

Don't Get Mud on the Carpet

Tune: The "MTA Song"[†]

Lyrics by Peter Scott

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of three systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line with lyrics, a piano accompaniment in the right hand, and a bass line in the left hand. Chord symbols (G, C, D7) are placed above the vocal line. The lyrics are: "We had moved in - to the build-ing, 'twas the month of No-vem-ber, Just be-fore Thanks-giv - ing day, When the word came down from the A - soc - i - ate Chan - cel - lor, Here's what he had to say: Yes, the word came down from the A - soc - i - ate Chan - cel - lor, Here's what he had to say: (Don't get) Don't get mud on the carpet, Don't leave crud in the hallways, Don't punch holes in the sheetrock walls. So please refrain from bringing your bicycles Into the building at all. Yes, please refrain from bringing your bicycles Into the building at all. But the very next morning, We rode up to the campus, High above Monterey Bay, And we wheeled our bicycles right into the building On that stormy and fateful day. Yes, we wheeled our bicycles. . ."

1. We had moved into the building,
'Twas the month of November,
Just before Thanksgiving Day,
When the word came down from the Associate Chancellor,
Here's what he had to say:
**Yes, the word came down from the Associate Chancellor,
Here's what he had to say:**
2. Don't get mud on the carpet,
Don't leave crud in the hallways,
Don't punch holes in the sheetrock walls.
So please refrain from bringing your bicycles
Into the building at all.
**Yes, please refrain from bringing your bicycles
Into the building at all.**
3. But the very next morning,
We rode up to the campus,
High above Monterey Bay,
And we wheeled our bicycles right into the building
On that stormy and fateful day.
Yes, we wheeled our bicycles. . .

The Story

4. We got mud on the carpet,
We left crud in the hallways,
We punched holes in the sheetrock walls.
We refused to refrain from bringing our bicycles
Into the building at all.

Yes, we refused to refrain. . .

5. So they called the police,
And we were all arrested.
We were hauled off to jail.
What's more, they confiscated our bicycles,
And planned a bicycle sale.

Yes, what's more, they confiscated. . .

6. We'd got mud on the carpet,
We'd left crud in the hallways,
We'd punched holes in the sheetrock walls.
We'd refused to refrain from bringing our bicycles
Into the building at all.

Yes, we'd refused to refrain. . .

7. So we all got cars,
And we drove up to the campus,
High above Monterey Bay.
We drove into the building and we parked in our offices,
And here's what we had to say:

Yes, we drove into the building. . .

8. There was grease on the carpet,
There were skid marks down the hallways,
Soon there were no sheetrock walls—
It seemed acceptable behavior to drive into the building,
No-one minded at all.

Yes, acceptable behavior to drive. . .

9. 'Til the Associate Chancellor
Came to view the situation,
On his face was a look of dismay.
He said, we'll give you back your bikes,
We'll put bike-hooks in your offices,
And here's what we'll do today:

Yes, we'll give you back your bikes,. . .

10. We'll clean up the carpets,
We'll scrub down the hallways,
We'll replace those sheetrock walls.
And we'll all ride our bicycles up to the campus,
There is no need to worry at all.

Yes, we'll all ride our bicycles. . .

The earthquake of October 17, 1989 caused severe damage to the Natural Sciences II building. This building was the home of the Physics and Astronomy Boards of Study since the building's construction in 1969.

To make life bearable during a ten-month earthquake retrofit construction project designed to keep the damaged building from collapsing during the next earthquake, the entire Physics and Astronomy Boards of Study were moved to space in Kerr Hall in mid-November, 1995.

Many of us had been parking our bikes in our offices in Nat Sci II since its creation, and no complaints were ever lodged to my knowledge. We were therefore surprised to see, in early December, the following emailed memo, along with others mentioning possible damage to walls and ceilings.

For the occupants of Kerr Hall:

[The Associate Chancellor] (whose office is located on the third floor) is requesting that Kerr Hall occupants refrain from bringing bicycles into the building. This request is in accordance to a campus policy designed to minimize building wear and tear and reduce the amount of mud and dirt tracked onto carpets and floors.

This song is based in part on those memos. Having composed the song, we posted its lyrics on the bulletin board at the entrance to Kerr Hall. It turned out to be effective. The exchanges of angry emails stopped completely, and no-one complained when we again brought our bicycles into Kerr Hall. Some years later, Vice Chancellor Hal Hyde complimented us for having taken just the right approach to solving the problem.

– Peter Scott, September, 2021

A copy of this pdf, along with an mp3 file with the tune, is available from <https://scott.physics.ucsc.edu/songs/mud/>.