

Dormies hawk contracts to escape campus living

By MELODY WARD
Of the Emerald

Every term, students advertise their exodus from the dorms.

"HELP. I will pay you to buy my dorm contract... BEER and \$50 when you buy my dorm contract," beguile classified ads. Some ads reveal deeper desperation. "NAME YOUR PRICE and my dorm contract is yours!"

Close to 60 students seek replacements for themselves each term, says Dick Romm, assistant director of dorm housing.

"I haven't seen the figures for this week, but people seem to be finding replacements," he says. "It seems to be an average year as far as people who want out and people who will replace them."

Reasons for quitting dorm life are as varied as the ploys that contract sellers write into their advertisements. Some want to escape closed quarters, fraternity and sorority members want to take advantage of the chance to get into their houses, graduate students desire a quiet place to live, Romm says.

"Some just have a chance to save a great deal of money by moving. Many are upperclass

transfer students who really didn't want to live in dorms except as a chance to meet people. Now that they've met people they want to move into off-campus housing they couldn't get because they didn't make the trip out to Eugene before the term started."

One contract seller found enthusiastic response to her ad. "But I almost lost it because she asked why I wanted out," the graduate student says. "I told her it was because I felt out of place (as a graduate student) and that's when I found out she was a grad student too."

The tactical slip didn't lose the sale, she explains, because the new contract holder wanted to try dorm living in the hope it would be easier to meet people.

Students who fail to palm their contracts off must buy their way out of the dorms, Romm explains. "They can either sell the contract, or pay \$1 a day for every day they're not here for the rest of the school year," he says.

The housing office holds students to the agreement so that the debt service owed on dorm buildings will be met at year's end.

"A little over \$250 per year of the dorm contract is used to

pay off debt service," Romm says. "That insures that we can pay off the debt service even if we're not able to fill their bed."

That explains why many students pay people to take over contracts. They'd be paying one way or the other and under the barter system, they can still save money.

"I'm willing to pay \$75," says one dorm dweller. "I'd rather give my money to somebody who wants to get in here than to the University."

He says three of his fellow dorm residents "figured out in three weeks we didn't like it here" and found a three-bedroom house close to campus. Two of the three have signed over contracts, and now the trio awaits the third and final sale.

"One of us got out on an athletic pass and \$25... but I'm ready to go higher if necessary," the advertiser claims.

"We sat down and tried to think of ways to get out, but all the good and funny ways we could think of would have led to eviction," he adds. "You've gotta really sink and get down on your knees and say 'please, please help me get outa' this pit.'"

But while dorm life isn't for everyone, there are people who try living off campus and

