

Tolerating the end-of-semester mess

Most people like to give the impression that they are organized, neat and aseptic people in their own environment. I tend to get caught up in the idea myself.

This week, I can't bear it anymore. Lately, my surroundings have gone downhill to the point of no recovery. My apartment has taken on the look of "Early Remodeling" style. I attribute the mess, a modified barn-look, to the end-of-the



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semester projects and tests that my husband and I are enveloped in. Everything we own seems to be coming out of hiding and onto every available inch of flat open space.

The carpet is covered with tiny pieces of paper and new spring from the cutting and pasting that will become layout. Weeks of paper and newsprint from the cutting things we don't have room for are shoved into every corner, as though we work on the side for a hardware store as glass packers.

Books, supplies, measuring tools, adhesive and shoes are strewn all over. Mail from last month, tape cassettes and old popcorn lay uninvitingly scattered about. You may wonder why I don't clean it up instead of just talking about it. My husband wonders the same thing. If I have all

this free time to write about my dilemma, why don't I use it to clean up our place? Writing about it is one thing, doing it is something altogether different.

Friends delight in our fortune of having a kitchenette in our apartment. That's just one more area to become an eyesore. I'm at the point where I'm so tired every day, it's easier to go to class than to sit around and look at the dirty dishes.

How could I have forgotten about the long-suffering hours spent doing undergraduate work? How could I forget about "the shakes" from exhaustion and the sensation of lightbulbs flashing in front of my pupils? To top it off, I'm getting edgy about moving. For the fifth time in five years my husband and I face another move. I am over the shock of having to physically leave my apartment and possibly this town forever, but am petrified of packing again.

I packed things two years ago and don't know where they are. Not only that, I don't know what they were.

For a couple who hasn't even been married for a decade, we have enough material goods to start a second-hand store. The large items don't make trouble in a move; it's the small things like my Rubik's Cube, pin cushions, a stuffed bear, coasters, ceramic dog, iron, wrapping bows, photos, clothes and dishes that frustrate me.

Chances are very great that I will not see a number of things that are in my possession for a number of years. We have at least two more years of residence hall life ahead, providing my husband gets a residence hall

director position somewhere. The last time we moved, we devised an extensive numerical coding list for our goods going into commercial storage. We have temporarily lost the list.

More than half of our material possessions are stored in different locations. My clothes are at my parent's house, my albums at my brother's, my lamps at my aunt's, table at my brother-in-law's and most of my plants are at my cousin's.

Now and then, we check the storage bin for vandals to see if they've done a favor and taken some of our junk. Maybe we could encourage them by putting up "help yourself" signs and leaving the door ajar.

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