



# HOUSEHOLD WORDS

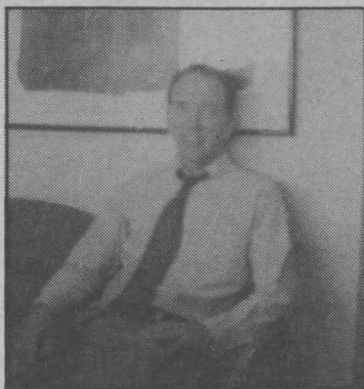
Vol 2 No 2 February 1993

UCSB COMMUNITY HOUSING OFFICE

893-4371

8AM-5PM MONDAY-FRIDAY

## UP TO CODE



## LANDLORDS, TENANTS & THE LAW

WITH **JOHN FORHAN**

*With the rental season just about here again, what advice would you give to people who'll be signing a rental agreement or a lease for the first time within the next few weeks?*

One of the most constructive things anyone looking for a place to rent can do is talk to the people who're already living there. That's true if it's your first time or your twelfth time. It doesn't matter. It's only people who've been living in a particular building who can tell you the things that you need to know about how the place is managed. Like how quickly or willingly does the manager or landlord respond to maintenance problems? How seriously are tenants' concerns taken? Try to get an idea of how well the whole business of getting Security Deposits returned and properly accounted for is handled. This will tell you how likely it is, or unlikely, that you're going to run into the kind of problem that'll bring you to the Community Housing Office with a dispute that needs third-party intervention to get resolved. Once you've signed that lease, you've signed a contract and you've incurred a whole lot of legal obligations. The more you know about the person you're going to be dealing with, the better off you'll be. That's exactly why landlords and management companies run their checks on you, so you shouldn't be shy about running the same kind of check on them.

*Is there anything tenants can do about the "Joint & Several" clause we discussed in the last issue of Household Words a few months ago?*

If I were a tenant, I'd certainly try to negotiate some relief from "Joint & Several." Let's recap. "Joint & Several" is a provision that legally enables the landlord or manager to

*continued on page 2*

## CHO RENTERS' WORKSHOPS BEGIN FEB 22 IN UCEN 3; FULL SCHEDULE OF TIMES & PLACES ON PAGE 4

## ADVANCE COPIES OF 1993 "TENANT'S HANDBOOK" WITH UPDATED LISTINGS AVAILABLE ONLY AT WORKSHOPS; GENERAL DISTRIBUTION BEGINS MARCH 4

by Roane Akchurin  
Manager, Community Housing Office

At Community Housing, we're looking forward to seeing a huge crowd for our first Renters' Workshop of 1993, in UCen 3 on Monday afternoon, starting at 2pm. As in previous years, the workshops will feature a video presentation and a Q&A session with a representative of the Owner/Manager community, with CHO's own student peers presiding.

We have twelve sessions planned this year between February 22 and March 3, including one apiece in each of the on-campus Residence Halls as well as in Tropicana Gardens and Fontainebleu. We've also designed one session specifically for veteran IV renters; that'll be at 7pm on Tuesday, February 23 in the IV Community Relations Center at 970 Embarcadero del Mar.

You'll find the full schedule, with times and places, on page four of this newsletter.

In addition to having re-edited (and shortened) the video we introduced last year, we've also redesigned the *Tenant's Handbook* to include just as much information as before about tenants' and landlords' respective rights and responsibilities but in what we hope is a more attractive format.

And please let us know if this year's editions of the video and the handbook, with their revised formats, respond efficiently to your need for information.

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## IN THE COMMUNITY AS COMMUNITY AFFAIRS BOARD

For many UCSB students, the sense of privilege implicit in their status as members of a university community brings with it an urge to give something back to the larger community within which they live. Without specific knowledge of the Santa Barbara community's network of more than 250 human-services agencies, however, it's often difficult for students whose homes are in Los Angeles or San Francisco or elsewhere to identify an appropriate channel for their volunteerist energies.

Patty Chan solved that problem for herself by tapping into the resources of AS's Community Affairs Board (CAB). A Junior who's majoring in English and Asian Studies, Chan now spends a lot of her free time working with LIVE (Let Isla Vista Eat) addressing the persistent problems of hunger and homelessness as these manifest themselves every day in the poignant tableaux that have become part of every city's environment.

