

Parenting

Sooner or later, adult kids must pack up and go

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Dr. Dennis Boike

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

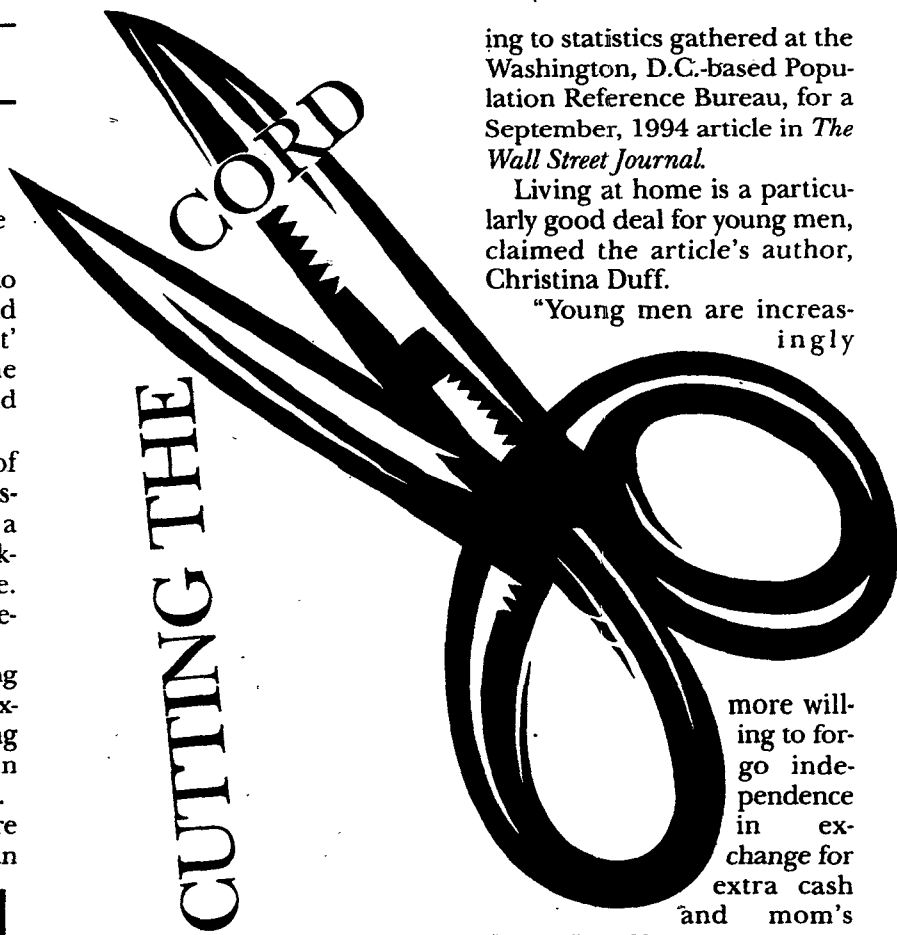
Millions of adults in their early to late 20s may live at home with their parents, but Dr. Dennis Boike is not in the least happy about it.

“When kids come back into the home, they remain kids and parents don't expect 'squat' from them,” complained the Rochester-based marriage and family therapist.

A parishioner at Church of the Transfiguration in Pittsford, Boike has conducted a number of church-based workshops throughout the diocese. He has also done work on behalf of diocesan education.

Boike finds the trend among young men — and to a lesser extent, young women — of living in the home they grew up in disturbing in its implications.

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ing to statistics gathered at the Washington, D.C.-based Population Reference Bureau, for a September, 1994 article in *The Wall Street Journal*.

Living at home is a particularly good deal for young men, claimed the article's author, Christina Duff.

“Young men are increasingly

more willing to forgo independence in exchange for extra cash and mom's

doting,” Duff wrote.

Yet, instead of learning that life sometimes means such harsh realities as meeting the monthly bills on a low budget, these twenty-somethings who live at home are unreasonably extending their adolescence by continuing to spend the bulk of their income on recreation, Boike noted.

Unlike their parents, who worked years to attain a standard of living that finally allowed some room for luxury, many adult children refuse to start out at the bottom of the economic scale like their parents did, Boike argues.

“What I see is that they want to live in a style similar to their parents,” Boike commented.

The therapist would probably get little disagreement from

Larry Stockman and Cynthia S. Graves, co-authors of the 1990 book, “Adult Children Who Won't Grow Up: How to Finally Cut the Cord That Binds You.”

Adolescence is the process of a child gradually separating from his or her parents and moving into adulthood, the book maintains, yet millions of this nation's young men and women have stalled that process, and indeed, even reversed it by continuing to live with their parents.

While the book acknowledges that a minority of adults living with their parents may have legitimate reasons, including serious economic need, too many adults perfectly capable of paying their own way instead live virtually rent- and stress-free with the parents who have supported them for more than two decades, the authors explained.

Stockman and Graves stress that as long as parents allow their adult children to continue to live with them, they should demand some conditions which call forth their offspring's responsibility.

For example, parents should be aware that their needs are as important as that of their children, and adult children should not be allowed to unduly take advantage of their parents' largesse. Adult children should make a substantial financial contribution to the household and participate in its upkeep, the book stressed.

In addition to encouraging young adults to work and support the household, young adults who do not work should be engaged in some sort of self-improvement activity such as attending college, the authors conclude.

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