

Agents explain rent differences in B-CS

By SEAN FRERKING
Of The Battalion Staff

You get what you pay for, and the differences between what you get in Bryan and College Station may surprise you.

Martha Starts, an agent for Western Realty, said one of the differences between the two areas is the cost of rent. Although property taxes are higher in College Station than in Bryan, Starts said, taxes have little influence on the price of an apartment.

"The location and type of neighborhood are the important factors in calculating the cost of the apartments or duplexes," Starts said.

She said the age of the complex is a vital statistic in the price of the unit. The newer the building, the more the owner can charge, she said.

Holly Blue, an accountant for Culpepper Properties, said she agrees with Starts.

"The buildings are much newer in College Station, and companies can get more rent per square foot because of that," Blue said.

A greater demand for housing near the campus also lets apartment complexes raise rates, Blue said. Certain apartment complexes also try to target an affluent group of students, she said.

"They (the apartment complexes) throw in some perks like (paid utilities), two or three swimming

pools, laundromats and volleyball pits to attract students who can afford these luxuries," Blue said.

The cost of electricity also adds to the cost of living in Bryan and College Station, Blue said. With initial flat rates on water and electricity, students who use an average of 1,000 kilowatts of electricity in a month will pay almost \$20 more per month in College Station.

If students use an average of 2,000 gallons of water per unit, which is the average for individual units in Bryan and College Station, students paying for water and sewage will give the utility company nearly twice as much money in College Station as they do in Bryan.

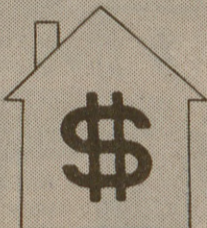
One reason for the disparity in prices between the two areas might be the isolation of the market, Dr. John Hanson, a Texas A&M professor of economics, said. Hanson said some economists consider Bryan and College Station an isolated market.

"In isolated markets, competition is usually less," Hanson said.

And the lack of competition may be a factor for higher prices in the Bryan-College Station area, Hanson said.

Blue offered her theory about why prices are higher in College Station than in Bryan.

"After all, B-CS is a college town, and nothing ever really makes sense," she said.



Off-Campus Center offers advice

Students should search for roommates with similar basic needs

By JULIE MYERS
Of The Battalion Staff

Roommate hunters beware! Friendship does not necessarily mean people will be able to live peacefully under the same roof.

"Compatibility does not mean roommates will click," said Mary Ann Rausch, assistant coordinator for the Off-Campus Center.

She said students must know their basic needs before trying to find livable roommates.

Basically there are two kinds of people who are roommates, Rausch said.

Some people look for roommates who will become their confidants and good friends, Rausch said. Other people just want somebody who will obey some basic rules and pay the bills on time.

"When picking a roommate, it helps to know what your basic living needs are," Rausch said. "If you know, for example, that you value privacy or time to yourself, and you live with the roommate who wants to be your best friend, then that might cause problems."

She said it also helps to have similar views about home.

"If you like to study in your apartment and your roommate thinks studying should be done in the library, then it's possible your roommate will view the apartment as a party area, which might interfere with your study schedule," Rausch said.

"Roommates need to determine the appropriate times to be loud. If one roommate is a morning person and the other a night person, those needs should be respected."

After needs and wants have been identified, students can

find roommates by:

- Using the OCC's Roommate Referral Service.
- Placing ads in local newspapers.
- Distributing fliers around campus.
- Telling friends, neighbors and classmates you are looking for a roommate.

When looking for a roommate, the OCC recommends that students:



- Ask as many and as specific questions as possible.
- Interview more than one potential roommate.
- Think over the decision and do not rush.

Junior mechanical engineering major Mike Bradley said his roommate situation works because the men communicate, cooperate and accept the necessity of sharing.

"The key to our situation is that we all met in the dorms so we already had an idea of how compatible we were," Bradley said. "We're still in the same social circle."

Bradley said his roommates deal with conflicts by either having group discussions or leaving notes. If it's a problem with another person, Bradley

said, he tells the person in a tactful way what's bothering him.

"If the problem gets resolved, it's worth the confrontation," he said.

Rausch said she estimates about one-fourth of the students who use the Off-Campus Center sign a roommate tenancy contract. The contract specifies responsibilities of all roommates for payment of uti-

Because off-campus students usually have more space than dorm students, campus students sometimes tend to resolve a problem by escaping to a different area instead of communicating, Rausch said.

Additionally, Rausch she thought women are willing to discuss what bothers them than men who may miss a problem altogether and resolve it in a more aggressive manner.

"Men think that many problems are not serious enough to worry about unless the roommate is stealing from him something really serious," Rausch said.

"All roommates need to decide what's important to live happily, what they're going to deal with and what's going to roll their backs," she said.

As freshmen, many students aren't experienced negotiators, Rausch said. In fact, said, some students come to the Off-Campus Center ask counselors how to tell a roommate to quit doing something that annoys them.

OCC offers a roommate counseling and conflict resolution for students who can solve their differences themselves. The Office of Students' Attorney is unable to represent student-against-student cases.

Freshmen also experience occasional problems with roommates they knew in school and decided to

The Texas Apartment Association lease states that tenants are jointly and severally responsible for the entire rent. This means if one roommate leaves, the remaining roommate or roommates are responsible for the entire rent.

The tenancy contract, however, can be used as evidence in a court of law if one roommate breaks the contract and moves out, leaving the remaining occupants to pay all rent and bills.

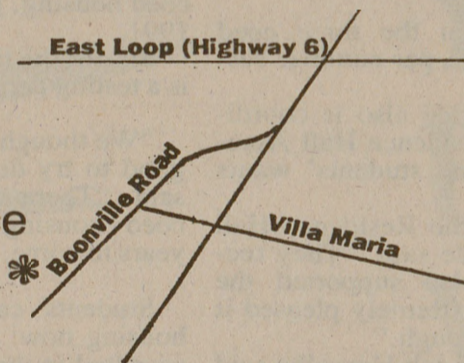
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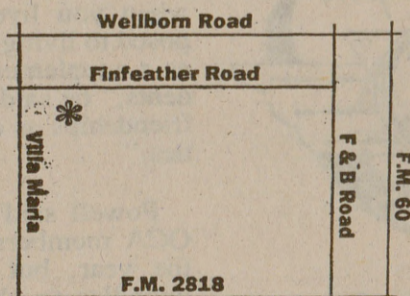


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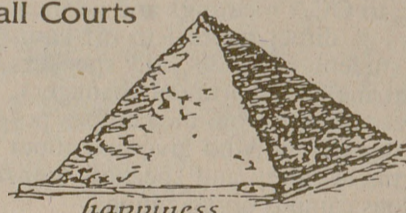


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