"I lived on campus my first year," Chan recalls. "I was in Santa Cruz, in the Leadership in Service Hall. I'd been quite active in high school, in the Key Club and so on, but I was still looking for something constructive to do in my free time. Then CAB came in

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# UP TO CODE

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hold tenants collectively responsible for observing all the terms of a lease. In other words, if four people sign a 12-month "Joint & Several" lease for an apartment and then one moves out without having found someone to take his or her place, the other three are still responsible for coming up with the full amount of the rent. You certainly don't have anything to lose by asking the landlord or manager if they'd consider allowing you to take sole individual responsibility only for your own fair share. But if they decline to eliminate that clause, there really isn't anything you can do about it because "Joint & Several" is a perfectly legal option. But you can look for somewhere else to rent, of course.

*Is it only rent that "Joint & Several" applies to?*

No, although rent is obviously the most important element. This is going to sound a little quaint after we've had so much rain in the last few weeks, but some leases make a specific provision that imposes sole responsibility for water usage on tenants. If that's the case in a unit that doesn't have water conservation devices such as low-flow toilets or shower heads, you might suggest to the manager or landlord that you'll be willing to assume that responsibility if he or she will reciprocate in good faith by installing the devices in question. That strikes me as a reasonable quid pro quo that protects both the tenants and the owners. If the manager or landlords does agree to make those improvements, make sure that the whole text of the agreement is written out in full and incorporated into the lease. This should also include a specific date by which the improvements will

have been completed. That's valid any time in the period that precedes the execution of the lease when a manager or landlord makes a commitment to fix something: Get it in writing.

*Are there any circumstances under which it's possible for a landlord or manager to raise the rent during a fixed-term lease?*

Only if you've signed a lease that specifically allows the owner to do that. Or if you specifically agree to and sign such a supplement to the original document. There are very few, if any, owners who'd try to sneak a clause like that past you, but even that remote possibility emphasizes how important it is for everyone to read their leases from top to bottom and with great care.

*That really is the primary difference between fixed-term leases and month-to-month agreements, isn't it?*

That's right. If you're confident that you can live up to the terms of a lease for however long—ten months, twelve, whatever—then a fixed-term lease protects you against rent hikes and arbitrary evictions and any other unilateral changes during that period. But if you want greater flexibility for yourself and a shorter-term commitment, then you should look for a month-to-month agreement.

*A lot of Isla Vista apartments are offered furnished or at least partially furnished? Do you have any advice for people who are looking specifically at furnished units?*

What does "furnished" mean? What does "unfurnished" mean? The agreement may say that two chairs and a couch are provided, but I

know I'd want to see them before I started paying for them. Not just chairs in another apartment that look like the ones I'll find in the one I'm going to rent. The actual chairs in the actual apartment.

*You seem to be saying that tenants in this market need to take a course in cynicism before they go out to make their arrangements.*

Not cynical. Skeptical. Landlords and managers aren't cynical, but they are skeptical, and there's a reason for that. No-one in charge of rental housing units is going to say, "Yeah. You look like a nice person. I trust you. Go ahead and move in. Deposit? Last month's rent in advance? Don't worry about it." This is business, so they have you fill out an application, maybe check your credit, check your references, maybe check your parents' credit, maybe require a co-signer. That's skeptical. So there's no reason for you to take anything on trust either.

*What if there's a clause in a lease that I don't understand or I've got a question about.*

Take it to the Community Housing Office. Roane or Scott will be glad to help you make sure you understand exactly what you're getting into. Just don't sign it until you do understand. General questions you can get answered at one of the CHO Renters' Workshops over the next two weeks or so.

John Forhan is a Santa Barbara attorney who worked for many years with AS Legal Services.

## IN THE COMMUNITY

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and did a presentation, and I was set."

