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2015 Winter Housing Guide

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INDEX

Bower Housing.....	6
Chauncey Square.....	4
Cochran Apartments.....	6
Copper Beech Townhomes.....	3
Crestview Apartments.....	4
Evergreen Rentals/Village Center/Linwood Apartments.....	6
The Fairway.....	7
Fratello Properties.....	6
Fuse.....	6
Hunter Lafayette Properties.....	5
The Lodge on the Trail.....	5
McCormick Place.....	1
River Market Apartments & Shoppes.....	3
University Residences.....	2
Williamsburg on the Wabash.....	8
Willowbrook West Apartments.....	6

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Academic Décor

By Andrew McGlothlen

When one hears the phrase “academic décor,” they rarely think of home improvement. In college, though, there is a very specific connotation to the academic décor of your dorm room or apartment: cheap. If you’re designing on a budget and want to create a nostalgic feel for collegiate life, keep reading.

When you’re in college, you often have a small budget and are more likely to use it on pizza or books than a sofa. This trend has caused many college students to think creatively over the years in designing cheap and effective furniture for their dorm room or apartment. Many of the items they use are easily found and, while not the most attractive, very structurally sound.

One way to create quality college furniture involves acquiring a number of milk crates. Be sure that these are not owned by private dairy farms, as using those is illegal. Many students borrow them from their local

cafeteria or living unit kitchen and return them at the end of the semester, but you can also acquire them at a number of home office stores. Should you be unable to acquire milk crates, cinder blocks will also do the job, though to a lesser extent in many cases. Milk crates, on the other hand, have the added benefit of acting as shelving and storage space. Finally, acquire several 2x4s or pieces of large plywood. Some students even buy unfinished doors from local home improvement stores.

To build a quality desk, you can stack milk crates two deep and two to three tall on each end of an unfinished door, leaving the opening of the crates facing toward the work area. If you do use a door, put the doorknob hole in the back to run computer wires through it. If you have no computer, you can leave the doorknob hole in the front and modify it into a cup or pencil holder. Another portable idea is to use PVC pipe and four fittings to screw into the bottom of the door. This will make the desk very

portable when you remove the PVC, but you’ll still need milk crates or something similar to create drawer space.

For an entertainment center, you must be a bit more selective. Cinder blocks are usually preferred over milk crates because they are sturdier. Make sure to lay the cinder blocks so the long, flat sides are against the ground, not the shorter ends. When you’re dealing with expensive electronic equipment, you don’t want to leave anything to chance, so make sure that the wood in which you are investing as a base will be able to support whatever you place on it. If you have a large television, don’t use a thin piece of plywood for support. With several large pieces of wood and six cinder blocks, you should be able to set up a TV with DVD and VCR players above or below it. Should you wish to include your stereo system, the speakers can usually sit nicely next to the cinder blocks and you can choose whether to have your stereo over or under your TV. It

Décor continued on page 6

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IN THE PAINT



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Décor continued from page 4

is generally recommended that you keep your TV as low to the ground as possible, though, in the event of an accident.

For a bookshelf, usually the simplest solution is a stack of milk crates. One can feasibly stack milk crates four high while still using them as shelving, but they are more likely to stay firmly against your wall if you bind them together with something like duct tape. Stacking them side by side with another set of crates can also increase the stability and storage capacity of your structure.

This second set of crates, especially near your new entertainment center, can be used for more books, DVDs, VHS tapes, remotes or video game console storage.

Now that you have a bookshelf, a desk and an entertainment center, where will you sleep? This part is easy. Buy a mattress, lay it on the floor and you're done. For comfort, you may want to buy two mattresses, but if you're on a budget, then you can use a sleeping bag and comforter for added cushioning.

All that's left now is the seating arrangement. Well, you can sit on milk crates with the opening down. Should you find that to be less than comfortable, though, think about the location of the nearest college. Every so often (usually at the end of the semester), there will be a trash day for couches, chairs, etc., that students are not taking home with them. This can be a great way to get some furniture for your colle-

giate décor. Make sure to dis-infect whatever you find, as you can never be sure why it was being thrown away. Then take a bed sheet and use it as an impromptu slipcover. The size of the sheet required will depend on the size of the piece of furniture and a few tacks should hold it in place.

Voila! You now have a collegiate style room. Enjoy!

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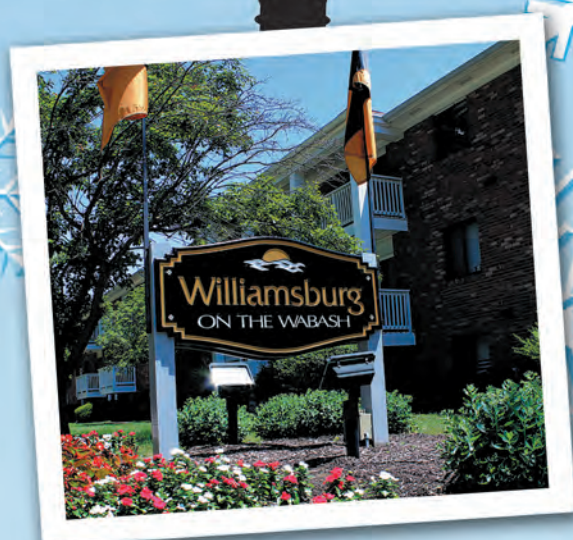
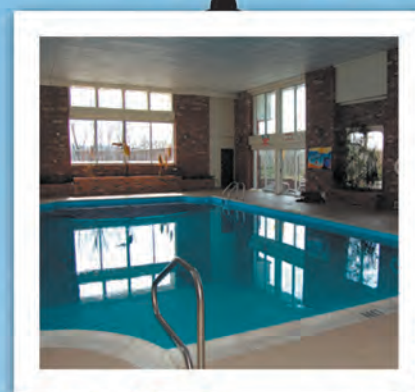


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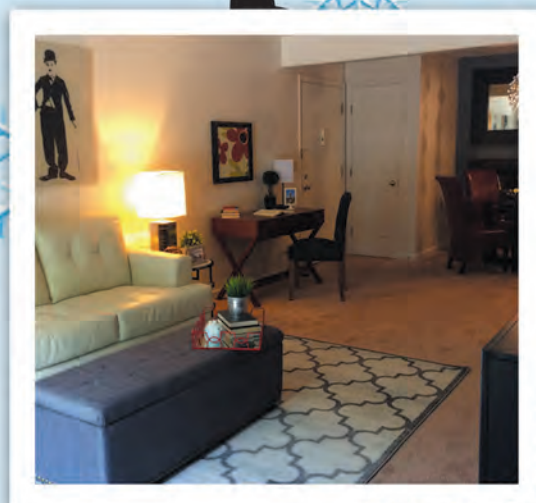
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