

Housing policies lack consistency

As a virtue, consistency often rates low in human affairs — as any observer of romantic love or professional sports might well agree.

But, as a principle of bureaucratic administration, consistency is well-regarded by most, and in its housing practices and policies the University too often lapsed into muddled inconsistency.

This quirk arises most frequently in the University Housing Office's attitude toward its family-housing projects, Amazon and Westmoreland. On some occasions the Housing Office treats these rental havens as a single entity, while at other times it views them as separate subjects, each requiring special consideration.

These contradictory attitudes were succinctly juxtaposed in the Housing Office's efforts this year to impose part of Westmoreland's construction debt repayment on Amazon residents and at the same time propose maintaining a reserve fund for building repairs equal to two percent of Amazon's replacement value.

On the one hand, University officials argued that all family housing was a single project; so, debt-free Amazon should share in the construction costs remaining at Westmoreland. On the other hand, the University argued that the mandatory one percent repair-reserve fund required for the state's educational facilities was inadequate for Amazon. That aging, poorly repaired bit of military surplus had a "special" need for a higher reserve, the Housing Office reasoned.

Both of these proposals were incorporated into the 1978-79 budget that determines rents for each of the University-owned housing projects.

The University assigned part of Westmoreland's debt service to the Amazon project for the first time since the early 1960s to help prevent too large a discrepancy in rates that might create vacancy problems for an "expensive" Westmoreland competing with a "cheap" Amazon.

Although rent at both apartment projects will remain the same as last year, the proposals angered Amazon residents rightfully concerned that these policies will affect future rental rates. The dispute over whether Amazon tenants should help retire Westmoreland's debt or not is now before the Amazon Appeals Board. That issue should be settled in favor of Amazon tenants.

Despite the University's intermittent contention that the housing projects are one, the differences between the two units — age, locale, condition, attitudes of the renter/consumer community at each — demand that Amazon and Westmoreland be dealt with separately.

The \$11,630 sought by the Housing Office as Amazon's share of the debt-service fund for Westmoreland represents only 7 and 3/4 percent of this year's payment. If that cost had not been offset by other factors in this year's budget, it would have required less than a \$4 increase in the monthly rent for each of Amazon's 246 units.

But, once debt-service sharing is accepted in principle, nothing stands between the Housing Office and an increase in Amazon's share of Westmoreland's debt service. In fact, several fiscal consultants have proposed that Amazon's share of the debt should reflect its share of the replacement value of the two housing projects — a formula that could raise Amazon's portion of the debt service to 32 percent.

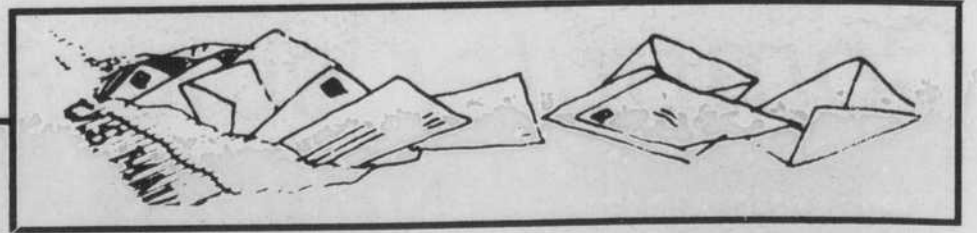
However, other costs incurred by the separate complexes, including project managers' salaries, repairs and insurance, are budgeted to the individual project. Costs incurred by the Housing Office as a whole — such as central staff and office costs — are allocated to the various housing projects based on the number of units in each.

If the University truly wanted to "level" costs within an integrated family-housing entity, it would assign part of Amazon's repair-reserve costs to lower-maintenance Westmoreland, which this year required no budgetary addition to its reserve fund, already at the prescribed level. But the greatest "consistency" would be for Amazon residents to accept the higher repair-reserve request in return for the University's full-fledged treatment of it as a separate entity.

