

The OC Link

Off-Campus Living News for Fanshawe College Students

November/December 2013

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR UTILITY BILLS

By Cailie

As winter approaches, tenants often become concerned with rising utility costs. To fight this we have compiled a short list of effective utility-reducing practices that could potentially save you money:

- Lower your thermostat by a few degrees and wear an extra layer of clothing if necessary.
- Check that all vents are open so heat circulates throughout the house.
- Turn off lights when you exit a room.
- Take shorter showers.
- Ensure that all leaks are attended to by landlord immediately.
- Try using weather-strips to better insulate doors and windows.
- Wash clothes with cold water.
- Only run washer or dishwasher when it's completely full.
- Unplug your appliances when you leave the house for a substantial amount of time.
- Try to use electricity during off-peak times whenever possible.

Hopefully this list is helpful in reducing those costs! For more ideas on how you can conserve energy and as a result lower your utility bills, visit this website: <http://www.ontarioenergyboard.ca/html/firsttimetenants/>

WHERE'S YOUR MONEY GOING?

By Avery

Is your financial situation getting you down? Learning how to budget properly will ensure that your money goes further. Budgeting can not only help you from accumulating debt, but it will also help reduce stress associated with spending. Here are some tips for managing your money so that the only thing you have to worry about are your exams!

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- WRITE down everything that you buy so you see where you spend most of your money. Small purchases add up, and could be consuming a large chunk of your money!
- Maintain your own accounts and always reconcile your banks statements.
- Prepare a BUDGET that helps you start a regular savings plan.
- RESIST the urge to buy the latest "stuff" you might not need for university. Don't give in to impulse buying!
- Buying in bulk only saves money if you're consuming in bulk.
- Don't pay for things you don't use: access fees, download fees, subscription fees, usage fees, etc.
- Be conscious of saving money at every turn.
- RETURN things that you don't like or don't need—not every sale is final!

Fanshawe College's Financial Aid can assist you with your questions and concerns.

Office: Room E2020

Phone: 519-452-4280

Website:

www.fanshawec.ca/admissions/financial-aid

GETTING YOUR HOUSE READY FOR HIBERNATION

By Prince

As the exam proctor tells you to put your pencils down and your final December exam is over, most students experience a moment of relief, knowing they can go into “academic hibernation” for the next few weeks over the holidays. However, even though you might be all packed up and ready to leave your rental to return home, the dangers to your house are still present (and perhaps even increased) during the holidays. Here are some tips to keep your home safe:

KEEP YOUR HEAT ON—even if you pay for utilities you need to leave your heat on. Otherwise, your pipes may get too cold and freeze. When they freeze the pipe could crack and then cause a leak when the water thaws, leaving you on the hook for all the repairs (i.e. \$\$\$).

UNPLUG EVERYTHING YOU CAN – this is more of an issue if you are the one paying the electricity bill, but even if you’re not it’s still good to conserve! Things like speakers, chargers, TVs, small appliances or video game consoles all draw energy even when they are not being used.

KEEP VALUABLES OUT OF SIGHT OF WINDOWS—being a student already makes you a target, so don’t add to the risk by advertising what someone may want to steal from you! Even better, take home any valuable you can carry with you.

LOCK YOUR DOORS AND WINDOWS – nothing says Happy Holidays to a burglar like coming across a house with an unlocked door and no tenants inside. Double and triple check that you have locked your doors and windows before leaving for the holidays.

DON’T ADVERTISE YOUR DEPARTURE—everyone has heard the stories about people who posted that they were leaving on Facebook and were broken into later. Going home for the holidays is common among students, but you don’t need to tell potential burglars when the coast is clear!

STAY FIRE SAFE

By Cailie

As everyone is aware, fires can be devastating and destroy entire homes. With the need for heat in winter time, fire safety risks are increased. However, if you follow each of these easy but important steps you can make sure your rental unit is fire safe!

