

Rental deposits: let the tenant be wary

Recently, I moved from an apartment managed by a well-known University area management company. I had a security deposit which was totally refundable. A little over a month later (after I moved) I received a check for less than half the amount of the deposit. I was quite upset since I had cleaned the apartment thoroughly.

This letter, printed in the April 16 Emerald, bears the common complaint of the student/tenant. All too often, students become the victims of unscrupulous landlords and property management companies that

illegally keep renter's deposits. Some landlords and property management companies see deposits not as protection against property damage by the tenant, but as another source of income.

David Lesser, director of Off-campus Housing, says in a month's time he "anticipates a flood of calls to the office." No doubt nearly all of those calls will be complaints involving deposits. But Lesser sees the larger problem as being students, because they are moving or in the middle of finals, don't follow through with a complaint. Usually students "let it go", according to Lesser.

Some Eugene landlords and property management companies count on students "letting go" a complaint. Landlords and property management companies have been known to issue an erroneous itemization of damages to a unit. Former tenants have been billed for such things as stray popcorn kernels, fingerprints, burned out light bulbs, and less than shining soap dishes.

In many of the cases Off-campus Housing has been able to contact the landlord or property management company and by reiterating the complaint have most of the deposit returned to the former tenant. Off-campus Housing cannot represent a tenant legally — they can only do para-legal counseling. The threat that the landlord or property management company may face small claims court, usually makes them more amenable to negotiation.

A most useful booklet, the OSPIRG Renter's Handbook (now in its sixth edition and available in the Off-campus Housing office, the first is free with a fee card — a second costs \$1 at the EMU Main Desk) can answer any questions a tenant may have regarding deposits. A deposit, according to the handbook, is refundable if the tenant meets specified conditions. The deposit is the tenant's money which the landlord merely holds.

The tenant, says the handbook, must leave the unit in the condition he or she found it, minus normal wear and tear. The tenant is responsible for unusual damage, but not normal wear and tear. The key phrase is "normal wear and tear." Normal wear and tear often includes a worn-out rug, couch and painting. But be warned — broken windows, cigarette burns and broken furniture will not be considered normal wear and tear. A record on the condition of the unit when the tenant moved in and moved out, with witnesses, is often helpful.

Students are easy targets for unethical landlords and property management companies. And they will continue to be targets as long as they don't stand up for their rights as renters.



'BLOODY MARVELOUS! WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH TWO HUNDRED FLIPPIN' PRISONERS?'

letters

Dazzling

Regarding the "Editor's Note" in your April 9 paper... dazzling personality profile on a day in the life of a bar in Springfield, but what happened to your topic paragraph, or your topic for that matter?

I reread the article, thinking maybe I missed something the first time, yet the point of it continued to elude me.

One thought was that your intention was too deep for me to grasp, but then, it was too deep for anyone else I had read it to grasp either.

Another conclusion was that the editor has nothing better to do than sit in various bars around town and write observations on the patrons.

If this is the case, why don't you write on something prevalent to the University and your readers? Perhaps travel to the Homefried Truckstop, and stereotype their patrons for a while? No, that may hit a little too close to home.

Maybe you will do an article on Duffys, however which would be

just as pointless, but would give you another marvelous opportunity to demonstrate your ignorance of people and their lifestyles, and put them down at the same time.

In essence, you should be as concerned with your advertisers and readers that may reside in Springfield, as you would with the majority of your readers or one of your most important advertisers.

If you are going to continue to stereotype and categorize people in an offensive manner, do it to everyone, not just those in a minority group, or those who will (hopefully) never see your paper.

Jeanne M. Huey

Coverage

I have been less than pleased with your coverage of University sports action this year. Does the Emerald sports staff believe that the only athletes on campus are football, track or basketball team members? Sorry, folks — what about swimmers, tennis players, crew oarsmen, cyclists and lacrosse players?

Sure, these may be only "minor" sports or (heaven forbid!) club sports; but I've watched these athletes train and compete, and their efforts are no less noble than those of the "major" athletes.

Unfortunately, some of your readers get tired of the same old sports gossip day after day. Come on — a football season review in the end of April? Let's share those extensive coverage articles on the

sports page, boys, and add a little variety to life by keeping the student body informed about all our campus athletes.

Suzanne Ward
Junior, English

ron hunt

editor's note

In fishing it's called "the one that got away."

But this isn't fishing — it's politics. And it's not a fish darting away — it's Rubin Townsend.

Townsend was running for the Republican nomination for Oregon House District 40 against Robert James O'Reilly. If he won the primary, Townsend would face incumbent Democrat Margie Hendriksen in the November general election.

Instead, Townsend is moving to Las Vegas.

"I decided to withdraw my candidacy," he says, explaining that it was a hard decision, but he used to live in Las Vegas and he's buying a computer company there. "I had to make up my mind."

Townsend complains about the long, unproductive regular and special sessions of the Legislature. "I wasn't too happy with the political scene I saw here, he says.

"Any high school freshman class could have done the same thing."

He learned a great deal and met a bunch of fine people while he was campaigning, he says, adding that several groups backed him.

"No question in my mind that I could have won the district" in both the primary and general elections, Townsend says.

"One thing I'm happy about," he says, is that he didn't take any contributions until after the primary. If he would have accepted contributions, he says he — of course — would have reimbursed contributors.

Too much money is spent by candidates, he says, adding that "you can almost buy a seat." All contributions "should go into a kitty" and be distributed evenly to all candidates, he says.

Townsend doesn't hide his desire to get away: "Oregon is a wonderful state, but the political scene soured me."

Well, not many anglers want to catch a sour fish anyway.

staff

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