

# Workshop surveys housing rights

By JOHN LUDWIG  
Of the Emerald

A landlord-tenant workshop, held Wednesday evening in the EMU Ballroom, drew an audience of over 100 landlords, tenants and interested persons.

The workshop, sponsored by the ASUO, featured Charles Spinner, an attorney from the University Office of Student Advocacy; Don Chalmers, a para legal also from OSA and Walter Pavlich, director of Off-Campus Housing at the University.

Spinner emphasized that the information presented at the workshop focused on preventing future disputes. "When hassles happen over rental agreements it takes away from the mutual benefit that both landlord and tenant derive from the agreement," said Spinner.

"Verbal contracts are binding for up to a year — but the reality of the situation is that they don't work. Written contracts take away a lot of the confusion and questionable aspects of rental agreements."

Spinner also explained lease agreement policy.

"In common law, when someone enters into a lease, the person breaking the lease is responsible for damages. The Landlord-Tenant Act has changed this. If a tenant breaches a lease, the tenant's breach stops the day the landlord rents the place again."

Addressing the landlords in the audience, Spinner said, "So what is the value of a lease agreement to the landlord? The landlord gets all the damages that occur as a result of the breach."

Security deposits and cleaning deposits are probably the greatest problem in landlord-tenant disputes, said Spinner. But here again he emphasized that landlords should inform tenants at the beginning of a rental agreement, in writing, specifically what cleaning fees and other costs are for.

Landlords were also informed that security deposits must be returned to tenants within 30 days, or at least a statement of the deposits which are being held against unpaid rent. If tenants are not notified within 30 days, or at a reasonable effort has not been made by the landlord to notify the tenant, the security deposit doubles.

Walter Pavlich noted tenants and landlords can get inventory sheets from the Office of Off-Campus Housing.

Spinner also discussed the obligation of landlords to maintain their rentals in a "habitable condition".

"A rental must have adequate heating, electricity, hot water, appliances and provide protection from the elements," said Spinner. "A tenant may give a landlord written notice of seven days in which to remedy such problems. If a landlord refuses to supply any essential service, the tenant has a right to procure the service themselves and deduct it from the rent."

## OSL studies housing complaints

The Oregon Student Lobby (OSL) is looking into reported cases of housing discrimination against students.

OSL Pres. Robert Liberty says such discrimination may be outright denial of housing or imposition of stricter rental conditions, simply because a person is a University student.

An informal survey conducted during winter registration at Central Oregon College in Bend by Doug Bischell, student body president at the school, turned up

80 such complaints. They must still be substantiated however.

Complaints have also been received from Albany, Monmouth, and Corvallis, but the OSL has not heard of any instances of housing discrimination against students in Eugene.

However, Liberty says, "In Eugene and Portland, where there is sufficient housing, discrimination may exist, but you may not be aware of it."

Liberty encourages anyone who has firsthand knowledge of

such discrimination to inform the OSL.

He says the OSL is now gathering information about student discrimination, and complaints will be investigated. If the problem is found to be serious, OSPIRG will conduct additional research.

Once evidence is collected, lobbying efforts will be made at the municipal level in an attempt to bring about legislative protection.

A state law will also be advocated. Liberty points out that legislation was introduced in the last session of the State Legislature that would have prevented this kind of discrimination. But the bill died in committee.

"Next time we'll have the evidence we need," says Liberty.

## South area group adopts parking plan

A two-hour parking limit might one day ruin the routines of University students accustomed to regulated all-day parking along streets south of campus.

The South University Neighborhood Association (SUNA) and a Eugene traffic engineer discussed Wednesday night a proposed system of parking permits and restrictions designed to help residents find parking places near their homes.

Local residents would buy per-

mits from the city and everyone else would be subject to the two-hour parking limit on weekdays between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

City traffic engineer Jim Hanks stressed that the system is only tentative. If the city manager gives his approval, the traffic division will proceed with planning and submit a proposal to the city council. The council would hold public hearings before voting on the plan.

The discussions came in the wake of a U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing cities to restrict parking in residential areas to local residents.

Students who park in "hoards" in the early morning and leave their cars all day have created a problem for residents south of the University for years, said SUNA president Leslie Childress-Ullman.

"It's not that we don't like students," she said. "We live in this neighborhood because we like to be near the University." The parking restriction would simply increase turnover of parking places to give residents "at least a chance" in the scramble for parking, she added.

The two-hour limit, Childress-Ullman pointed out, gives students time to attend one or two classes.

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