox Mulder of the television drama “The X-Files,” lives with Connors in Pearce-Ford Tower.

Connors said Mulder brings happiness not only to her but to the residents on her floor as well. She believes having a companion pet is a privilege people shouldn’t take lightly.

“I think it’s a really serious matter to have a comfort pet,” Connors said. “It’s unethical to have an animal in the dorms just because you want one; it’s a serious thing.”

To have comfort animals, students must go through the Student Accessibility Resource Center, get an approved doctor’s note explaining why the animal is needed, and then be approved by Kit Tolbert, the director of Housing and Residence Life, to house the animal, according to Connors.

“There’s a valid reason for us to have these comfort animals. Other people shouldn’t take advantage because it seems easy to get one,” Connors said.

Jolly doesn’t have any concerns about students trying to get animals for their personal enjoyment because she feels the process is safe.

“Even if someone was to try to fake to their doctor a need for a support animal, they would need to show progression of an illness — though I wouldn’t call it an illness,” Jolly said.

These students are happy that they have their pets here to share their college experience with them.

“A lot of people come up to me and ask, ‘Is that a ferret?’” Connors said. “It’s just nice seeing how excited people get to see and pet Mulder.”

Denhard shared the same sentiments.

“People will come to my room and ask to pet her, and I let them because it’s like this little dog gives people so much joy,” she said.

Aside from random people approaching them to ask questions and taking pets to the grass for bathroom breaks, these students are happy to have this option.

“I really appreciate that this is an option for students to have at WKU. It’s a good thing,” Denhard said.
WKU’s Housing and Residence Life has released its 10-year housing plan to renovate old dorms and build new dorms.

Kit Tolbert, the director of HRL, said she met with members of the planning committee this spring to draw up a tentative plan. The plan includes renovations of several dorms that would allow for more residents as well as the construction of at least two new dorms. The plan is open for other construction when the first two dorms are finished.

Tolbert said rather than building traditional, community-style dorms, the new dorms will be similar to apartment-style living.

“They’ll be more of a suite, pod-type living arrangement where you’ll have a group of bedrooms that share a basic common area,” Tolbert said.

Tolbert said the idea to move away from traditional dorms came from the students.

“One of the things that students have told us when we surveyed them was that they would like that different style building,” Tolbert said.

Jacob Brumley, a sophomore from Lawrenceburg who currently lives in Minton Hall, said he has only lived in a community-style dorm, and he would recommend it to first-year students.

“It’s a very good way to get into college for your first year because it does build a relationship with the people around you because you’re with them so much,” Brumley said.

Despite his experience in the community-style dorms, Brumley said he would not live in them after his sophomore year.

Mariah Cobb, Bowling Green sophomore, lives in Southwest Hall.

Cobb said she lived in Keen Hall last year but prefers to live in a suite-style dorm.

“It’s more convenient than living in the common-bathroom style,” Cobb said. “You don’t have to wait in line or anything like that, and you know who has been in there so it’s less of the bleaching it down.”

Both Cobb and Brumley said they would be willing to pay more for a suite-style dorm.

The move to more suite-style dorms will mirror the changes other campuses are experiencing. Northern Kentucky University, Eastern Kentucky University, the University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky have gradually reduced the number of community-style dorms on their campuses while building more suite-style and apartment-style dorms.

Suite-style dorms are often more expensive than community-style dorms, and Tolbert said the new dorms would cost more.

Tolbert also said the cost of living in WKU’s current dorms will increase to cover some of the upcoming construction costs.

Despite the increase, WKU will still have a housing price comparable to prices at other universities.

WKU’s current cost of housing per semester is between $2,134 and $2,395 for on-campus housing with one roommate.

WKU’s housing is closer to the lower end of both U of L’s and UK’s housing costs. U of L costs between $1,900 and $5,036, and UK costs between $2,393 and $4,342, according to their websites.

Tolbert said the funding for the 10-year plan will be borrowed from banks. To secure these loans, HRL will use the WKU Student Life Foundation, which owns the residence halls.

According to a previous Herald article from 1999, WKU’s residence halls needed renovations at the time; however, the university was unable to pay for the construction due to its $21 million debt on the dorms.