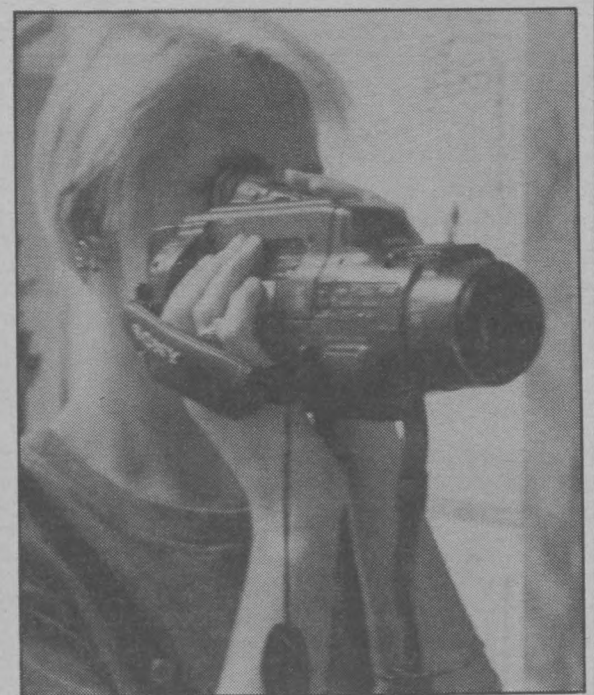
In fact, CAB's community of student volunteers numbers as many as 1,500 or 2,000 in any given year. Opportunities are listed on bulletin boards (presently on the UCen's third floor but soon to be moved to the Old Gym) and organized into such categories as Health & Medicine, Legal Services, Youth and, inevitably given the diversity of needs, Miscellaneous.

Implementation of CAB's principles, even with the funding support granted by AS, involves much more than just keeping bulletin boards updated. The organization has co-chairs, Jennifer Perkins and Nhu-Y Canh, and works closely with two full-time UCSB staffers, Dulcie Sinn and Amy Supinger. Given that CAB lives by its success in replenishing the community of students who are its volunteers, much time, energy and Xerox are always being applied to recruitment and the task of keeping the organization's campus profile high.

"For me, CAB has introduced me to some really unique people and experiences," Patty Chan says. "And there are some major rewards just in knowing you're helping and how much it's appreciated. Join us. You'll see."

AS COMMUNITY  
AFFAIRS BOARD  
.....  
Call  
893-4296  
for more information

EVERY  
PICTURE  
TELLS  
A STORY...



and one of them could save your Security Deposit. Call CHO for your FREE Move-In/Move-Out Video. We're at 893-4371, Monday through Friday, from 8am to 5pm.

# ELSEWHERE:

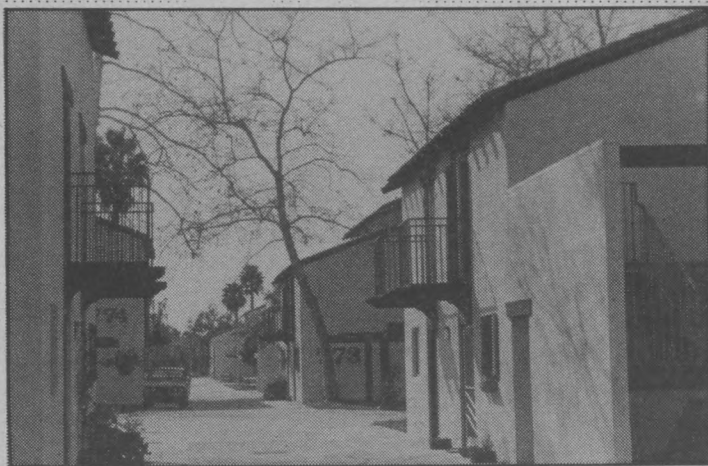
## ALTERNATIVE HOUSING FOR UCSB STUDENTS

### SANTA BARBARA STUDENT HOUSING CO-OPS 685-6964

The Santa Barbara Student Housing Co-Ops provide a unique housing opportunity for students who are looking for an alternative to traditional landlord/tenant situations. The Co-Op is a democratic non-profit organization run by the members. The students own and operate the Co-Op with the assistance of the National Student Housing Co-Op Association. Long-term planning and budget decisions are made by the Board of Directors which consists of Co-Op members and advisors representing the community and the university respectively. Because the Co-Op is non-profit, members are able to keep the rent low while ensuring that the organization continues to run smoothly. The budget is also designed to benefit members in other ways: money is set aside for improving the buildings, for member education and for social events. The budget also makes provisions for the purchase of communal property; members have access to a VCR, BBQ, Cable TV, Microwave, FAX machine and computers. Members are required to attend monthly house meetings and to take an active role in house upkeep. The required work hours are minimal, usually amounting to no more than 6 to 8 hours per quarter. Opportunities also exist for involvement in planning, operations and financial management. Positions are available on the Board of Directors or within individual houses. It's also worth noting that Co-Op leases are made out to individuals; no Co-Op lease includes a "Joint & Several" clause.



