

Vandalism strikes University Inn

Graffiti and other damage have increased at the residence hall

By Jason George
Oregon Daily Emerald

It's paradise lost at the Club Med of residence halls.

This academic year, an extra \$1,020 can get you a single room at the University Inn, located on Patterson Drive and Franklin Boulevard, instead of standard University housing. This includes a bigger room, a personal bathroom and a smaller cafeteria.

Also this year, a room in the University Inn can get you tobacco spit in the hallways, graffiti and urine in the stairwells, burning bulletin boards and garbage in your hall.

It's amazing what money can buy.

Not that other complexes do not have problems, but the University Inn has been suffering a blitzkrieg of damages lately. Most recently: graffiti.

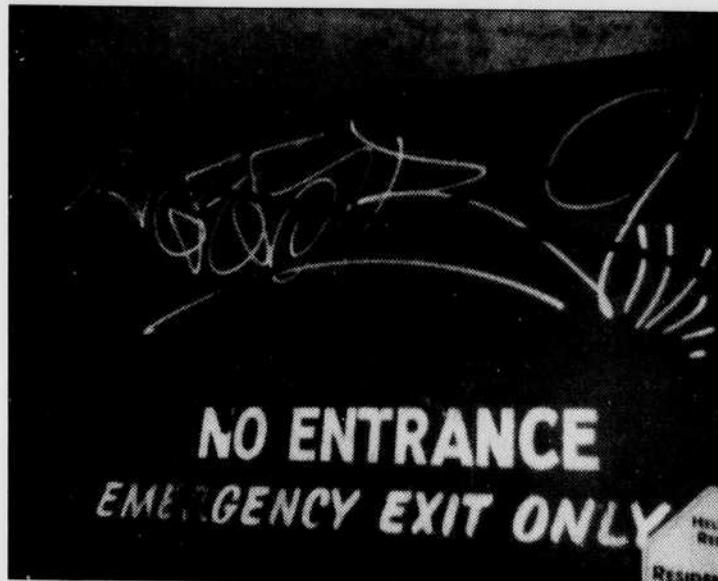
Two separate stairwells have been vandalized by graffiti, and more specifically "tagging," — a Krylon or Sharpie calling-card left by vandals. There are at least four different tags, some aggressively scribbled over others, an act of disrespect to the previous tagger.

"At this time we do not think it is gang-related," said Sgt. Rick Gilliam, the Eugene Police Department's on-campus supervisor.

Gilliam said there has been a recent flare-up of graffiti in the East Eugene area, but he does not recall seeing any of these tags before. With the extensive damage to the area because of tagging, Gilliam said the crime would be a Class C felony, which is punishable by fine, community service or jail time.

The price of the repair and repainting is approximately \$1,000 per stairwell, according to Timothy Womack, resident director of the University Inn.

The present policy is to charge the entire complex for damages anywhere in the protected por-



Graffiti in a stairwell at the University Inn is just part of a plague of vandalism at the hall.

tion of the building. Womack said he is considering not charging the residents for this offense because of the high cost of the repair.

However, there are plenty of other offenses the residents have been charged for.

Pizza boxes discarded in the halls have been a problem, especially on the seventh floor, but Womack said that this problem is desisting.

Couches have been thrown over balconies to the floor below, damaging furniture. Also, there have been three bulletin boards lit on fire, and several "No Smoking" signs ignited.

"I find it ridiculous. I don't think it is fair that I have to pay for people's destructive behavior," said Lauren La France, an undeclared freshman. "I work hard for my money."

The lobby of the University Inn is under video surveillance. Womack said this has been beneficial in apprehending offenders in the past, but the cost of installing the cameras every-

where is too great.

If the vandals are caught, the punishment could be severe, Womack said. He stressed the seriousness of the incidents.

"These are the things that could hamper someone's dreams," he said. "Forget about the cost, our primary goal is development out of the home environment."

For next year, Womack is considering limiting access to each floor to the residents who live on that floor.

"I am hesitant to do this, because the free access to the area they have now is good for a community atmosphere," he said.

One change that will be implemented next year is a weight alarm for the elevator.

Overcrowding on the elevators occurred twice in the fall term and once this term. The overcrowding resulted in the elevators getting stuck below the first floor. Once, there were 18 people in an elevator with a legal limit of six. The fire department had to be called in to open the doors.

The Office of Public Safety can be anonymously contacted with information on any crime at 346-5444. Gilliam can be contacted at 346-2904.



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