In an effort to make renovations possible, President Gary Ransdell and the administration created an entity separate from the university that would buy the residence halls from WKU.

The separate entity was SLF, which was created as a private, nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. In 2000, SLF purchased 17 of WKU’s 18 dorms.

In exchange for the dorms, SLF sold $65 million in tax-exempt bonds. The sale of these bonds allowed SLF to absorb WKU’s $21 million debt on the dorms. As part of the contract, SLF and WKU agreed that in 20 years, WKU would have the option to buy back the residence halls or extend the contract.

Tolbert said HRL is not able to receive state funding, and the university does not give HRL any money. The money students pay to live in dorms allows HRL to pay off loans secured by SLF.

“Everything we do when it comes to construction or renovation we can do because we can borrow money,” Tolbert said.

Tolbert said the first part of the plan will be to renovate Northeast and Southwest. She said the renovations are expected to be finished in fall 2017. Construction on the new dorms will hopefully begin within the next year after a location is chosen.
I’ve never quite understood the idiom “home is where the heart is.” At face value, it simply means that wherever you experience love and happiness is where your physical or metaphorical home is. Maybe I’ve long rejected this idiom at face value because it downplays the other vital organs. Yes, the heart is an important organ for survival, but what about the brain, stomach or kidneys? What about the lingering attachment some of us have for our left pinky toes?

Now that I’ve worked at the Herald for almost two years, I’ve interviewed a good number of people. I always start with the same questions: “What’s your name?” and, after they help me spell it, “What year are you? Where are you from?”

I ask these questions so I can identify the person speaking in my stories and so people don’t think I’m making them up. I’ve interviewed people from Peru and Pakistan and, of course, a slew of folks who hail from Kentucky.

Asking people where they’re from, I started wondering if the answers really indicated where they considered their true homes — the places where their hearts were, not just their residences.

Home is an important concept and a popular word; it falls in the top 30 percent of words on Merriam Webster’s online dictionary. For me, home is Olive Hill where I grew up, attended church, was involved with the community, graduated high school and spent the majority of my formative years. Part of my home is still Olive Hill as my metaphorical heart is still there, but now my home is also Bowling Green.

In an interview with the Atlantic, Susan Clayton, psychology professor at the College of Wooster, said for many people home is a part of their self-definition. Clayton went on to say that “for better or worse, the place where we grew up usually retains an iconic status.” For me, that means embracing my identity as an Appalachian and coming to terms with the complexities of that identity.

Curious to know what home meant to other people and if it had the same connotations for them as it did for me, I took to the shade of the red “Centennial” statue in Centennial Mall to ask people what home meant to them.

Taryn Mitchell, Chicago junior, said she made Kentucky her home after living here for three years. She has family in Chicago and Hawaii as well, but for her, home is wherever a person is happy.

Robert Dietle, head of the history department, said for him home means Bowling Green. He’s lived in the city for 24 years now. For Dietle, home means “a place where your family and friends live.”

Charlie Starmer, a freshman from Louisville, said home means the place where he can be the most comfortable with being himself, and right now his home is here at WKU.

Nashville freshman Jayla Jones said she considers her home to be where she grew up: Franklin, Tennessee. She said she has a lot of family there and has fond memories of spending time with her grandmother.

“Home means safe,” Jones said.

Lynette Breedlove, the director of the Gatton Academy, moved to Bowling Green a year and a half ago from Houston. She said the move from Houston to Bowling Green wasn’t as big of a transition as people might think. For her, establishing friendships and ties within the community made the transition easier.

“Home to me is warmth and safety and belonging,” Breedlove said.

Subarna Pandit, a first-year student from New Delhi, India, said her home is in India but also in Bowling Green. She said she misses her home, and it can be tough sometimes being so far away.

Pandit defined home as “[a] place I find comfort and want to go back to.”

Glasgow freshman Alex Sergent responded to the question initially with what he thought was a cliche, but then he followed up by saying home is wherever he is and wherever he finds enjoyment.

“I don’t necessarily need a base camp,” Sergent said.

