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ANI DIFRANKO &
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Tickets available at EMU Main Desk, Face the Music,
House of Records, Record Garden, CD World.

Answers: Renters have several options

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mation on how to resolve landlord-tenant problems. But because there is no city agency, callers are referred to the White Bird information line. White Bird generally refers people with legal concerns to Lane County Legal Aid.

In the past, White Bird referred callers to the OSPIRG Consumer Hotline. However, OSPIRG Campus Organizer Kristin Lee said the hotline was discontinued two years ago when the group's focus shifted to other projects.

OSPIRG does publish a Renters' Handbook, which is a comprehensive guide to landlord-tenant laws and remedies to try when those laws are broken. OSPIRG Consumer Advocate Laura Culberson said a newly updated handbook will be available in about two weeks. It will sell for \$3 to students and for \$4 to the general public and can be picked up at the OSPIRG office in EMU Suite 1.

In addition to the handbook, Culberson said OSPIRG is also looking at ways to track renters' complaints and create local or statewide databases of landlords. People would be able to access the database and locate landlords who consistently follow the law as well as those who do not.

Other on-campus resources include the Rental Information Office and ASUO Legal Services, agencies that provide students with information and advice.

The Rental Information Office has a copy of current landlord-tenant laws on file. Students can go in and make copies if necessary. If a student is not sure whether his or

her landlord has broken a law, such as showing up without 24-hour notice, the student can look up the law to use as leverage.

If a tenant's questions are of a legal nature, he or she would be referred to ASUO Legal Services. John Edward Davidson, of Legal Services, is an attorney who represents and guides students who are dealing with legal issues involved with renting.

He recommends students do research before renting an apartment or house. That research should include talking to people at the Rental Information Office, trying to get the names and numbers of past tenants and talking to people currently renting from the landlord in other units.

Without a comprehensive directory to work from, such research is often time-consuming and difficult, but he said in the end it could end up saving a lot of headaches.

Davidson said most of the problems that crop up at this time of year involve landlords' failure to get the premises ready. Sometimes it is just the crunch of so many people moving in and out that causes some units to fall through the cleaning cracks. However, there are some landlords who just don't care, he said. If the landlord fails to get the premises cleaned in a timely fashion, the tenant should call Legal Services before taking action, such as withholding rent.

Another important element for tenants moving in is the inspection, which is conducted by the tenant. This is one problem that usually does not surface until the end of the tenancy, when the land-

lord does the inspection. Damages that are not logged during the move-in inspection could be attributed to the wrong tenant and could affect the amount of money returned from the security or cleaning deposit.

"Standards of acceptable conditions might change at the end," Davidson said.

Other problems that arise later in the term sometimes involve privacy concerns, such as a landlord showing up without 24-hour notice or habitability issues, such as leaking roofs or walls during the winter, Davidson said.

At the beginning of the summer, most of the landlord-tenant disputes Davidson deals with involve deposits. Again, he said, the best way to avoid these problems is to be as clear as possible at the beginning of a tenancy. If any fees are charged, the student should get the landlord to state in writing what the money is for. Fees are not the same thing as deposits and are usually not refundable.

"If you don't get the landlord to say [what the money is for], you basically just handed them money for nothing," Davidson said.

Not all landlords and property management companies have the same charges. An understanding of the fees and deposits should be part of the pre-tenancy research.

The options for landlord-tenant resolution may be limited in Eugene, but for those who take the time to find out who the best landlords are and take their roles as tenants seriously, the payoff may mean peace of mind.

OSPIRG: Case will be appealed to Circuit Court

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"Student groups shouldn't lobby government with these fees."

Brennan Rounds said he plans to appeal the case in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. In addition, he said the case was filed in federal court "because First Amendment Rights need to be addressed in a formal setting."

OSPIRG maintains that by filing the case in federal court, the student body was "disengaged" instead of included in discussing the role of OSPIRG.

"The plaintiffs avoided a University-centered debate by going

straight to court," Krishnamurthy said. "They turned this into a conservative-backed issue when the real issue at hand was students' right to organize."

Krishnamurthy said OSPIRG's educational issues, outreach and coalition-building are relevant to activism on campus and do not promote certain political agendas.

"We at OSPIRG believe this ruling shows how sound the incidental fee structure is at this University," Campus Organizer Kristin Lee said. "A ruling against us would mean all student groups would suffer from a massive restructuring

of student fees that could slowly eliminate these groups."

With talk of appealing the Court decision, the parties disagree as to whether OSPIRG's funding will be an issue in the future.

"The final story should be written about three years from now," Brennan Rounds said. "Nothing is final at this point."


OSPIRG Statewide Director Maureen Kirk disagrees with the idea that the lawsuit will last much longer.

"As far as OSPIRG is concerned, the year-and-a-half-long lawsuit is definitely over," Kirk said.

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