

Eugene has many off-campus housing options

Take the time to learn about renter's rights before signing a lease

By Amy Goldhammer
Oregon Daily Emerald

Finally out of "dormland," many students choose to live off campus during the school year, and the campus community provides many housing options for those ready to be on their own.

"During our training week, we were told of all the people who drop out of school. Forty percent drop out because they don't have any intimate friends," said Brenda Wood, University Rental Information Office coordinator. "They don't feel connected to their community."

Where a student chooses to live has a large effect on his or her happiness, Wood said.

"You should hear some of the stories people tell about horrible roommates and scary landlords," Wood said. "It's hard if you are not in a happy place."

There are many possibilities for students looking for a place to live other than the residence halls, she said. However, when a student starts looking for a place, he or she needs to take into consideration the amount of time it will take to look for a new place as well as the money and the pure luck of finding a place with a perfect roommate, Wood said.

"I feel freshmen should live in the dorms their first year," Wood said. "It's so overwhelming to all of a sudden have to cook, clean, pay your rent, figure out how to live off campus and do that kind

of stuff."

The Rental Information Office in the EMU maintains bulletin boards that are updated daily with rental listings. These boards include available studios, duplexes, apartments, houses, co-ops, rooms for rent and roommates wanted.

"Students out of town have the opportunity to look at all the listings available via the Internet," Wood said.

Students just moving out of the residence halls may want the ultimate freedom of a big house with a group of friends, but don't realize the responsibilities of the lawn, the grounds and dealing with the angry neighbors, Wood said.

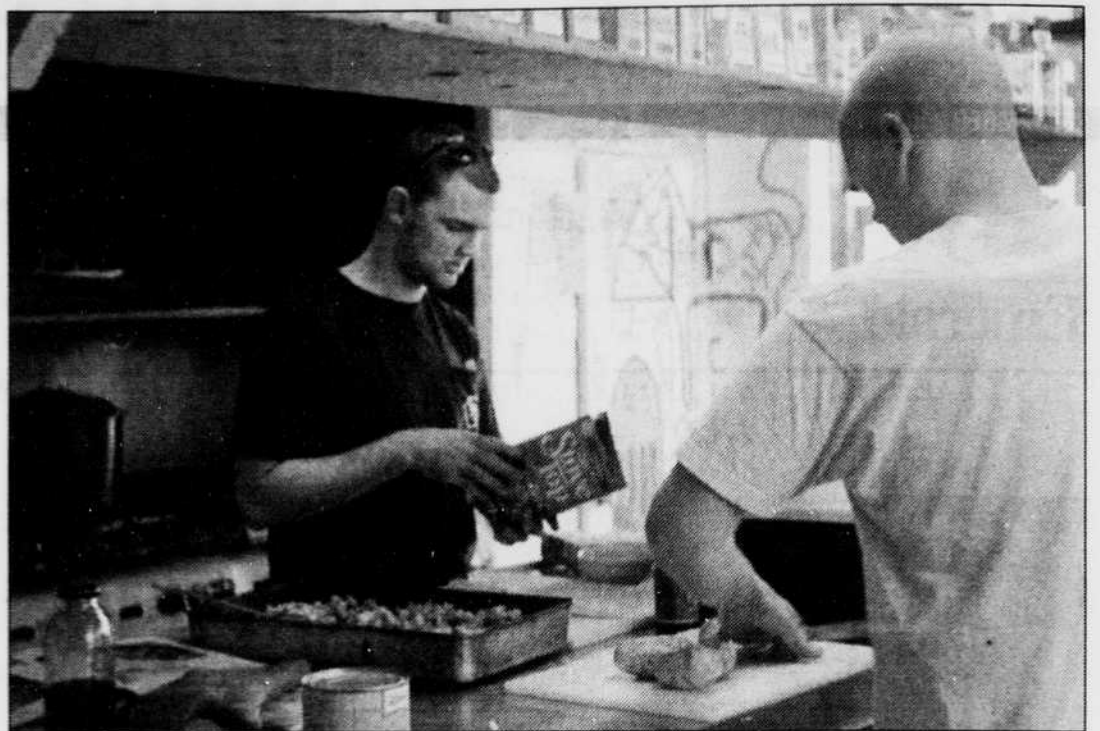
"It's an individual thing," Wood said. "It is more work, but some people have no problem mowing the lawn."

Micki Josi of the Student Cooperative Association said a good alternative to living in an apartment or house right away is to move into a co-op.

"It is a really good transition coming straight from the dorms," Josi said. "Students are not faced with all the responsibility they would have if they were living on their own, but still have a handful of obligations."

The co-ops are student-owned and run. Students make all the decisions, the rules, and are required to do work ranging from cleaning or maintenance to food preparation or making grocery lists, Josi said.

"Students are still able to meet a large range of people from grad-



LAURA GOSS/Emerald

Dakota Elder and Adrian Bergeron prepare a turkey dinner for residents of the Cambell Club Co-op.

uate students to freshmen," she said. "We are very student centered."

Another reason potential renters may look into a co-op is because it does not go through a rental agency, Josi said.

"I have heard good and bad about every single property management company," Wood said. "Some companies are too busy and treat students like a number."

Students may prefer to go through a private owner rather than a rental agency, Wood said.

Privately owned establishments tend to work out better for students because whoever is running it may be somewhat flexible, Josi said.

"If there is a student who can't make our two payments a term, we can work out a payment plan," Josi said.

Rooms for rent and roommates wanted can work for some people, however, it may take a little bit of time for the new place to feel like home, Wood said.

Wherever a student decides to live, he or she needs to be aware

of renters' rights and laws.

"Students need to do a walk-through with the landlord," Wood said. "Renters need to be aware of deposit refunds, access abuse and smoke detector laws."

Students need to be very wary of private owners who write up their own lease. They need to make sure everything in the lease is legal, Wood said.

"Looking for a place to live off campus is probably not going to be the most positive experience," Wood said. "But it's not going to make you pull your hair out."



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