Stranded in Manayunk

Story by Jessica Lindsay
Layout by Nicole Jenet
Photography by Jennifer Quilter
I hardly ever want to go to Charmont’s dorm rooms to catch some more sleep. Charmont is once again left alone. This, he says, is the time for getting work done. He begins a paper that is due in the days. This work is quickly interrupted by three of his girl friends who spot him sitting alone and decide to join him for the next 45 minutes.

10:30 a.m.

Charmont returns to his paper. The “tap-tap-tap” sound of his fingers hitting his keyboard ceases within the summer holidays. Charmont decides he needs more sleep and rests his now-silent laptop.

11:15 a.m.

“Yo, dude!”

Charmont is awakened by a buddy who had happened to walk by earlier. They order more food and are joined by more “buddies.”

“Hardly get to work done when you stay in the Union. Everyone I know eats

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here,” Charmont says. “I’d much rather sit and laugh with the guys than write a paper on the differences between financial and management accounts.”

Charmont gives in to temptation and puts his work on hold once again to enjoy the company of his friends.

11:50 a.m.

“I didn’t get enough done,” Charmont says. “You wanna know what one of the worst parts of living in Manayunk is? It’s not being stranded in Manayunk, car-less. It’s not having all the resources, the school resources, right at hand.”

Charmont’s grades haven’t suffered because he misses classes. They are, according to him, “pretty decent.” The problem is “I can’t go to the library whenever I need to. I can’t use the Writing Center when I need it. It can be tough.”

Charmont pauses and thinks about this. His dark eyes show the signs of realization.

A light bulb turns on.

“Maybe I would use all those things more often if I had a car, which would be nice. I don’t know, though. Maybe yes, maybe no. It still is difficult to get the will to drive back and forth for schoolwork when you’re about 20 minutes away, comfortable in your own home.”

11:55 a.m.

Charmont gets up, grabs his schoolbag, stuffs his abandoned laptop under his arm, and heads out of the Union on his way to his next class. He continues to think about how different life would be had he chosen to live on campus.

“Yeah, it can be tough getting used to being a commuter. It was a lot easier living in North Dorms and walking out my door and then making a quick return back to relax,” Charmont says.

He thinks the biggest change when becoming a commuter after already living on campus is no longer having a designated spot to call his own. He can sit in the Union, somewhat content, but there is still a certain feeling of being out-of-place.

La Salle University does not ignore its commuter students. There are two designated locations for commuter students: a television room in room 121 and a game room on the lower level of the Union. Nevertheless, these don’t seem to be up to par for Charmont.

According to Charmont, “La Salle people should go check out the so-called ‘game room.’ It’s an old pool table you have to pay to use that’s pretty nasty, so I don’t know why you would want to. A TV and old lockers. There’s nothing comfortable about it, nothing homey about it.”

When he is told that the Commuter and Off-Campus Student Association also plans social and educational activities for commuters, he replies, “If they do, I don’t know anything about them. I don’t think it would matter if I did, though. I’m a senior. I have my friends. But if La Salle people are trying to help other students, then good for them.”

“I might not take advantage of the commuter offices, but I can’t only complain though,” Charmont says.

“Manayunk is a great town, and La Salle has been a great school and a great time. I was ready for something different, and what’s better than a young town with a great night life? But it would be better if I had a car,” he says with a laugh as he enters his second class of the day.

1:00 p.m.

Charmont rushes out of his class and sprints to the parking lot out front of St. Basil Court. “My friend, Dennis Diviney, is leaving now. He’s my roommate. Gotta hurry though,” Iyarn says. “He has to get to work by 1:30.”

In what seems like a minute, Charmont makes it to Diviney’s car.

“He’s my boy, so I get him where he needs to be,” Diviney says.

“Charmont’s no trouble at all. He’s my boy, so I get him where he needs to be,” Diviney says.

They make the drive in 18 minutes listening to what seems like the same deafening rap song the entire time, and arrive at their home. Charmont collapses onto his hand-me-down couch. He throws his schoolbag against the wall, aiming it under one of the many beer posters that decorate the living room. He closes his eyes, spreads his limbs, and exhales deeply, ready to rest.

2:00 p.m.

“It’s been a somewhat long day. I hate being up so early. Tomorrow will be my most difficult day, I guess. I have night class, but none of my roommates do. No worries though. I have a few girl friends who have night class too, who live in Manayunk.”

These girl friends, however, do not always finish their class around the same time as Charmont. Thankfully, though, Charmont has friends who live on Chew Street near campus. “I can chill out there until they’re ready. If they skip class? Well, let’s just hope they don’t.” At this, Charmont goes to call one of those “girl friends” about plans for the night.

“If you live in Manayunk, you’ll understand why it’s worth the hassle. There’s a bunch of college kids here, bunch of girls if you catch my drift,” Charmont says with a sly grin. “The nightlife is unbelievable. I’m in college, man: Nightlife is what it’s all about.”

Before his friend answers, an incoming call interrupts him. It’s his dad. Charmont will have a car by next Monday.