

Even with more than 100 apartment and housing complexes in Bryan-College Station, choosing a new college home is not easy. Where to turn then, when one first moves to town? Or when a lease comes up for renewal? With approximately 33,000 students living off campus, these questions often arise. Off-Campus Student Services (OCSS) was designed to provide students with the answers.

According to Risa Bierman, coordinator of OCSS, the organization provides the "strategic initiative to do more" for students, the community and their relationship with the University. Bierman cites leasing and roommate problems as the most common issues that OCSS must deal with. All too often, these concerns arise once the student has already signed a lease and has an obligation to his or her residence. This is largely because most students do not consider using a service such as OCSS until after a problem arises. Bierman said that new students usually come to OCSS before signing a lease, but current students generally wait until a problem occurs.

But despite the apparent de-

lay many students show in using OCSS, the organization's Website receives 15,000 to 20,000 hits a day, and the office usually has 15 to 20 people phone or walk in. In an effort to do more for the community and advertise its services, OCSS is beginning a campaign in the fall entitled "Bee a Good Neighbor"—a campaign designed to "build relationships between the community and the students," Bierman said, and to allow tenants "to understand that they are part of the community."

With the ever-growing options for student housing, it is important to take advantage of some OCSS services, such as roommate searches, housing options searches and lease explanations. Bierman also said that through the use of such services, "a lot of freshmen are opting to live in The Callaway House or The Tradition." There is a very good reason for this trend. These new housing complexes are similar to "dorm-style" or "community" living, similar to what is experienced in on-campus dorms but in a more luxurious environment. These new styles of living are often billed as "off-campus dorms," and through the services and amenities that they offer, they attempt to provide the community atmosphere of an on-campus dorm.

Becky Bell, accountant for The Tradition, said that The Tradition is "as close to campus as you can get without being on campus," and "structured activities and help with personal and educational roadblocks" are offered to the students to help build the kinship between the tenants, as well as between the staff.

Both The Tradition and The Callaway House provide such amenities as a fitness center, a theater and a dining hall, as well as bundling utilities and basic cable in their rent packages.

Marc Wade, assistant general manager of The Callaway House, said that the benefit of this type of dorm-style living is that "everything is in one place, and when individuals feel like a part of a community, they feel better."

The Callaway House also helps to build the community atmosphere by organizing activities like casino night, barbecues and progressive dinners, often running anywhere from two to five of these programs each month. On the opposite end of the spectrum, both The Tradition and The Callaway House enforce "quiet hours" during the night, and extend these hours during exam times. A "courtesy patrol" makes rounds through the buildings to help uphold these rules, but also keeps an eye out for all of the tenants.

"The Callaway House has a very good service record, with knowledgeable staff who are friendly and have a desire to help," Wade said.

Students cannot be too careful when choosing where they will live in for the next year or possibly longer. When faced with this decision, OCSS can help narrow the selection based on the options and services that are

See HOUSING on Page 4.

To live ... or not to live ... OFF CAMPUS

Feature by John Salerno
Photographs by E. Ray Gard



Background: The Tradition at Northgate is planned to be completed by Fall 2001. Above: Students walk through the lobby at The Callaway House.

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1:00 4:00 7:00 9:50 12:45	11:25 2:00 4:40 7:25 10:15 12:55
FINAL FANTASY: SPIRITS WITHIN (PG-13)	DR. DOOLITTLE 2 (PG)
11:35 2:15 5:05 7:45 10:20 12:55	12:45 3:10 5:25 7:50 10:10 12:20
KISS OF THE DRAGON (R)	ATLANTIS (PG)
12:20 2:30 4:50 7:30 10:05 12:30	11:45 2:10 4:35 7:20 9:40 12:05
SCARY MOVIE 2 (R)	TOMB RAIDER (PG-13)
11:40 1:50 4:15 6:10 8:20	11:55 2:25 5:00 7:35 10:25 1:00
12:40 2:50 5:15 8:10 10:35 12:40	SHREK (PG)
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11:20 1:35 4:05 7:15 9:30 11:40	PEARL HARBOR (R)
12:20 2:35 4:45	12:00 3:50 8:00 11:45
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