### FAMILY STUDENT HOUSING 893-4021



UCSB Family Student Housing is strongly committed to providing a supportive environment where a student with dependents can achieve her/his academic goal while raising a family. To be eligible, students must be able to provide documentation either of their marriage or of their status as the parent of a dependent minor child. The rents paid by Family Student Housing residents compare very favorably with those paid elsewhere in the Santa Barbara area; these apartments are the best deal in town for students with families, especially those that include small children. Family Student Housing actually operates three complexes, West Campus (across from Francisco Torres, where El Colegio Rd meets Storke Rd) and Storke I and II, off Los Carneros. While the student must play the pivotal role in creating her/his experience during the years spent at UCSB, Housing & Residential staff strives to provide a variety of programs and services that both serves this diverse population's needs and fosters a "sense of community." Among the special programs developed in response to residents' input are the Recycling Program, Community Gardens, Youth Recreation Program, Newcomers Social, Monthly Movie, Happy Birthday Party, Halloween Party, Family Celebration Week and Re-Entry/Non-Traditional Students Activities. Development of a Residents' Council has provided a forum in which residents are able to voice their opinions and offer suggestions for future events and programs.

### SORORITIES & FRATERNITIES 893-4553

If you're currently a member of the Greek system, the option of living in your organization's house may be a viable one for you to consider for next year: sororities and fraternities provide a great environment with a real sense of community.

The cost of living in a Greek house usually includes room and board, monthly dues, all utilities (except long-distance telephone calls), use of in-house recreational facilities and, in some houses, on-site laundry privileges. The actual monthly costs vary from one chapter to the next, but the costs are generally less than those entailed by renting from a private party.

House officers are required to reside in the house. Most rooms in Greek houses accommodate three people. Priority with regard to selection of rooms and roommates is dictated by seniority and individual levels of active involvement in house business.

Because houses must respect the community that surrounds them, each one has general rules that govern members' conduct. Members will often form study groups to motivate each other academically. Members are also expected to play an active role in the maintenance and operation of the house.

### HOUSEHOLD WORDS

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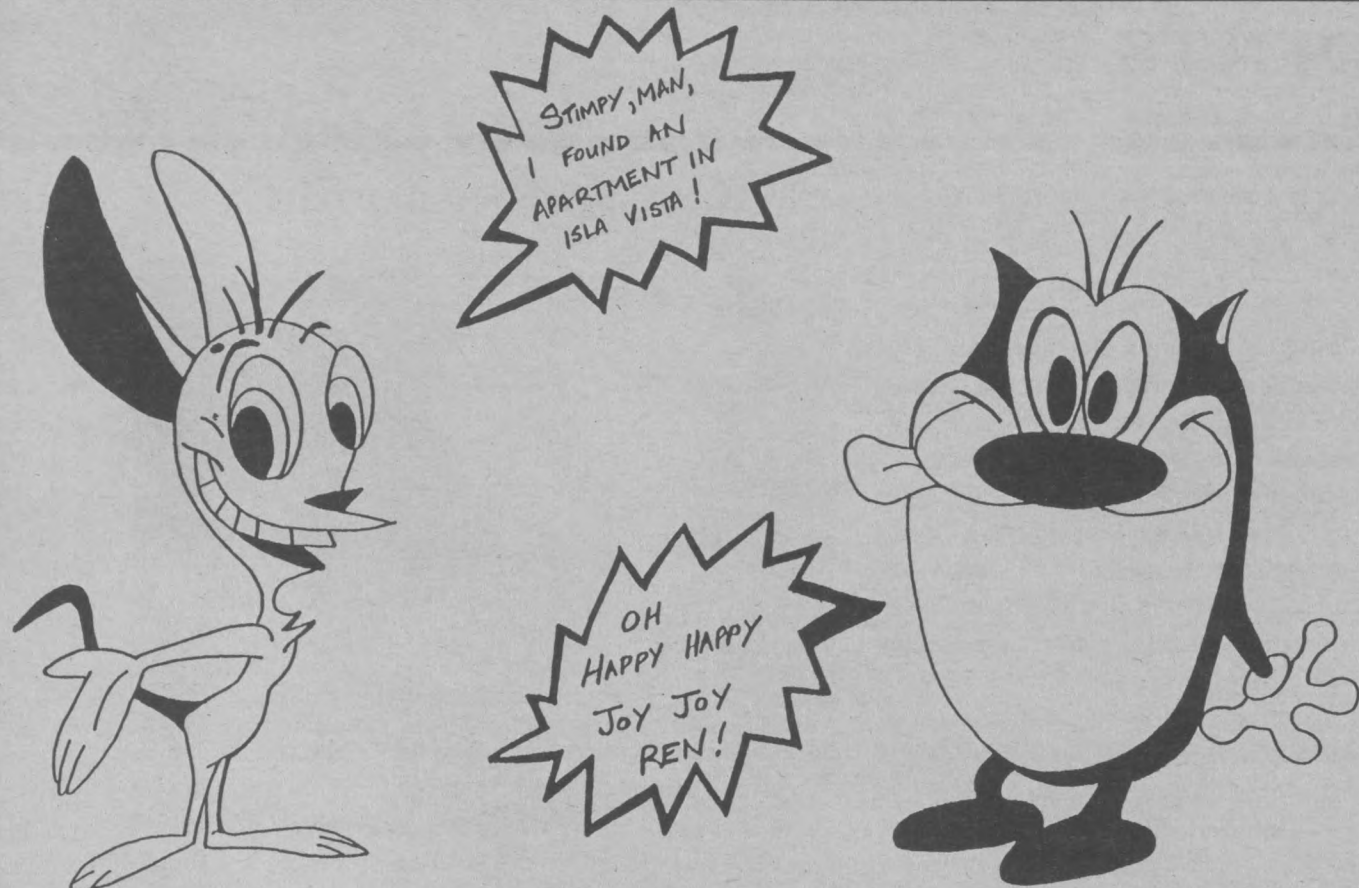
Daily Nexus