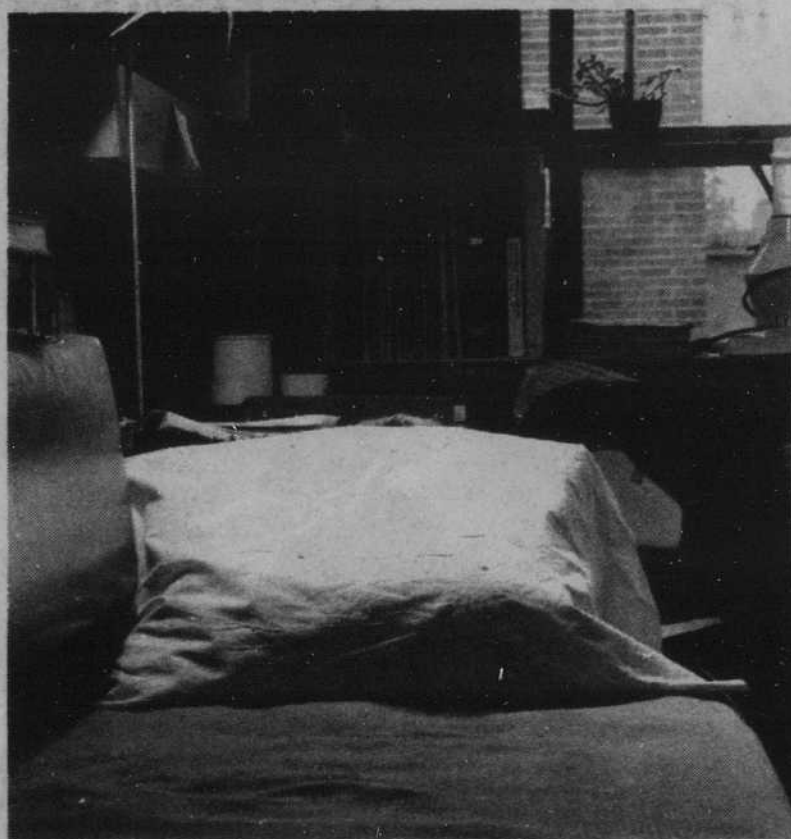


Photo by Doug Williams

decide they'd rather "pay a flat fee and know that they'll be getting three meals a day," Romm says.

The housing office looks to those students, plus mid-year transfers, to replace contract-breakers and make up the difference for the approximately 100 students who will withdraw from the University over the year.

"We've got to make those replacements," Romm says. "The whole crux of the thing is, we don't get any money at all from the state. All financing of

dorm housing — operation and the buying of the buildings — comes from student room and board money and summer conferences.

"No funds are available to bail us out if we don't make our money. That's why we have the year contract, to help insure that dorms will stay close to one hundred percent full for all three terms."

Students who withdraw are automatically released from contract obligations because they are no longer considered University students, he adds.

Minicomputer organizational discussion set

The newly-formed Eugene Microcomputer Users Group will hold an organizational meeting today at 7 p.m. in the Instructional Media Center.

Sponsored by Computers in Education of the University Computer Science Department, the group will work to share the experiences, expertise and needs of minicomputer users.

For more information, call Dan Isaccson at 686-4424.

EMU bookdrop collects books for spring sale

The Friends of the Eugene Public Library Inc. have placed bookdrop barrels in the Lobby of the EMU and in other sites in Eugene to gain books for its first book sale, to be held next spring.

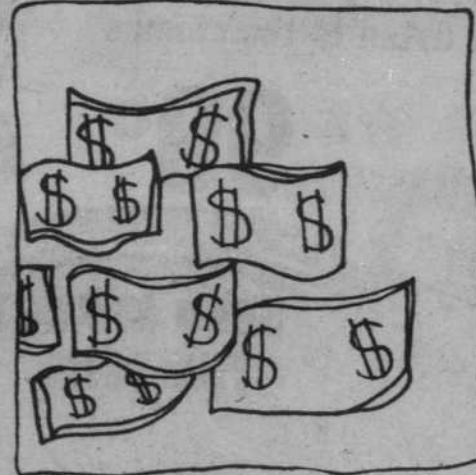
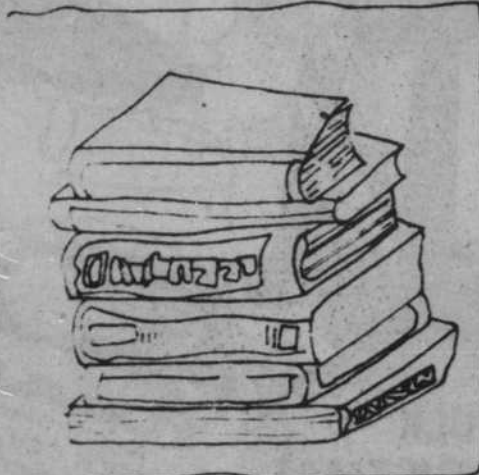
In addition to the EMU bookdrop, barrels have been placed at the Payless Drugstore in the Willamette Plaza, the Williams Bakery Thrift Store at 225 River Road and the Eugene Public Library, 100 W. 13th Ave.

The book sale itself is set for April 20 and 21 in the Valley River Center.

For more information call the Friends at 344-6488.

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