Safety, belonging and comfort are likely all qualities people can agree home embodies for them. Or maybe you agree more with Sergent’s perspective that home is something you carry with you rather than a “base camp.”

Our definitions of what home is differ dramatically, and perhaps these individual differences can be attributed to factors like economics, mobility, choice and social standing. Regardless of differences, however, the meaning of home is crucial for all of us.
Being in the middle of my last semester, I’m capable of looking back on my years in college and recognizing all the mistakes I’ve made. From transferring twice, which means I’ve attended three schools in three cities, to never utilizing the library to its full potential, I’ve made a range of college faux pas. The one mistake that makes me the most disappointed in myself, however, is choosing to live on campus through my last two years.

Not that living on campus is that bad — there are many good things about it — but going “home” to my tiny dorm room every night kind of feels like going back to my jail cell after a day in the yard. There’s barely any space, and no matter how thoroughly I mop the floor, it never feels clean. If I think about it too much, being there just makes me feel icky — and I live in Southwest, so I have my own bathroom.

Living in dorms, to me, essentially means that you receive half the independence college is supposed to teach you. I’m 21, and my roommate is 23. We’re definitely older than most people who live on campus, but we’re still treated as though we were freshmen.

With all the rules that come with living in a dorm, I feel like I’m being controlled by overbearing parents, which is annoying because my mom was never strict. In the dorm, I feel even less independent than I do when I’m living with my mom during holidays, which is silly. The worst part is that when I’m feeling stressed about school, I can’t even have a glass of wine or light a nice, relaxing candle because of the restrictions.

It’s not always terrible, though. I love being able to wake up 10 minutes before class without being late. I also enjoy being right across the street from work when I’m working late nights at the Student Publications Center. There are many food options nearby so I never go hungry, but I miss being able to cook my own meals.

All in all, being old and living on campus isn’t really that bad, but to me it feels like I’m sacrificing my own independence just so I don’t have to pay rent out of pocket every month. I think it depends on what you’re comfortable with. If you’re comfortable living in the dorms your junior or senior year, then good on you. Just do you, boo.
Columnist shares experience as a college-age landlady

BY ELISABETH MOORE
HERALD.FEATURES@WKU.EDU

When I started searching for a cheaper alternative for housing at WKU, I couldn’t have guessed that the result would make me the landlord of my own house.

College housing costs students living on campus thousands of dollars per year. For students without other options, it can cost tens of thousands before the student’s four years at WKU are complete.

As I moved in freshman year to my dorm, I also moved in with debt. I felt as if I came with one suitcase full of loans and another, somewhat smaller duffle bag full of scholarships.

Living in a dorm was fine with me, but after a semester I put on my thinking cap and started searching for a cheaper way to live on or near campus.

Not much turned up, but when my aunt told me about her moving and how she had recently filed for disability, I thought there might be another option.

My aunt, who lived alone with multiple extra rooms, was only a short car ride away from Bowling Green, and staying with her would benefit us both. One letter to Housing and Residence Life later, and I was off campus as a sophomore.

Soon after, we started to look for tenants to rent the extra rooms. Within the next year, three renters moved in and my aunt moved out. This caused my parents to buy the house and made me the landlord.

Being a landlord is an interesting experience to say the least. I have had to deal with keeping up with the yard, making sure the pets of the house are still living and also solving my tenant’s problems.

I have gone through multiple creepy renters before I found ones I could trust. I have had to deal with drunk tenants ranging from a tenant passing out in the backyard to one drunkenly asking me out — trust me, I said no. I have also had to deal with walking in on a tenant buying weed in the middle of the living room.

Although being a landlord can be taxing at times, I like to believe there is a good side to this job. For example, the house costs about $850 per month, not counting taxes, so the tenants help me pay to live there.

I’ve also found two new tenants whom I enjoy living with.

Being a landlady has allowed me to experience life off campus as well as what it really means to be a homeowner, though I have had plenty of help from my parents.

Although the yard could use some work, the inside could be cleaned more and there might be something dead in the air vent, this house has been a great staple in my life.

