

RENTERS' RIGHTS... AND WRONGS

The tenant-landlord relationship requires respect and privacy

BY SAMANTHA BATES
DAILY EMERALD FREELANCE REPORTER

The house was a wreck. A closet door lay broken on the ground with bent window screens. Cigarette burns and water marks littered the windowsills. There were too many stains on the carpet to count. The bathroom door-jamb was splintered from being kicked in. In the kitchen, there were maggots on the cutting board.

"This is why I dislike renting to younger tenants without a rental history," said Jim Straub, the property manager of the 5-year-old house. "My houses are spotless when I give them to a tenant. This gives you an idea of what nine months can do to a property."

Straub, 32, is vice president of the Rental Owners Association and is the third-generation owner of several property management companies in Eugene. After a month-long process that started with the tenants not paying rent, he went through court proceedings and had the tenants evicted.

"This one is just really bad," he said. "It's very rare."

This is a prime example of tenants not knowing their rights and responsibilities when it comes to renting a house.

Straub said landlords can choose to not rent to students.

"You can legally discriminate against students as long as that is the only reason you're not allowing them," he said.

Such discrimination is allowed because students are not a designated minority group. Some property owners may choose not to rent to students because of high turnover or wear and tear on the house.

Most tenant responsibilities are outlined in the rental agreement, which tenants and



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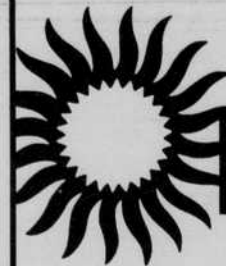
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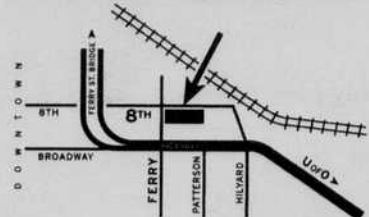
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