

Students transform houses into homes

BY ALEX CARLSON
Staff Reporter

Moving into her off-campus house, junior Melissa Stone found that the former duplex was almost uninhabitable. Loud cicadas nested in the bedrooms and the kitchen was covered in nauseating dirt and grime. After two days of non-stop cleaning and painting with her housemates, the building became her slice of home.

Whether on or off-campus, Truman State students have been designing their rooms not only for relaxation and convenience, but to share their distinctive image and personality with neighbors and housemates.

Having lived in Missouri Hall for the first two years of college, Stone was eager to leave the residence hall lifestyle and make a new home off-campus. She was not alone in her endeavor. Stone was one of 14 students in her Missouri Hall house who made a pact to make their off-campus experiences even better than their residence hall experience. The house agreed that they had grown out of residence hall life and needed to earn their independence off campus.

Stone's passion for art is reflected by how she decorated the rooms in her house. Travel photographs and images from National Geographic magazines hang from strings on her living room walls. Translucent glass jars and scented candles she collects are scattered along her bedroom shelves and floor.

Stone said her off-campus independence and friendly housemates let her try new things with how she decorates her house, something that felt completely new compared to her life at home in St. Charles, Mo., where much of her house's design was run by her parents' preferences.

"I've worked with my housemates and next-door neighbors here to personalize the house in a new way," Stone said. "When we work together, I don't feel disconnected and I really feel like I belong here."

Home isn't limited to off-campus students. Some students have even made their residence hall rooms noticeably homey and interesting to fellow residents.

Sophomore Jared Dietrich met sophomore Alex Fowler in Truman's ROTC program two years ago, and since then, the two have roomed together on the third floor of Dobson Hall. The two friends have worked together to personalize their room to their liking.

The ROTC duo's camouflage backpacks sit on the small patches of floor still visible from their many belongings,



Hanna Bilinski/Index
Sophomores Alex Fowler and Jared Dietrich relax in their Army-themed room in Dobson Hall. Fowler and Dietrich are members of Truman's Army ROTC program and have decorated their room with their camouflage belongings.

while a matching camouflage poncho tied to their loft beds' posts stretches across the middle of their room. The students even brought a massive reclining couch up to their third floor room. The couch fills a large amount of space in the two-person room, while the poncho dims the shining overhead light. Dietrich and Fowler's room gathers plenty of attention from other students in Dobson Hall, Dietrich said.

"We get a lot of interested looks from other people on our floor," Dietrich said. "Sometimes people will see us walk by them on campus and say 'Hey, you're the guys with the Army room!' They may not know us, but they definitely know our room."

Atop the roommates' furniture, buried behind multiple pairs of boots and shoes, sits a large, cardboard treasure

with its own value.

"We call it our empty box," Fowler said. "It really is an empty box, but between us, we give it value. I'd say it's our pride and joy. Call it an heirloom between us."

Dietrich and Fowler value their room's reputation in Dobson Hall, but the two are eager to move off campus during May and get another fresh start. The rambunctious nature of the residence hall life has convinced the duo to move to a house behind Barnett Hall when the semester ends.

For now, though, the students continue to express themselves through their own room designs, while also gaining plenty of attention from their peers.

"We like making our room our own," Dietrich said. "If people notice, then that's not a bad thing."

Runners brave the cold

BY KATE LINMAN
Staff Reporter

Despite the freezing temperatures, inches of snow and iced-over roads, junior Sarah Cutler has kept running on the streets of Kirksville.

Now on her third winter season, Cutler said she has picked up some tricks to keep her safe in the cold, dangerous winter weather.

Cutler runs four to five times a week to train for the GO! St. Louis Marathon, which is April 15. She runs anywhere from six to 13 miles each time she goes running. Because there is less daylight during winter months, runners have to change the time they run.

"I am not comfortable running in the dark," Cutler said. "Drivers can't always see you, even with a [reflective] safety belt."

Junior Kirsten Vollmer, who runs fours to five times a week, plans to start training during February for the GO! St. Louis half marathon. She said her schedule makes it difficult for her to run during daylight hours. While she owns bright orange running shorts to ensure drivers can see her, Vollmer said she is more inclined to run in the Student Recreation Center any time after 5 p.m.

Because the weather has a big impact on her training schedule, she looks at it ahead of time to plan her runs.

"I take my off-days when there is snow on the ground, and when it melts is when I do my longer runs," Vollmer said.

She said she runs on the track in the rec center when there is unexpected weather and she really wants to work out.

Rec center director Sue Limestall said the rec has 11 treadmills and a one-tenth of a mile track. She said the track and treadmill provide a safe, stable surface for runners.

Although the rec provides an ice-free, warm place to run, Cutler prefers running outside because she said she doesn't like running on treadmills and would have to complete 130 laps on the track to run 13 miles.

Cutler said the icy or snowy conditions during winter also affect her running. She said she has become good at spotting black ice. Sometimes, she said, she has to run on ice or snow. Instead of trying to side step ice, runners should put their whole foot on the ice to get more traction. They also have to change their footing and the weight they put on each foot so they don't fall.

"On ice you try to stay light on your feet so you don't slip," Cutler said.

She said if the sidewalks aren't cleared to run on she has to run on the street, but she stressed that runners should always run on the left side of the street to see oncoming traffic.

Cutler also said it is important to wear quality, winter weather clothing while running outdoors. She said she has every part of her body covered with tight sport fabric, like neoprene, to keep her muscles warm. She also wears running leggings and a tight shirt with a jacket, gloves and a hat. She recommends runners get a jacket with a hood that covers most of their face to protect themselves from wind burn.

Cutler said she always brings a running water bottle with her if she runs more than eight miles so she does not become dehydrated. She said runners need to drink just as much water in the winter as they do in the summer.

"I think people think that because they are cold, they are not sweating and they don't need to hydrate," Cutler said.

Cutler encourages people to try running, but to be prepared for all conditions if they choose to run during the winter.

Cutler said to subscribe to one last tip for winter running: avoid puddles.



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Junior Melissa Stone reads a magazine while lounging on her bed in her off-campus house. Stone shows her passion for art by decorating her house with National Geographic magazines and travel photos.



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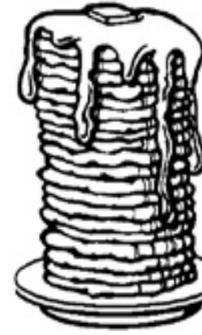
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