

# Money Pit

## Students share experiences with less-than-perfect landlords

BY MELISSA PANTANO  
The Battalion

Jeff Lewis slides the key into the lock of his new apartment. As he opens the door, he finds the temperature on the inside is higher than the temperature outside.

He checks the thermostat, and behold, it reads 70 degrees. He sighs as he realizes he has one of those "landlords."

Moving off-campus is an exciting experience, but it can be spoiled by the person who collects the rent.

Lewis, a senior agriculture development major, said he has been at odds with his landlord since the day he moved into his apartment.

"When we got there, the AC was broken," Lewis said. "I tried to get hold of my landlord, but she never returned my calls."

"I went out of town for a few days," Lewis said. "When I got back, she had put a window unit in the room that blew 5 feet of cold air — and the fridge was broken. Then she told me and my roommate a letter that said that she thought we were responsible for the AC and the fridge being broken, like we would turn it off on purpose."

But Lewis' landlord nightmare was just beginning.

"It's been a month, and the AC is still broken," Lewis said. "It's so bad that I have had to live with a friend."

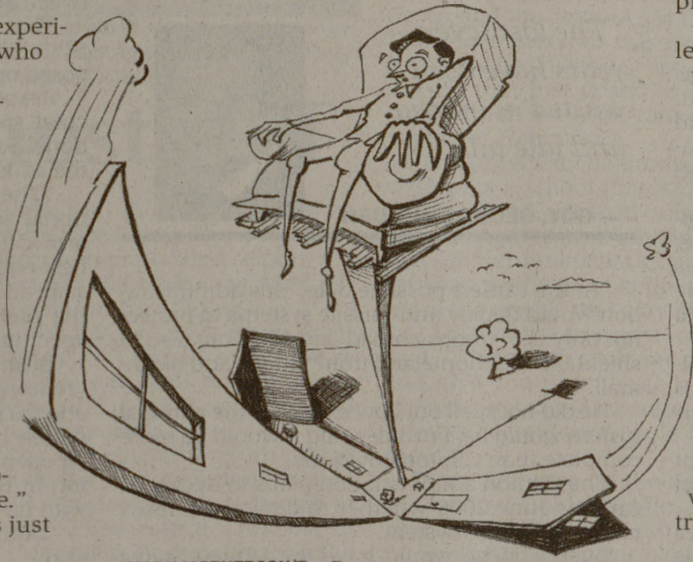
Lewis is not the only Aggie who has had to deal with shady landlords.

Heather Milner, a junior agriculture development major, said she has gotten the shaft from her residential powers-that-be.

"I lived in this one place a few years ago," Milner said. "The management had changed,

and we got a new landlord. After that everything went to hell."

"There was a rumor that the manager would fine residents for different things and then pocket the cash," Milner said. "Also, if you paid your rent in cash, that would get pocketed, too."



MARK MCPHERSON/THE BATTALION

Sometimes a different type of landlord attracts different types of tenants.

"One time I woke up in the morning and there was all this noise outside," Milner said. "I turned on the T.V., and my complex was on because there was a hostage situation. The SWAT team was there, and it was just a big mess."

"The police were doing drug busts there all the time, people's cars were being broken into — it was a scary place to live, and the lousy landlord didn't help."

"So, I moved to the complex where my old landlord transferred to."

Jennifer McCreary, assistant coordinator of the Off Campus Student Services Department of Student Life, said there are some common problems student tenants should avoid.

"People need to read and understand their lease," McCreary said. "If your landlord says that they are going to fix something and it is not added to your lease agreement, they are under no legal obligation to fix it. Verbal contracts don't hold up."

McCreary said students mostly run into problems with the return of their deposit.

"Save a copy of repair requests," McCreary said. "Keep anything you turn in your landlord."

Gavin Daniels, a senior architecture major, said he wished he had followed McCreary's advice when dealing with one of his landlords.

"He totally misrepresented the house when we went to look at it," Daniels said. "He said that the house would be clean when we moved in and that we would have trash service."

"When we moved in, the house was a mess and it didn't have a refrigerator. Not only that, but we never did get our trash picked up"

Daniels said his old landlord took advantage of him and his roommates.

"This one time, we came home and our TV and vacuum cleaner were both gone," he said.

"My landlord said that he took them because our rent was late, and that is legal for landlords to hold your stuff hostage, but they have to give proper notification first."

## GUNS

Continued from Page 3

"When a girl wants to do something guys traditionally do, they think 'Oh, she's dumb, she doesn't know what she's doing,'" Bradberry said. "That's the stereotype look at the ratio of girls to guys that hunt."

That gap, according to the WSSF, is decreasing. Over 22 percent of the overall sports-shooting population are women with five million women participating in handgun, rifle and shotgun sports.

Bradberry said while shooting is fun, she considered it more a skill to acquire than a rush.

"I don't feel powerful just because I'm holding a gun," Bradberry said.

However, Bradberry said, shooting the gun made her more aware of the power of a firearm.

"When you're holding the gun you have to be so careful," she said. "You're holding something that can really hurt yourself and someone else."

Powell said that being able to handle a gun is an important fac-

tor for women learning to shoot. "The physical aspects of shooting are different for a woman," Powell said. "Generally a man is physically stronger, so there's an aspect of control involved."

Hvizdos said shooting is as much a thrill as it is a skill.

"Shooting gave me an adrenaline rush," Hvizdos said. "The guys teaching me thought I was really good. It was kind of a danger thing."

According to WSSF statistics, women own 9 percent of all firearms in the U.S.

Hvizdos and Bradberry both said there are safety issues that go along with shooting.

"It's more dangerous not to know how to use a gun and have it in the house," Hvizdos said.

Bradberry said she would probably not be able to hurt someone even if threatened.

"I don't see myself being able to shoot a person, even if I'm being attacked," she said. "You would want to protect yourself, but in a dangerous situation, I don't think I could stay in control. I think that's true of a lot of women."

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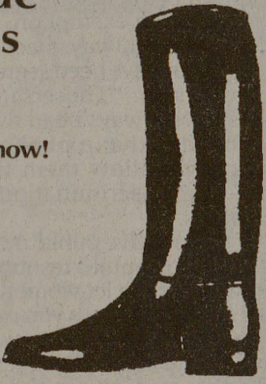
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