

# Pets prove expensive for apartment dwellers

By SELINA GONZALEZ  
Of The Battalion Staff

Before owning a pet, Texas A&M students should consider more than just that pretty doggie in the window.

Off-campus living differs from staying on campus in that students have the choice in some apartment complexes to have a pet. But the luxury of owning and caring for a pet doesn't come cheaply.

Client Schroff, a Creekwood Apartments representative, said residents who own a pet pay a \$150 pet deposit that is returned in full if no fleas, damage or odor are found when renters leave. Residents who don't alert management of a pet can be charged \$10 a day from the day the pet is discovered until the resident makes amends, Schroff said.

"We haven't had a problem with residents and pets because we pretty much told them (the residents) up front," he said.

Phillis Fontenote, a representative from Brazos House Apartments, said the pet policy includes a \$100 pet deposit, and \$50 of the deposit is returned if no damage is found, such as bad odor or torn carpet. There is a 15-pound limit on the weight of a pet, she said.

The representative from Timber Creek Apartments said a \$350 pet deposit is collected for a cat or a dog. There is a 30-pound limit on the weight of the pet. No deposit is collected for birds or fish and \$150 of the deposit is non-refundable while the remainder will be returned if damage is not found.

The representative explained that some apartments in Houston have pet rents. For example, a resident might have to pay up to \$25 per pet per month, so living at the residence for a year or two could result in an extremely costly pet.

James Westbrook, a Casa Blanca Apartments representative, said although the management used to allow pets, their current policy doesn't.

"It became such a hassle in the past with people leaving them in their apartments over vacation; they would leave a bunch of food and just leave them there," Westbrook said.

The management had to replace the carpet in many of the units as a result of pets occupying the residence, he said. Many of the units at Casa Blanca are furnished and in order to care



Battalion File Photo

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# Many students prefer living alone to having roommates

By JULIETTE RIZZO  
Of The Battalion Staff

You can be your own best roommate.

Living alone seems to be an alternative arrangement for many students who do not want to deal with hassles of sharing living space or splitting grocery bills.

Although there are no figures available as to how many A&M students actually live alone, a significant number do.

According to publications released by the Off-Campus Center, the housing needs of those students who live alone are met in the off-campus community, which offers a variety of one-bedroom and efficiency apartments at comparatively low rates per month.

A consensus from students who live alone is that personal freedom is worth the extra money it might cost not to have a roommate.

Elizabeth Thornton, a senior education major from Mesquite, has lived alone since her junior year and said she wouldn't want to have it any other way.

"There's nothing like having the freedom to do whatever I want, at any time of day, without having to worry about whether or not my roommate would approve," she said.

Several A&M students who chose not to be identified in the interest of safety said they choose to live alone for a number of reasons.

Most students agreed the option of living alone offers lifestyle flexibility and independence.

When asked why she prefers to live alone, Thornton said she can avoid the arguments that her friends have with their roommates about bills and house rules.

"Living by myself, I don't have to worry, for instance, about a roommate wanting to have the air conditioner on full blast or wanting to split the grocery bill when they eat twice as much as I do," she said.

"Besides, I've got too much stuff to have a roommate," she said. "There's nowhere in my apartment to put one."

Holly Beeson, a senior journalism major from Houston who has lived by herself for four years, said she recommends that incoming students live with a roommate until they meet people at A&M. She said living alone is

not lonely if you have friends who respect your privacy but still come over to visit.

"I live alone (with my dog and cat), because I like my privacy," she said. "I had a lot of problems with roommates in dorms, especially with the lack of personal space."

"It's not the same living with a roommate."

"I know that when I leave a mess no one will leave one after mine, no one will borrow my clothes and I can sprawl out on my couch whenever I want to."

Students can get information about one-bedroom and efficiency apartments at the Off-Campus Center in Puryear Hall across from the YMCA Building.

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# Married Student Housing provides good location, activities to tenants

By ANDY KEHOE  
Of The Battalion Staff

For those Aggies with families, Texas A&M's Married Student Housing offers a reasonable alternative.

Located across from the polo fields on University Drive, the 651-unit apartment complex is reserved for graduate students and married people with or without children.

MSH offers several benefits to its tenants, making it a popular alternative to off-campus housing.

Only 700 students are accepted each year, and students

currently have to wait more than a year to get an apartment.

Sandra Burke, president of the Married Student Apartment Council, said the first and most obvious advantage to living in MSH is the apartments' location to campus.

"A lot of people are able to walk or cycle to campus if they live in the apartments," Burke said. "This allows them to save money on gas and parking stickers. Living this close to campus also cuts down on the daily wear and tear on your car."

While the University-owned

apartments are open to all graduate students, they are ideal for students with families, Burke said.

"We have many activities for the families, especially the children," she said. "Everybody is so busy, juggling school with marriage and family life. We try to get them to participate in our activities like the barbecue and volleyball competition."

Several different styles of apartments are available to students. One-

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# Apartment locators save students time, energy on search for home

By CHRIS VAUGHN  
Of The Battalion Staff

Apartment locators were created for students without the time or energy to pore through the yellow pages or drive around Bryan-College Station looking for a new home.

Students can save the time and energy by walking into a local apartment locators office, filling out a card, meeting with an agent, saying on what side of town they wish to live, specifying their price range, and answering a few more easy questions.

And it's free.

The leasing agent then assists students in finding several properties that fit their needs and wishes. After narrowing down the possibilities, students can get a leasing agent to give them a personal tour of the apartment complexes, duplexes, fourplexes or any other type of residences.

"We spend time trying to match property to them," Charles Ragland, a leasing agent with Finders Keepers, said. "We get a feel for what they want before we jump in the car and start looking."

Shirley O'Brien, management director of Apartments Plus, said there is no time limit for assisting a student in finding a place to live.

"The time limit is catered to everyone's specific needs," O'Brien said. "On an average,

we spend three to six hours per rental helping students."

Apartment locators don't charge a fee to students, but make their money from the apartment complexes who participate with them. Most locators are paid on a commission basis per apartment by the management companies.

"We don't get a dime until the first month's rent is paid," Ragland said.

Rose Marie Lindsay of the Bryan-College Station Apartment Association said that because not all apartments are listed with the locators, students may have to do some looking on their own to cover all the apartments.

"It's entirely up to the apartment owner as to whether to use an apartment locator or not," Lindsay said. "Some of the apartment owners aren't interested in paying the commission fees."

The apartment locators agents say most students probably don't take advantage of the service for fear they will have to pay.

"A lot of students don't realize what we do is free," O'Brien said. "We save them a lot of time, and we know about the availability of apartments faster."

Ragland said students should trust apartment locators agents as much as any other leasing agent.

"We're licensed real estate agents, and we operate under a code of ethics just like they do," he said.

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