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Life is Heaven In Hell

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When people think of Wallace and Wilson Halls, collectively known as “The Towers,” they often think of a hellhole — there’s asbestos, they were temporary housing, Storms sucks, nearly everything sucks. They would be nearly correct. Nearly. The Towers were not meant for temporary housing. They were originally built to meet the demand for university housing from the swell of more students (sound familiar?). The other stuff is correct, but the most important word in those claims is “nearly.”

There is asbestos, about 5 percent of it in the ceiling. The ceilings do get wet and leak into the rooms. But really, none of the residents seemed to mind. “I didn’t care much,” said one. “I didn’t freak over little stuff like that,” said another. Others just shrugged their shoulders. Hit your head against the ceiling that contains cancer-inducing material? Give a nervous chuckle. What doesn’t kill you...

But that’s OK, because they have Wallace-Wilson Wars. A mixture of Olympics and feudal warfare, Wallace-Wilson Wars is kind of a big deal. Taking place around the Tower grounds, this fall semester competition isn’t about being rewarded with pizza parties or anything physical — it’s getting those damn bragging rights. Carly Reiser was repping McCowen (Wallace, 9th Floor) in tug-of-war. The elevator space” as their meeting spot. Floors rent out a projector to watch movies, watch the Cyclones or build a blanket tent when the heat doesn’t work. You really get to know people at towers, “If you live in towers you know everyone,” says Reiser.

But get off the elevator and you might walk into a floor movie night. Because the dens are filled with students, most floors use the “elevator space” as their meeting spot. Floors rent out a projector to watch movies, watch the Cyclones or build a blanket tent when the heat doesn’t work. You really get to know people at towers, “If you live in towers you know everyone,” says Reiser.

Piping can be a problem. Last winter a pipe broke in Wilson and the alarms went off. Everybody evacuated and Carly Reiser saw, the gust of wind wouldn’t let her move forward. It was like she was in a Looney Toons short. Sometimes, on a windy day, if you’re on the upper floors, you can feel a swaying. Just don’t think about it.

Instead, think of helping others, in a House of Cards kind of way. The Towers did a United Way charity drive and made it into a competition between floors to get the most money. Emily Belloma participated, and rather than find outside sources of money, she infiltrated the other floors and asked for spare change. They didn’t think anything of it, but it came back to bite them as Belloma’s floor won. There was no prize, but they had won in both the kindness (and competitiveness) of their hearts.

According to some residents, the elevators are haunted. They rattle and the doors open randomly on floors, “It’s like they were popping open to say, ‘Hello!’” said Gesila Marsek. Other times the doors don’t close so you have to do it with your bare hands. Reiser rode up to her floor and then the doors wouldn’t budge. She almost pressed the firefighter alarm button.

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Other times the grounds suck. The space between the Towers creates this wind tunnel. Reiser was walking back to her dorm one day and the gust of wind wouldn’t let her move forward. It was like she was in a Looney Toons short. Sometimes, on a windy day, if you’re on the upper floors, you can feel a swaying. Just don’t think about it.

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“a waterfall in the stairway.” When they got back, all their stuff was wet from melted ice getting through the windows. But like all things broken, the windows and pipes got fixed.

Nobody could say nice things about the C-Store and Storms. Storms is only open Sunday through Thursday and, on those days, only from 4:30-8:30 pm. They have a very small selection so you’re basically eating the same thing every few days. Otherwise you have to go to the C-Store, which is a choice between a pizza slice, sub sandwich or cereal. Every. Single. Day. That gets old.

But that doesn’t mean it sucks. It means great conversation with your housemates while walking to and back from UDCC. These walks force people to talk to each other. They are essential to developing the camaraderie among people on the floor, according to residents.

“It’s such a positive community that can form out there,” said Macek. So thank you for sucking. Storms.

The place feels completely isolated. There is a bus line that goes from Towers to campus, but you better be there on time or you either have to wait 20 minutes or walk the 15–20 minutes to campus — but once again, the people that talked shrugged it off.

Belloma say this isn’t a symptom of Stockholm Syndrome — it’s perseverance.

“It’s like any situation; if you want to make it, it’ll be great, and if you sit there and complain, it’s going to suck.”

**STOCKHOLM SYNDROME AND TOWERS:**

Isolation not only leads to Stockholm Syndrome, but it also gets people to look around them to find something to do — and there is a lot. They have functioning basketball courts, and the cross country field across the street is great greenery for ultimate frisbee. There is also a frolf (disc golf for the uninitiated) course and an ice-rink to not only watch Iowa State play hockey and the Hockey Band play music, but also for skating. You don’t have to walk very far; take an elevator down to the commons and there’s a fitness center, a movie room, and study areas for those that hate their partying neighbors (the walls are so thin!).