### UNIVERSITY-OWNED SINGLE-STUDENT APARTMENTS 893-3640



UCSB's Single-Student Apartments (SSA) division consists of three complexes, Santa Ynez, El Dorado and Westgate; these units specifically serve students who have earned junior, senior or graduate status. Santa Ynez consists of 200 two-bedroom units gathered in four clusters of 50 units each. One cluster is rented exclusively by graduate students on 12-month contracts; in this cluster, two students share a two-bedroom unit. The three remaining clusters offer 9-month contracts to upper-division students; here four students share a two-bedroom unit. Westgate's configuration includes 18 one-bedroom units and one two-bedroom unit as well as 22 studios, while El Dorado has 27 one-bedroom and 23 two-bedroom units. All three complexes have coin-operated laundries, and the latest improvement is a Fitness Center. SSA takes great pride in its commitment to keep its rentals safe, affordable, well-maintained and student-oriented, providing friendly full-time office support, custodial and community-programming staff. Residents' access to SSA administrative staff responsible for implementing basic policies and procedures is facilitated via the forum provided by the Single-Student Apartment Community Council.

# DON'T PANIC!



The search is over! The COMMUNITY HOUSING OFFICE will be presenting workshops on "HOW TO RENT AN APARTMENT." The workshops will be held between February 22 and March 3. We'll be answering all your questions and showing a short video on the best way to go about finding the apartment that's right for you. An Owner/Manager, together with other IV residents, will also be present, ready to answer any questions you may have. We will also be handing out advance copies of the new edition of our Tenant's Handbook, with updated listings, with updated listings for 1993-1994.

February 22	2pm	UCen Rm 3
February 23	7pm*	IV Community Rel Ctr 970 Embarcadero del Mar San Rafael (Carrillo)
February 24	8:30pm	Tropicana Gardens
	7pm	Anacapa
	9pm	UCen Rm 3
February 25	4pm	San Nicolas
	7pm	San Miguel
March 1	7pm	Santa Rosa
	8:30pm	Santa Cruz
March 2	7pm	Fontainebleu
	9pm	UCen Rm 2
March 3	2pm	

\* For Veteran IV Renters only

REMEMBER, IF YOU WANT AN ADVANCE COPY OF THE HANDBOOK, YOU MUST ATTEND ONE OF THE WORKSHOPS LISTED ABOVE; GENERAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE HANDBOOK DOES NOT START UNTIL MARCH 4.