

Goin' Mobile

LAWN CHAIRS? CHECK. PINK FLAMINGOS? CHECK. Coolers of beer? Check. Faux wood siding? Double check.

It doesn't sound like the makings of your average dorm dwelling, but students at schools like Utah State U. and the U. of California, Santa Cruz, are finding that mobile home and trailer park living is the life for them.

Utah State offers married students the opportunity to live on one of its 178 mobile home "pads." The university maintains the pads and rents them to students, but the students are responsible for buying the mobile home on the plot.

"The trailer park has been around since 1958," says John Ringle, associate director of housing at USU. "We even have a trailer from '58 that's still there. It's not very mobile, but it's still there."

Students buy their mobile homes — which can range from \$10,000 to \$20,000 — and pay the school about \$175 a month for rent and utilities.

"It's better than renting an apartment," says resident and Utah

State grad Brook Ormsby, whose husband is a senior at the school. "The rent is cheap, you get back what you put into it when you sell it, and you can remodel it or do whatever you want with it."

The trailer park at Santa Cruz



Join the upwardly mobile students.

isn't only for married students, although the number of spaces is limited to about 45 slots, says resident and senior Josh Muir.

"There's a long waiting list because this is a great place to live," Muir says. "It doesn't feel like you're living on campus, even though you are. I wouldn't be able to live in the dorm — the people and the atmosphere are just different."

Muir says that other than a few lawn chairs around the park, the trailer park stereotype isn't really true at Santa Cruz.

"The park isn't really trashy, like some people would expect," he says. "But for this kind of rent, I can put up with any trailer park stigma."

Pass the grilled cheese, please.

By Colleen Rush, Associate Editor / Photo courtesy of Donna Horchner

File Under Scholastics

"MY TERM PAPER WAS CONFISCATED BY THE government." "My absence was due to an alien abduction." "An out-of-body experience made me fall asleep in class."

These excuses might not fly with ordinary instructors, but U. of Washington's Sean MacKenzie doesn't teach an ordinary class.

MacKenzie is the instructor for The Real X-Files, a course that teaches students how to investigate the kinds of paranormal phenomena featured on the TV show. The elective is offered through UW's Experimental College, a nonprofit continuing education program.

In the class, MacKenzie provides documentation on mysterious phenomena. Like the surgeon who removes implants from patients who claim they were abducted by aliens. Then

there's the reptilian goat vampire, called "El Chupacabras," that reportedly sucks blood out of farm animals in Florida and Puerto Rico. And don't discount missing-time experiences — e.g., it's noon, you see an alien in the backyard, you check your watch and suddenly it's 9 p.m.

Basically, anything that's been investigated by Scully and Mulder is fair game for MacKenzie's syllabus.

"Strange clouds fly over, and it rains frogs. Stuff like this really happens," MacKenzie says.

Alice Lancaster, an environmental engineering grad student, says she took the class because of a scientific interest in unexplained phenomena. But some classmates told her they had seen UFOs and wanted to make sense of their experiences.

"I've always had a childlike wonder about the fantastic," Lancaster says. "I think everyone has some sort of experience with the unexplained."

By Paul Dudley, U. of Washington/Illustration by Fred Dailey, U. of Tennessee, Knoxville



Screwing Up

If you think welfare or health care are ill-conceived government programs,

you can probably imagine how elected officials legislate sex. Well, imagine no more!

Willowdale, Ore. — It's against the law for a husband to talk dirty during sex.

Alabama — A man cannot seduce a chaste woman by means of "temptation, deception, arts, flattery or a promise of marriage."

14 states — Heterosexual oral sex is illegal. In 21 states, gay oral sex is illegal.

A Page in History

JEANNIE RHOADS ALMOST SCREWED UP HER chance to be the Republican National Convention's chief page — twice.

"I almost had my name pulled from the pile," says Rhoads, a senior at Point Loma Nazarene College, Calif. She had already accepted a paid internship with CBS to cover the convention but later decided to turn it down.

Then Rhoads went to the final interview and thought she really blew it when the interviewer asked her if she was a Republican. "I told them that, honestly, I don't agree with everything on the party platform."

Although Rhoads goes along with the basic premise of the party, she feels Republicans need to pay more attention to the environment and consider more gun control.

"I'm not Alex P. Keaton, but

I do believe in smaller government and individual responsibility," she says.

As chief page, Rhoads coordinated the movement of 250 pages at the convention. She also served as a youth ambassador at the convention's Young Voters' Program, which was designed to educate 16- to 24-year-olds about political issues.

"That's where my heart was," she says.

A youth convention sponsored by the program was held the last day of the national convention. Complete with bands, celebrities and political figures, it commemorated the 25th anniversary of the 26th Amendment — passed during the Vietnam War — which gave 18-year-olds the right to vote.

"You had teens going off to fight, but they couldn't vote," Rhoads says. "It's so important to start young and be concerned."

Serving as chief page kept Rhoads busy. Between interviews with CNN, MTV and The New York Times, canceling an appearance on Good Morning America and carrying out her duties, Rhoads never had a moment to herself.

"I wouldn't think about eating. Sometimes I worked from 7 a.m. to 4 a.m. Basically, it was the best and worst time of my life."

By Brent Johnson, U. of California, San Diego / Photo by Mark Patterson, UCSD



I just got paged.

The Buzz

• American College Testing (ACT) reports that the percentage of students who drop out after their first year has reached a new high. With a 26.9 percent freshman dropout rate, one in every four freshmen will not return sophomore year. Additionally, the number of students who graduate within five years has reached an all-time low of 53.3 percent.

• The typical student borrower accumulates more than \$10,000 in education debt, according to an analysis by USA Group Loan Services, one of the nation's largest student-loan administrators.

• A recent survey of college women shows that big bucks aren't a top priority when choosing the men they want to date or marry. Wealth ranked behind qualities like honesty, good looks and having time for family life. The survey was conducted by researcher Michael Cunningham from the U. of Louisville, Ky.