Dorm contracts not selling

DORM CONTRACT FOR

Quiet, single, female room in Carson

closet and free refrigerator. Available

now or for next term. Call: 345-6

DORM CONTRACT FOR SA Available now: Call Megan 68

684 and ask for Emily

DORM CONTRACT

Call Margaret 343-8

Hall up for grabs. Room includes large

Kathy Rm 213, 485-91

By Patrick Low Of the Emerald

When University freshman Jayne Hanslovan moved out of the campus dormitories and into the Delta Gamma sorority, she thought getting rid of her nine-month dorm contract would be relatively easy. All she had to do was forfeit her \$50 deposit and pay the University's Housing Department \$1 a day until she found someone to take her

But it's been more than a month since she advertised her contract for sale in the Oregon Daily Emerald and on various notice

boards around campus, and so far she says the response has been terrible.

easy to sell my contract,
because I thought there were a
lot of people waiting to get in.

FOR SALE SPRING TERM Call Cricket

Case of beer with purchase of the service of 'I thought it would be case of beer with purchase

discovered in the following weeks how costly and frustrating getting rid of a dorm contract can be. An unsold contract can cost more than \$200 in daily penalties.

Potential buyers are scarce in the middle of a term, and stiff competition among the sellers accounts for the seductive promises of cash or libations that

accompany dorm contracts advertised for sale in the Emerald classified ads.

Many students leave the dorms to join and move into a fraternity or sorority, and some are lucky enough to receive compensation for the contract fees from their Greek houses. However, Hanslovan's sorority does not offer such help, and she can't afford to have the \$1-a-day penalty cost hanging over her head, she says

deposit.

Hanslovan says she sought help from the Housing Department but received virtually no assistance in finding a replacement for her dorm

"I was sort of surprised," she says. "They're the Housing Department and I thought they'd help me line up people. I went in there, and they said all they could do for me was tell me where to put up ads. I figured there'd be more of a way they could help me."

Dick Romm, director of residence life, admits Housing Department policies, have given the department a somewhat shady reputation. But the policies must remain, given the financial realities of operating the dorms, he explains.

Romm says contracts are long-term because it's the only way the department can be guaranteed a fixed number of residents for three

'If we have a term-by-term contract we would probably have to budget on the fact that we'll be less full," Romm explains. "We'll have to be more conservative because we're not allowed to lose money. The only way we could take in the extra money is to raise room and board rates.

"So our stance has been for years that we advertise ourselves in the long-term housing business. And anybody who breaks that contract shouldn't be subsidized by the people who stay

If we went by, say, a term-by-term contract, we'd probably have to raise room and board rates. So in effect the people who do stay would be subsidizing those (who leave)," Romm says.

Still, the people who get stuck with the \$1-aday penalty often feel they are the ones subsidizing the housing budget, a frustration that often translates into hostility toward the DORM CONTRACTS

department. "It's like they've got a racket going," said one disgruntled ex-dorm resident. whose fraternity is paying 75 percent of his penalties.

says he's heard the complaints about his. department's yearlong contract ripping students off, and he understands how they feel. But the policies exist to protect the Housing Department, since it is not a nonprofit organization. Romm says.

The department must squeeze out some profit in order to make payments on the bonds that the University sold to build the dorms, he

"If there was some natural disaster and they have to close the University, we have to guarantee the state of Oregon that we can pay the mortgage for two years," he says. "Otherwise you will default on the bonds, and the taxpayers have to pay. So we have to make enough money over and above our expenses to make a two year reserve."

spring.

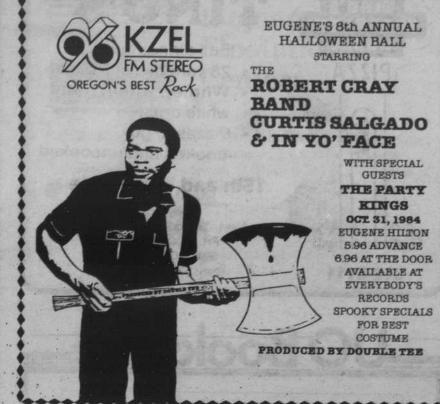
About \$230 out of each resident's room and board is allocated for the mortgage payment, Romm says. And if a person decides to leave, he or she is made to pay \$1 a day to cover the

In addition, each empty bed constitutes a loss of \$2,200, and right now there are 40 of them, he. says. Any disincentive to leave, such as not refunding the \$50 dorm deposit, helps to keep the department in the black, he says.

'I realize that people change their minds, and that's why we have ways to get out of the contract," he adds. "But they are ways in which we won't lose a great deal of money.

But if we were completely full, and we had someone who wanted to sell their contract, then we will help them find replacements." he says.

In the meantime, Hanslovan says she will ertise her contract again at the en when a new crop of students will be moving into



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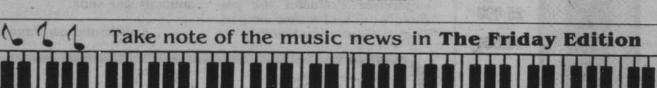
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