Bedford junior Elisabeth Moore poses in front of her house, which she rents to other people, on Wednesday, March 23. Moore moved into her aunt’s house in Franklin her sophomore year, found renters and became the landlady. “It’s nice, but I have to make sure everyone’s happy,” Moore said. ERICA LAFSER/HERALD

Going away to college: When distance is just a number

BY BRITTINY MOORE
HERALD.FEATURES@WKU.EDU

After a 15-hour road trip, my legs were numb and my stomach was heavy with junk food. Arriving in Bowling Green never felt so good.

My parents and grandparents had made the 993-mile trip — a huge feat — to drop me off for my first day at WKU. I watched my mother shed tears as she left her baby behind to begin the next chapter in her life; this is still a common goodbye tradition. Now, almost three years later, the journey home to Dodge City, Kansas, is still a burden.

Packing up and moving hours away from home is an amazing way to experience life, but more often than not, after a bad week of exams, projects and assignments, I find myself wishing I could curl up on my old lumpy bed and listen to the cows moo in the backyard.

Leaving home means leaving the comfort of the people — and sometimes the pets — who love you.

After countless nights of late phone calls with your mom, time passes. You make friends, and you adjust to life in a once-strange environment.

We make the choice to move away for different reasons. Regardless of the reason, there is something to be said about the student who braves the unknown.

Niche Ink, a website devoted to in-depth articles and education analysis, reported from a 2012-2014 analysis of users that only 11 percent of students traveled more than 500 miles to attend college while 72 percent stayed in their home state.

As part of the 11 percent, I can’t say I have ever regretted my decision. I chose to leave the comforts of home for more opportunity.

Being such a great distance from a physical support system allows you to grow in ways you might have thought impossible.

At college you’re an adult, and you have to start acting like one. Dad can’t be there to check the oil in your car and make sure you get a change before you blow the engine. You must become observant of all those little details in life your parents always took care of for you.

However, this awareness makes you brave and prepares you for other obstacles in life. You won’t think twice about how far away your study abroad trip is or how intimidating your first internship will be because you’ve done it all before. You’ve reached outside your comfort zone and grown to be more confident in your ability to adapt, learn and stand on your own two feet.

However far from home you go, the true challenge is not the distance you must travel to get there but the distance that lies between you and those you leave behind. This is the challenge to begin anew, to move outside your comfort zone and to allow yourself to take risks that lead to tremendous growth — growth that sets you apart from the rest.
Students rant and rejoice over their random roommates

BY SAMANTHA CLARK
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When students log on to TopNet to pick their roommates for the upcoming fall semester, some might consider having a random roommate assigned to them instead of choosing their own.

Random roommates have their ups and downs, but they can give students a chance to reinvent themselves and make the most out of college life.

“You get to make new friends who don't know about all the embarrassing stuff from grade school,” Lexington sophomore Hayley VanMeter said.

Coming to WKU, VanMeter didn't know anyone and was worried her roommate would be “super strange.” After meeting her roommate on move-in day and suffering through all the awkwardness of meeting a new person, VanMeter began to find they had a lot of things in common.

“She was really great,” VanMeter said. “I don't know if I could have made it through freshman year without her.”

VanMeter said she was one of the lucky ones. She chose a random roommate and ended up with a lifelong friend.

There can be some downsides to having a random roommate. Tamara Warren, Frankfort sophomore, experienced this downside head-on when she lived with her random roommate.

Warren said she knew it was going to be bad when she walked into her room for the first time, saw paw print stickers on her wall and was asked if she wanted to see her new roommate's card collection.

“Consider all the facts,” Johnson said about getting a random roommate. “If you're not okay with certain things, you essentially just have to get over it.”

Not all random roommates end up being as perfect as VanMeter and her roommate were, but they aren't all awful either. Hayley Moss, a sophomore from Campbellsville, said she and her random roommate got along okay.

They had fun at first and enjoyed each other's company, but after a while their personalities started to clash.

“She was just so nice, it started to get annoying,” Moss said.

Moss said her roommate left her candy sometimes and that the gesture always made her happy, but Moss never had much time to herself.

“Some roommates might not give you a lot of alone time, so you need to be prepared for that,” Moss said.

