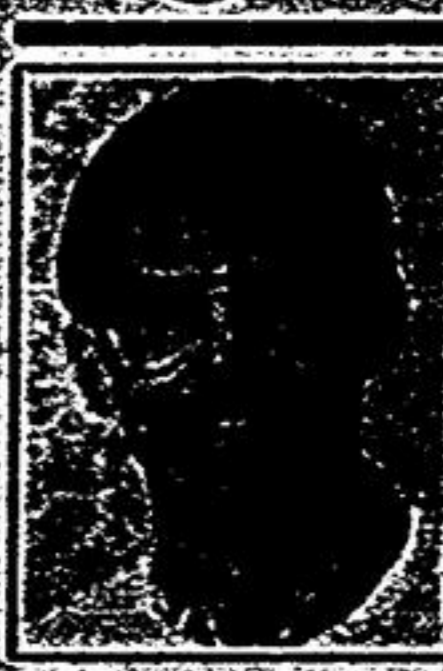


Life of young university students not for the middle-aged

Anyone who's had a teenaged son attend university out of town knows the wretched state of material existence they so often choose to adopt.

Especially when they scorn the conventional university residence route with its plain but thrice-daily feedings, choosing instead the independence which goes with renting a working person's apartment on a student's budget.

Sensing my son Shane and his roomie Mike Peters could use the boost that goes with a giant



From where I live

Bruce Stapley

care package from home, I borrowed a friend's mini-van, loaded it with assorted spare furnishings, and set out accompanied by my daughter Marissa on a one day mission of mercy to

Ottawa early last Saturday morning.

The cargo, which we shoe-horned into the vehicle in order to include as many essentials as possible, included Shane's double mattress and spring, a castoff double dresser, a card table to be used as a desk, a "desk lamp" purchased for four bucks at a local second hand shop, and a pair of winter boots to help him make it to classes during the coming rugged winter.

There were also some chairs to

go around the wooden extension table they managed to stuff in the trunk of Mike's compact car during one of their trips back home.

And of course, we filled a few special requests such as an electric guitar and a couple of amplifiers so the boys can endear themselves to their fellow apartment dwellers in those rare instances when they're not hitting the books!

It became immediately apparent upon entering the boys' apartment that this infusion of sundry furnishings would have a marked effect in terms of bringing the place to within striking distance of bare subsistence level.

The fridge was empty but for a bag of carrots and a container of orange juice. I was told it was simply that they hadn't had a chance to go out and shop since the appliance broke down and left them with a box of spoiled hamburgers a few days earlier.

The bathroom provided a similar treat. Thinking I might have a shower

to wash away the grime of the long drive and the rainy unloading of the van, I thought better of it when I saw there wasn't a bar of soap or a bottle of shampoo in sight.

When I suggested in mid-afternoon that since the weather wasn't conducive to a city tour, we might want to consider going out for a burger, their faces lit up like Christmas trees.

After loading up on food and other supplies including soap and shampoo, we went back to the apartment, where a visit with a couple of university friends down the hall revealed the same spare decorating motif as was so evident at Shane and Mike's place. Then it was back out into the rain for the long drive home.

I finally climbed exhausted into my warm bed a little after midnight.

But before falling asleep, I reflected briefly upon the advantages of being middle-aged with an appreciation for life's basic amenities.

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ADVERTISING CORRECTION: Eaton's Denim Event insert, which appeared in this newspaper, Wednesday, October 18, 1995, please note the following: Mohair scarves shown at top of page 8, are incorrectly described. Copy should read: "Beautiful mohair-like scarves." Inadvertently, the error listed appeared in our advertising. We sincerely regret any inconvenience or confusion to our customers.

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