

PERSPECTIVES

A NEW standard NEEDED

*West University residences are expensive and
the worst maintained properties in town*

Roofs caving in and poor lighting and water drainage are just three amenities of living in the West University area. The area from 19th Avenue to 11th Avenue and Kincaid Street to Pearl Street encompasses one of the most poorly maintained parts of Eugene. About 97 percent of the residents are renters, primarily students who want to live close to campus. Some landlords live outside Oregon and have made few repairs in the last 50 years, according to City Councilman Bobby Lee. Yet this prime location allows landlords to charge abnormally high rates. In fact, Lee said West University property is more expensive and valuable than downtown Eugene.

Landlords are clearly taking advantage of students and their apathy by neglecting their responsibilities.

But where is the student involvement?

Sure, if ATM fees are high or companies are making money by mistreating workers in foreign countries and even if Gardenburger has a contract with another company that mistreats farm workers, students get involved.

But what about in our own backyard — literally?

Students are being taken advantage of, but no one is speaking out.

HI. WE JUST HAD A CAR DRIVE THROUGH OUR HOUSE. COULD SOMEONE COME OUT AND PATCH UP THE HOLE?

HOLE, HUH? NO, WHAT YOU'VE GOT THERE IS A NEW AIR CONDITIONING UNIT, WHICH MEANS YOUR RENT JUST WENT UP!



Bryan Dixon/Emerald

OSPIRG helps educate students with a guide outlining renters' rights, but why not push for city ordinances that address the problem directly?

A lack of city housing codes and employees to enforce existing state codes only exacerbates the problem by not forcing landlords to a standard.

In fact, in Eugene, these residences cannot be called substandard because there is no standard.

Funding is the main problem with implementing and enforcing these codes, which makes it unlikely that things will change.

Lee suggested implementing a local improve-

ment district out of the West University area to force landlords to make repairs. He is also working to get students involved in maintaining the neighborhood.

This way, the city incurs little cost and leaves landlords with a majority of the expense, which is exactly where it should be.

With this solution, increased rental rates are a possibility, but with newer complexes, such as Chase Village, the University area faces more competition — especially if they raise the rent — making the side effect unlikely.

Students need to get involved if they want to improve living conditions. Send a message to out-of-state landlords that students will fight back.

We need to demand higher quality and greater accountability in the West University neighborhood. Even if we only live there for a year or two, these are still our homes, and students deserve better.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

QUOTED

"God, guts and guns made America free."

Rep. Carl Wilson (R-Grants Pass) said Friday in opposition of bill SB 700, which would change Oregon legislation to include mandatory background checks at gun shows. "America's relationship with the gun goes way back to its very roots."

"This bill is not about taking guns away from law-abiding citizens. It closes a major loophole in state and federal government."

Rep. Lynn Lundquist (R-Powell Butte) on SB700.

"Schools wait and see which kid actually develops a serious problem, in, say, sixth grade before they do anything for them. But by then the horse has left the barn," said **Hill Walker**, of University of Oregon in a Newsweek interview on kids and violence.

CORRECTION

Page one of the May 10 Emerald contained incorrect information about the Oregon softball team. It should have said the team completed its home season. The Emerald regrets the error.

Letters to the Editor

Boycott Nike

Cheers to the Emerald for keeping the pressure on and raising awareness of Nike's labor practices (ODE, April 28, 29 and 30). A little research will reveal that, indeed, Nike has been knowingly engaged in sweatshop-style labor practices since its creation.

It's clear that Nike has only implemented token reforms to stay out of the mass media, effectively out of the public spotlight. Their practices are still atrocious.

As a consumer, what you buy supports the entire way it was made, period. There is no way to disconnect yourself from this process. Buying Nike supports and increases demand for sweatshop labor.

We benefit: the Knight Library and the new William W. Knight Law School exist because of the oppressive, exploitative commodification of powerless humans. Our Division I and Club Sports teams wear the symbol representing the same.

I, for one, am totally ashamed of our relationship with Nike, and consequently the credibility I have for University officials is dwindling. Anyone concerned with justice will likewise question our ethical and moral integrity.

Hence, it is extremely important that we establish a seri-

ous University corporate code of conduct with high standards and rigorous, verifiable enforcement. The Fair Labor Association will not provide this.

After much communication and negotiation, Nike still drags its feet and our name through the mud. As with Gardenburger/Flav-R-Pac, the only remaining solution after this long unsuccessful process is a boycott.

Let's begin a serious dialogue on this issue. It is long past time we gave a collective "HELL NO!" to the unethical treatment of our unseen, disempowered brothers and sisters on the other side of Earth.

Dave Nelson
Environmental Studies, Computer Science

Oregon needs work

By reinstating OSPIRG, we made history. We demonstrated that we care about what toxic chemicals are doing to our environment, about keeping education affordable and about consumer rip-offs like the ATM fee.

We made a powerful community decision to kick in a few bucks to hire our own organizers, lawyers and scientists to work for us in countering the millions that polluters spend to keep the status quo.

In the past, OSPIRG has been able to defend Oregon's

clean-water standards and protect more than \$30 billion in financial aid. With restored funding from the University and a reinvigorated sense of purpose, we stand to take on new challenges.

Oregon's rivers and forests are being destroyed, we still have no right-to-know law about the extent of pesticide use and financial aid is under attack.

It's time to implement a statewide toxins reporting system, ban outrageous bank fees, increase funding for financial aid, implement a water-pollution watchdog project and protect the incidental fee from a legislative attack.

With funding from the University, we feel confident in our ability to take these projects and make an impact. Your involvement and feedback is critical, so get involved, or contact OSPIRG with suggestions.

We've learned a lot this year, but the biggest lesson is this: Don't take anything for granted.

If an organization doesn't communicate itself well to its base, it can lose everything. And we never want to make that mistake again. So thanks again, University of Oregon. Now, let's get to work!

Merriah Fairchild
OSPIRG State Board Chairwoman