Random roommates can have many different outcomes, but they aren't all bad.

“At least you'll have a story to tell no matter what the outcome is,” Warren said.
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What is most important to you when looking for an apartment?

- 55% Price

What's the best part about living on campus?

- 41% Easy walk to class

What are your housing plans for next year?

- 45% On campus

Does WKU need a new roommate matching system?

- 61% Yes
We polled our Twitter followers about housing issues over the past week. Happy house hunting, Tops.

#HeraldHousingGuide

**What is the worst on campus housing rule?**

- Visitation/Guest hours: 39%

**Worst roommate behavior?**

- Leaving stuff everywhere: 42%

**What's the most stressful part of living off campus?**

- Bills: 64%

**Do you feel like off campus students have adequate renter's rights?**

- No: 57%
I won’t romanticize dorm life, but it was still pretty great

BY MADISON MARTIN
HERALD.FEATURES@WKU.EDU

M.A.S.T.E.R. Plan was an amazing way to get to know the rest of my floor, most of whom were freshmen. My resident assistant for my freshman year was an absolute sweetheart — a mother goose to her fledgling ducklings — who had no problem enjoying our childish antics and joining in. She chose our eighth floor of freshmen on purpose to help with orientation and act as the first on-campus aunt we could go to. After getting to know each other during that week before classes, I met what was to be my core friend group here at WKU. I also became familiar and friendly with the rest of my floor.

Bemis Lawrence Hall has been a fantastic place to find friends and make new connections. We called ourselves “eighth floor’s finest” that year because we really were. We were boisterous and diverse, sometimes catty but usually sweet. It was a great way to be thrown into college.

Dorm life is interesting because you’re being put together with a bunch of nasty girls. However, there’s a lot of realness and fun that comes along with it. Some of my favorite memories are when my friends and I would spend hours hanging out and studying on our hallway floor. I remember one crazy night that turned into a sleepover so loud we were sure someone would complain.

That’s not to mention all the times when walking down the hall on a lazy Friday afternoon turned into multiple conversations with floormates from all walks of life. All the while, RA’s would conduct floor checks while smiling and laughing at our antics because just about anything goes.

You live in such close quarters with these people, and that proximity makes way for an easier entrance into friendship. You all have different majors and goals in life, but still they become your close friends.

We’ve moved floors, and this second year at Bemis has been quieter, but it still has some of those good vibes filtering through. Things are different, but that’s okay. We’ve matured and gotten through that first year, figuring out a little bit more the trajectory of our lives. An old floormate has become an RA, and my current roommate will be one next year. I’m glad they are continuing the kind and authentic attitudes that meant so much to me my freshman year.

When I look at my past two years at WKU, I greatly appreciate the opportunities I’ve had to get involved in student media, work for fantastic faculty at an on-campus job and be challenged by my courses. Still, it’s difficult to imagine what my experience would have been without calling Bemis home.

Now, three friends and I have signed our leases for our first apartment together next semester, and I can’t be more excited. We’ll still treasure some of our most personal, serious and ultimately silly experiences that transpired in Bemis.

So to Bemis and to all the lovely women who live, work and create its welcoming culture there: thank you for making Bemis all that it is! It’s been real.

A weary traveler explains why he is tired of the road

BY DUSTIN SKIPWORTH
HERALD.NEWS@WKU.EDU

I don’t enjoy driving anymore. I have lost sight of the ideals of freedom found on American roadways.

Somewhere on the long stretch of road of my 45 minute morning commute from Russellville, those images of freedom sank behind a rolling hill. Those fantasies took the backseat in my Jeep to the truth about driving in America: it’s simply necessary.

When I first started the commute, I found it somewhat invigorating and exciting. I wanted to explore the ways of the long-distance daily commuter. I bought a coffee tumbler with a lid for my cupholder, my sunglasses became fundamental to survival, and I started the long process of programming my radio.

What I didn’t understand then is that a vehicle is a monster. It demands to be fed and maintained like an addiction.

When I’m in my car, I’m surrounded by things that will eventually and inevitably cost me money, and all the while the odometer ticks closer to engine failure.