- Ensure there are smoke detectors on every floor—your landlord **MUST** provide working smoke detectors and replacement batteries
- **TEST** smoke detectors on a regular basis
- **NEVER** take batteries out of your smoke detector
- Keep space heaters 1.5 metres away from anything flammable
- Always turn space heaters off when you leave the room
- Never smoke in the house when you are sleepy or feeling forgetful
- Always fully extinguish cigarettes
- Do not leave your stove unattended when cooking
- Be careful when using lit candles and never leave them unattended
- Use a guard for your fire place

Fire safety is extremely important throughout the entire year, but be sure to be extra careful with the additional concerns the winter months bring!

ROOMMATE BONDING ACTIVITIES

By Leigh

As temperatures continue to drop and the end of first semester draws ever closer, opportunities for roommate bonding seem few and far between, especially because with snow coming they will be restricted indoors. However, there are plenty of activities to take part in during the winter months in London, and would be a great way to get some quality time in with your roomies before being separated for the winter break! Here are some ideas for things you can do:

- Ice skating in Victoria Park—there may not be snow on the ground yet, but given London’s history it will come. When it does, skating in Victoria Park is a great way to get outside, enjoy the fresh air and have some laughs with your roommates over who falls the most.

• Gingerbread house decorating—not only does this activity let you bring out your creative exterior decorator, but it’s also a low commitment way to spend time with friends within the comfort of your own home. Bonus points if you bake your own gingerbread!

• Plan a dinner together, and then make it—nothing is more satisfying than putting together your own well-cooked meal, so why not share the satisfaction with your roomies? If everyone contributes something you’ll end up with multiple (hopefully) well-crafted dishes and can enjoy a meal together! Who knows, it may turn into a tradition!

• Go to a hockey game! Cheer on the London Knights; what better way to bond than to unite in support of our city’s own?

ROOMMATE AGREEMENT: IT’S NEVER TOO LATE!

By Zainab

Living together with people who have similar interests and habits is usually a good idea. However, not everyone has the best relationship with their roommates. With stress from school kicking in, sometimes roommates can have a difficult time balancing school with house chores and responsibilities leading to conflict.

Even if you and your roommates didn’t sign a roommate agreement at the beginning of the year, it’s never too late to do it now! A roommate agreement is simply a document which outlines suggested information and agreement to prevent conflicts and encourage roommate harmony.

Some of the most common roommate issues revolve around: noise, cleanliness, paying bills, and guest rules. These are all issues that can be outlined in the roommate agreement to ensure that everyone is on the same page and understands the house rules. Although the roommate agreement is

Fanshawe College Housing Mediation Service
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not a legal document, it can help enforce rules, as everyone in the house would have agreed to the rules and promised to abide by them.

To prevent any conflicts and ensure everyone is following house rules, the roommate agreement is the way to go!

Download a Roommate Agreement here:
<http://www.fanshawec.ca/sites/default/files/assets/housing/pdf/accord.pdf>

CONNECTING TO THE COMMUNITY

Bell Canada	519-310-2355
Blue Box Info	519-649-6262
City Fire Prevention	519-661-4565
City Garbage Collection	519-661-4585
City Parking Enforcement	519-661-4537
City Property Standards	519-661-4660
Community Legal Services	519-661-3352
Fanshawe Student Union	519-452-4109
Information London	519-432-2211
London Hydro	519-661-5503
Reliance Home Comfort	1-877-267-7902
Rogers	519-646-3300
Union Gas	1-888-774-3111
Garbage/Recycling Collection Zone Map:	
http://www.london.ca/residents/Garbage-Recycling/Garbage/Pages/Garbage-Calendar-and-Zone-Maps.aspx	

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER QUIZ

1. Name one bus (& route #) that comes to Fanshawe?
2. How much snow fell in London on November 23, 2013?
3. What is the name of the Fanshawe radio station?

Send answers to gmatthews@fanshawec.ca before December 15th for a chance to win a \$25 Bookstore gift certificate.