Meeting the challenge of R/O

Institute publications often give freshmen the wrong idea about Residence/Orientation Week. Anyone reading the Freshman Handbook or Residence Book would think that the primary task of a freshman during R/O Week is to find a place to live and figure out which classes to take. They'd be wrong.

R/O Week — for upperclassmen and freshmen alike — is primarily a time for meeting people. Living arrangements can be changed and classes can be added and dropped, but friendships made during R/O Week often last four or more years. Even pairing acquaintanceships started during R/O can last a lot more interesting.

After three R/O Weeks, picnics and parties have started to fade into a blurred memory of junk food and sleepless nights. Most of the people I have met over the years, however, remain fairly as individuals in my memories. A few R/O encounters are especially clear.

My first R/O meeting actually took place before I arrived at the picnic my freshman year. I was nosediving on the train ride, trying to convinse my stomach that if it didn't settle down soon it was going to miss some of the world's greatest greasy chicken. Through the jumble of nerves, I heard voices discussing strands of Greek letters. Glancing over the seat in front of me, I saw two MIT freshmen, Residence Book in hand.

Talks to the other freshmen calmed me considerably, since I discovered that others were just as nervous as I. I saw one of the guys several times during R/O Week, and we're managed to run into each other in the halls about a term or two after. I never learned the names of some of the most people I met during my Freshman R/O, but one guy I haven't forgotten had long hair and was wearing my luggages. I switched dormitories several times to be experimental — people would materialize, grab a suitcase, slip it to my destination, and disappear again. Many others would patiently answer my endless and obvious questions. It wasn't until I came back for a second R/O that I realized that it is not at all tiresome to answer questions from freshmen, no matter how repetitive they become.

The interesting R/O meeting started very early one morning, after a party. I was sitting in a doorway, laughing and talking to a group of guys when one of them asked me if I'd like to see his baseball cards. I was somewhat nervous about going up to this room, believing that baseball cards were something like echinics. I was wrong — he really had a huge collection of baseball cards.

After the talk with this R/O student, I was suddenly introduced to another R/O. This time, a group of R/O students fell into the interesting talks category. I was sitting in a half-open double during R/O Week and was assigned a freshman roommate. We chatted a lot, during that week, but I didn't see her until a few weeks later. She started during my ex-boyfriend, who met the previous R/O Week. The two of us was give during R/O Week to go on a talk. A wide variety of topics — legal and otherwise — is available. Issues of MIT's outdoor sculptures are especially fruitful for these interested in original commentary and widely differing perspectives in art and at MIT.

The freshmen who will briefly assemble in Killian Court this after- noon at about 3:30 p.m. are in demand at parties, socials, and to help in dressing up. The university is also a haven for students, and to some extent. Sometimes there are already known what courses are taken by one freshman, but not by another. The Freshman R/O Week will almost certainly improve their years at MIT, it is meeting people. R/O doesn't make R/O Week special — people make R/O Week special.

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