I commute to save the money I’d spend on rent, so at least gas prices are kind of cheap. However, there is a suppressed thud somewhere in the back of my mind that tells me I’m driving the planet to death. My carbon footprint is enormous, I’m sure. Like most of us, I try not to think about it too much.

Something else is demanded from a commuter. It’s more than the gasoline or oil my vehicle consumes, although it isn’t a renewable resource. Last semester I spent a total of 7.5 hours a week just driving to campus and back. That’s staggering. It’s almost 8 hours I could have spent doing anything else.

Sometimes I wonder about all the other cars around me on the highway. How many people are stuck on commutes like this? It’s a little overwhelming to think about how much life is wasted just trying to get where you’ve got to be. But hey, it’s necessary, right?

While it might be one of the facts of American life that you’ve got to drive sometimes, I don’t believe it’s necessary to live so far away from school or your workplace. So if you’re thinking of joining the ranks of long-distance commuters of America, please reconsider. I’m already looking for a place in Bowling Green for the fall.
How to dress your best with a limited amount of storage

BY SCOUT HARDIN
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So you live in a dorm? We all know how depressing that can be. Your ramen constantly goes missing — you suspect your roommate is a noodle-thieving ninja — you’re forced to sleep on the top bunk and, worst of all, you have only a ridiculously small cubby to use as a “closet.” Well, when life gives you lemons — or a very tiny dresser — you make lemonade.

Know this: having great style doesn’t require a huge closet. You know what makes you fashionable? Classic basics and a little creativity.

Begin with decluttering. Haven’t worn that dress in the past six months? Donate it! Remember the blouse with the red wine stain? Toss it to the curb! We can all get a bit sentimental when it comes to our clothes, but now it’s time to take a step back and objectively decide whether or not you are going to wear it.

Having too many items in your closet is not only overwhelming but also hinders people from being resourceful and making new clothing combinations.

Once your closet is streamlined, time to go shopping! And yes, I know I just told you to minimize, but without making sure you have a few key basics, all those trips to Goodwill will have been in vain. Let your mother finally buy you that white button-down she so desperately wants you to wear. Invest in a good pair of jeans and a denim jacket. Simple items in solid colors are perfect for mixing and matching with your other, more exciting pieces.

After you have given your new and improved wardrobe the onceover, it’s time to clean up. Embrace the tiny closet! Buy baskets to organize your undies and socks. Put those nifty little command strips on the outer walls; this is extra handy for belts. Spare stackable boxes are great for storing shoes.

Dressing well doesn’t equate oodles of expensive clothes. Money can buy you a fancy closet, but it can’t buy taste. Raise your glass — of lemonade, of course — and give a toast to tiny closets with big style!
Meredith Hall gives sorority members full experience

BY KJ HALL
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Not all sororities at WKU have a large house full of rooms ready for all its members like some sororities might have at bigger universities. One residence hall in particular is designated for sororities with small chapter houses to give members a similar experience to living in the house.

Located near the bottom of the Hill, Meredith Hall is home primarily to four sororities: Chi Omega, Alpha Omicron Pi, Alpha Xi Delta and Phi Mu.

Margo Grace, WKU Phi Mu alumna and president of the housing corporation for Phi Mu, uses funds to purchase a section of Meredith to be home to 44 Phi Mu members every year.

Fort Thomas sophomore Laura Bunning serves as housing chairwoman for WKU’s Phi Mu chapter and has lived in both Meredith and the Phi Mu house. Bunning moved into Meredith in the spring of her freshman year and continued to live there through the fall of her sophomore year.

“Living in Meredith brought me closer to people I wouldn’t have met otherwise,” Bunning said. “It made the difference in me from kind of feeling lost in the fall of my freshman year to being so excited to get back to school after summer by the end of the spring.”

Phi Mus are required to live in some form of Phi Mu housing for two semesters. Only eight spots for members of the Executive Board are available in the Phi Mu house, Bunning said, adding that Meredith provides a great opportunity for members to bond with sisters in their pledge class and with those in later classes.

Meredith Hall is set up suite style with four people to a room, two people to a room and a bathroom that connects the two rooms. There is a study room on every floor and kitchens available as well.

