

Dorm Room Drama

Freshmen struggle to find a roommate

By Lexie Julbert

During their first week at Ball State University, Megan Linville's roommate suggested sticking a line of duct tape across their dorm room floor so each would stay on her designated side of the room.

The control freak also wanted to take charge of the "shared" mirror, light switch, window and TV.

Linville, a 2016 Perry grad, replied: "Hell, no!"

Later that same week, this roommate was screaming at her boyfriend on the phone — sobbing and pleading for him to visit her.

"I thought I was on Maury or something," Linville said.

As soon as the roommate convinced her boyfriend to visit and ended the call, her tears stopped.

She started laughing and then said: "I always get what I want — Just remember that."

Just like many universities, Ball State requires freshmen like Linville to live in dorms for a year. So does Indiana, Vincennes and Indiana State Universities.

According to The College Board, 40 percent of full-time college students at public universities and 64 percent at private universities live on campus.

A year ago, after being accepted to Ball State, Linville decided she was going to be open to new people and experiences, including to a roommate who wasn't already a friend.

Linville figured she would enjoy this roommate because she

seemed so friendly and sweet on social media, but the 2016 Perry grad said managing the relationship her first year of college was tough. "You'd find more well behaved kids at Walmart."

Many of today's college students tell stories about messy, stingy and loud roommates. Others talk about how blissful it is to room with someone they trust and can turn to for advice. Some of these roommates they knew in high school; others they met through social media or were matched through a university service after filling out their likes and dislikes in a survey.

A 2012 poll by the Association of College and University Housing Officers — International found that the majority, 32 out of 45 universities, allowed incoming freshmen to request roommates.

So, looking back, what advice do Perry alumni from 2015 and 2016 have for next fall's college freshmen?

Kahlie Cargal said college freshmen should not dorm with their best friends. She did at the University of Indianapolis.

"Although it may seem like a good idea, it could either make or break your friendship."

It broke hers.

"It drives me crazy when she has guys over all the time, leaves her things everywhere, blares her music while I'm trying to study or stays on the phone all night when I have to be up early for an exam."

Mckenzie Forrello couldn't disagree more. Rooming with her best friend, Brooklyn Kirkham at Ball State, was "honestly the best choice ever," she said.

They knew one another's boundaries and respected each other, as friends at Perry and then as roommates this year.

"We didn't have any awkward getting-to-know-each-other phases, so that was easy. It also helps that we get some separation on weekends so that we don't get too sick of each other," Forrello added.

Because she decided to go to a university about 400 miles away, Abby Ritter found a lot of comfort rooming with her best friend, Shea Darmelio, at West Virginia University in Morgantown, West Virginia.

At the end of a long day, Ritter likes to come back to the dorm and relax, often relying on Darmelio for advice.

"Some people say that you shouldn't room with your best friend, but if you have similar personalities and the same expectations cleaning wise and organizing how the room will go, then I don't see any issues at all," she says.

Is it any easier for guys to find compatible roommates?

Blake Coons, just finishing his freshman year at Ball State, said choosing roommates is tricky for both men and women.

He was matched with a roommate randomly his freshman year; but, luckily, the two got along.

Other guy friends didn't fare

as well, he said, often because their roommates were in relationships.

"Try not to be together in the room all the time unless your roommate is fine with it," he said. "That's just common courtesy."

He's observed that rooming with a friend can go well, but not with a best friend, nine times out of ten, it won't benefit your relationship with that person, he said.

This is how it worked for him his freshman year. He roomed with a friend, but not one that he knew well. It was fun to find out about one another's likes and dislikes, he said. Coons was able to convince his roommate and other dorm friends to watch *Game of Thrones* with him, and now they all are into it.

But even a bad roommate can be good. Despite all the trouble with her self-absorbed roommate, Linville called it a great experience.

She didn't spend much time in her room and instead sought out other people and opportunities that made her learn a lot about herself.

"Exploring campus, joining clubs and just being social is going to benefit anyone in a variety of ways," Linville said.

A university expert on residence hall life said Linville has the right attitude.

"A new environment can be scary but good for you," said Jessica Robinson, the associate director of residential education at Indiana State University.

Robinson said new college

students shouldn't expect a roommate to live and think the same way they do. Part of education is expanding horizons.

"Compromise is key. Don't judge a book by its cover and you will find out so much about yourself and others."

Tech Tip

Want to be almost scientific in finding the right roommate?

There's an app for that.

RoomSync is a free Facebook app. Students fill out a survey and pick a roommate algorithmically based upon criteria like neatness, sleeping habits and activity level.

Similarly, Roomsurf is an independent social network that allows a student to create a profile, answer questions and review matches. Then they can send their request to their school. Four hundred thousand students have used Roomsurf since 2010.

Do-it-yourself dorm room decorations

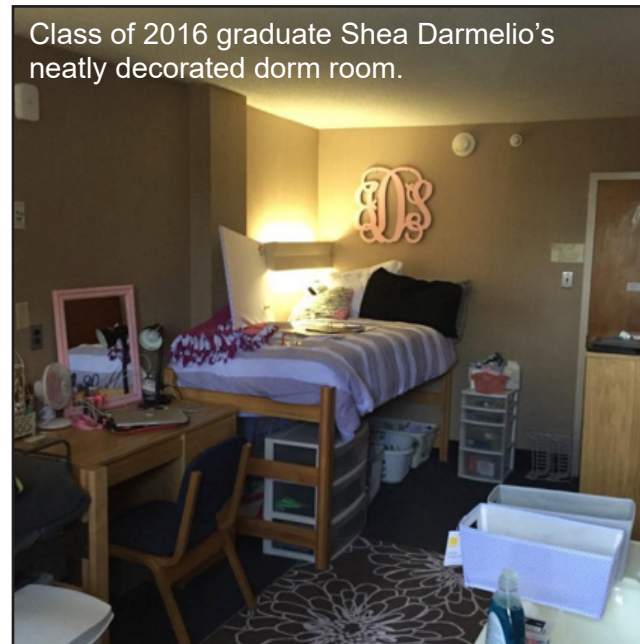
- Posters/ Art pieces
- Funky string lights
- Fun pillows
- Rug
- Cheap records
- Tapestries
- Pictures from home
- Wax melter
- Dream catcher



Class of 2016 graduate David Bawi shows off his tapestry and wall decorated with cheap Goodwill records (shown left).



Class of 2016 graduate Nathalie Leeds' dorm room.



Class of 2016 graduate Shea Darmelio's neatly decorated dorm room.