But probably the strongest argument for treating the projects as distinct came from the University itself when it acquiesced last fall in the creation of an Amazon Family Housing Policy Board to help govern the older apartment complex. At that time it was noted that Westmoreland residents might desire to establish a similar mechanism through which to channel their concerns, although that has not occurred — unfortunately.

The creation of a separate housing policy board for Westmoreland would allow users of each to voice their particular needs. It would also allow both groups of University renters to have an equitable, political access to the Housing Office's budget-making.

Letters



Lockers up

I would like further explanation from Dean Lynn Rodney (College of HPER) for the recently announced increase in faculty-staff locker permits from \$4 to \$10 per term. While I can understand the escalating costs of clothing, supplies, wages, laundry products, etc., I challenge Dean Rodney to show us these things have risen 150 percent over the past few years! Certainly I would be happy to pay an increased rental fee even as high as 50 percent increase (i.e., \$4 to \$6). Talking with postdocs and graduate students in the department, we discovered that locker service varies from free to \$7.50 per term-semester at 13 other universities.

We would all like to see University of Oregon No. 1 in everything, but I would like us to pass on the category of locker fees.

Stephen J. Girsch
Research Associate
Institute of Molecular Biology

City thanked

I would like to express my appreciation to the Eugene City Council for passing an ordinance requiring that smoke detectors be installed in motels, hotels and apartments. This is an important requirement for people like myself who are physically handicapped.

I also feel that the citizens of Oregon should be informed that this same kind of requirement could have been made statewide. In 1977, House Bill 2292 was introduced, passed the house, but, unfortunately, did not receive acceptance by the Senate prior to adjournment. Concerned citizens should carefully examine the voting record of legislative candidates on this important issue before voting in November. For example, incumbent Dave Frohnmayer voted against these important safeguards in voting against House Bill 2292.

Loren D. Simonds
Assistant Director, ALERT



Good news

With all the unpleasant news around the world concerning human rights, we feel extremely happy to be able to share some *good* news with everyone.

We have just found out that the great Indian spiritual leader and social philosopher, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, has won his own battle for human rights.

Over six years ago, Anandamurti (who is an outspoken critic of corruption in India's government) was imprisoned and accused of complicity in several previously "unsolved" murder cases. His supporters claimed that he was being framed and that, in reality, he was being imprisoned for his criticism of the government.

After one year in jail, Anandamurti was administered a near-lethal dose of poison in his cell. Since that incident, he has maintained a liquid fast to protest the treatment of himself and of other political prisoners.

Anandamurti was eventually convicted in a trial that impartial human rights observers called a mockery of justice. After lengthy court delays, however, Anandamurti has now finally won his appeal of the case. He has been officially acquitted of the charges.

As members of Ananda Marga (a world-wide socio-spiritual organization founded by Anandamurti), we have waited long for this day, and we welcome the return of this great humanitarian to the life of freedom that all human beings deserve.

Wayland Secrest
Graduate Student, Psychology
(For the Ananda Marga Society)

Wrong choice

Regarding Helene Johnston's letter of June 27, I was sorry to hear her objection to a news story concerning the nationally renowned Tom Skinner.

As any journalist knows, in-depth stories worth their salt include plenty of quotes from the interviewee. To neglect this makes them nothing more than long, glorified editorials.

If this is "evangelism," then, the Playboy interviews with President Carter and Anita Bryant are at least as much "evangelistic" — perhaps more so.

As far as evangelism is concerned, perhaps Ms. Johnston should be concerned with the evangelism with which this reader has been indoctrinated at least thrice weekly all year in this tabloid: the "Good News" of nuclear-power abolition, divestment, and — glory hallelujah — equal rights for oppressed homosexuals. Let's put the shoe on the foot which wears it best.

Harold Tilden
Graduate, Business

Letters policy

The Emerald will accept and try to print all letters and opinion columns containing fair comment on ideas and topics of concern or interest to the University community. Letters and opinions will be run on a first-come, first-served basis. Both letters and opinion columns must be typewritten, using 65 character margins, and should be triple-spaced. Letters and opinions must be signed and the author's field of study (or faculty status) noted.