The biggest difference for Bunning is the use of a kitchen, which she didn’t use in Meredith but now utilizes frequently in the Phi Mu house.

“Living in the Phi Mu house allows you to get closer to people you might not have been close to in the chapter,” Bunning said.

Bunning said living in Meredith is also great because if you’re having a bad day, you can walk in and open any door and be consoled, and members know you would do the same for them.

“With dorm life, you can also expect to have plumbing and electricity issues, which you think would be a deficit, but not necessarily,” Bunning said as she recalled one of her favorite memories from living in Meredith.

Bunning and her suitemates, whom she didn’t know well at the time, were up talking when they realized their sinks were filling up with water at 2 a.m. They had to have a resident assistant in their room to help fix the issue, which wasn’t resolved until 3 a.m. But Bunning said it’s things like that — the issues and funny problems that only happen in a dorm — that allow you to bond. She said those suitemates are now some of her best friends.

Elizabethtown junior Kristina Gonzalez-Lopez went through informal recruitment and joined Phi Mu in the spring of 2014. She has experienced life in both Meredith and the Phi Mu house and agrees that while the house has more places to nap and fewer closets, it was great to live next to and get to know so many sisters in Meredith.

“Meredith is definitely a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,” Gonzalez-Lopez said. “We’re not like bigger universities like Alabama or [the University of Kentucky] where they have big sorority houses; our house only holds eight people. So Meredith made up for that and gave me the opportunity to have a similar experience.”

Students give opinions about campus laundry facilities

BY MONICA KAST
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Sometimes the washers on campus work but the dryers don’t, leaving you with a pile of dripping clothes and nowhere to put them. Other times, change machines will be broken, and you’re out of luck unless you can find somewhere else to make change.

Whatever it might be, doing laundry on-campus presents its own set of obstacles.

“I imagine that we get complaints at least once a day or more,” freshman Austin Pittman, the vice president of Resident Affairs for the Residence Hall Association, said of laundry facilities.

The Residence Hall Association recently conducted a survey of students asking them for opinions and feedback about doing laundry on campus. Earlier this semester, 722 students took the Laundry and Vending Survey, which asked how often students used the laundry and vending facilities and how often they were actually functional.

One survey question asked respondents to rate their agreement with the statement, “When I am ready to do my laundry using my residence hall laundry facilities, the washers and dryers are working and operational.” About 16 percent of respondents selected “strongly disagree,” 34 percent selected “disagree” and 22 percent selected “neutral.” About 27 percent of respondents selected “agree” or “strongly agree.”

Sabrina Moll, Bedford sophomore, said she avoids doing laundry on campus if possible.

“I always have to dry my towels twice,” she said.

Pittman said many respondents expressed frustration with the laundry facilities and how issues with those facilities were handled.

“We did find that a lot of people did not know what to do if a washer or dryer broke down,” Pittman said. “One of the most popular answers was ‘beat it up’ or ‘kick it.’”

One question on the survey asked, “What should you do if you find a washer or dryer that is not working?” Pittman estimated that about 5 percent of respondents didn’t know what to do if a washer or dryer wasn’t working properly.

Another question on the survey asked if students would rather pay a flat fee of about $17 at the beginning of each semester as a laundry fee or continue to pay per load. About 73 percent of respondents said they would rather pay a flat fee per semester.

Moll said she supports this idea.

“A flat fee would save me so much money,” Moll said.

Other colleges and universities in Kentucky have moved toward this flat fee method. Institutions including the University of Louisville, Morehead State University and Eastern Kentucky University are offering laundry to students with the cost covered in their housing fees, according to each school’s website.

Pittman said the Residence Hall Association is meeting this week to address the findings of the survey and continue to develop the idea of a flat fee each semester to cover the cost of laundry.

“That’s definitely something that I feel needs to be addressed because, especially for me, I don’t have a million quarters sitting around my room,” Pittman said. “I don’t think anybody really does, especially when the quarter machines break down and you don’t have any way to do your laundry.”
BY EMMA AUSTIN
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When you live on campus, issues are sure to arise. Whether it’s a roommate conflict, broken furniture or a toilet with water that won’t stop rising, the transition to independence can be difficult. Luckily, on-campus residents have someone to make this transition go smoothly: their resident assistant.

Elizabethtown sophomore Kyler Hart is in his second full semester as an RA at McCormack Hall. Hart said his favorite part of the job is seeing how freshmen change during their first year of college.

“I like seeing people grow and develop from when they get here, so that’s really rewarding,” Hart said.

Although Hart initially applied for the position to meet new people and get his own room, he said he has developed many essential skills since he became an RA.

“If you actually put forth the effort to be as good of an RA as you can be, it requires a lot of time,” Hart said.

Juggling classes with work can be challenging, he said, but it has taught him how to manage his time well.

Zach Marcum, assistant resident hall director of McCormack Hall, said Hart manages his time to the minute.

“Kyler is a very unique RA and an incredible young man,” Marcum said. “It is when an RA decides to be the best that they can be that they inevitably become like him.”

Though he was nervous at the beginning of his first semester as an RA, Hart said other staff members helped ease his transition into the new job.

He also said he has had great hall directors since starting as an RA.

“They have all shaped me into who I am today both inside and outside of the job,” he said.

Hart said he plans on being an RA until he graduates, at which time he hopes to become a hall director. “I like to take pride in helping my guys,” he said.

“I’d like to be known on my floor as someone who my residents can rely on and be able to trust with their questions,” he said.

He said he gets asked everything, including questions about campus and about what to wear the next day.

Hart said he tries to stay in his room as often as he can to make himself available to offer help and connect with residents.

“He is able to connect to a very diverse population of residents in ways that a typical college student would struggle with,” Marcum said.

Hart said his dream job is to be the chief technology officer of an organization. He said he plans on attending graduate school to get a Master of Business Administration degree.

“Being an RA has taught me a lot of valuable skills,” Hart said. “You learn how to budget your time effectively; it teaches you communication skills. I’d recommend it to anyone that is looking for a good challenge.”
Three albums to listen to when you’re home alone

BY ANDREW CRITCHELOW
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Sometimes the best method of winding down after a long day of academics and Hilltopping is through staying home and getting lost in a good record. Below are three albums perfect for an evening away from it all.

“PINK MOON” BY NICK DRAKE:
Though late singer-songwriter Nick Drake still isn’t exactly a household name, the impact he left on modern folk and indie music is immeasurable. Known for his fusion of folk sensibilities with lush arrangements, Drake’s final record “Pink Moon” of 1972 was a stark and stripped-down goodbye to an audience that, unfortunately, was modest at best. At a time when much of popular music was championing lavish arrangements and operatic concepts, Drake dared to make a 30-minute album of soft crooning and gentle guitar arpeggios. Despite the record’s subtle production, “Pink Moon” is a testament to the fact that sometimes the most transcendent art is also the most immediate.

“MUSIC HAS THE RIGHT TO CHILDREN” BY BOARDS OF CANADA:
It’s easy to listen to the first few notes of 1998’s “Music Has the Right to Children” and label the music as ambient. Vintage synthesizer sounds twinkle in what seems to be an eternal void, channeling a blueprint created by the likes of Brian Eno. But though ambient influences are apparent in this album, the songs seem to demand something more. Esoteric field recordings and retro voice samples embellish this record, creating a soundscape that channels tackiness and camp into the ethereal. A purely electronic work, this record somehow manages to sound warmer and more comforting than most music made by conventional means.

“BLACK FOLIAGE: ANIMATION MUSIC VOLUME ONE” BY THE OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL:
Though this maximalist exploration into musique concrete and sunny psychedelia doesn’t scream relaxation, “Black Foliage” of 1999 is definitely a record to get immersed in. The album is every bit as much of an experiment in the world of sound collage as it is a tribute to 60’s psychedelic music. The Olivia Tremor Control seamlessly transitions between Beatles-esque pop tunes and random flashes of surreal noise on this record, sometimes allowing both elements to be present on a single track. This album explores sonic lucidity in a way few albums have done before, but don’t expect to get any sleep while you listen to it.

ANDREW CRITCHELOW

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