

**RG** RENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED



Landlord/Tenant Law  
with John Forhan  
(AS Legal Services)

*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 this office or 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

**Your Lease or  
your Rental Agreement  
is a Legal Contract.  
Think about that.**

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 first 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 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 man-

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## RENTERS' WORKSHOPS BEGIN 9PM MON FEB. 24, CARRILLO COMMONS SESSIONS THRU MAR 5; FULL SCHEDULE, TIMES ON PAGE 4

ADVANCE COPIES OF TENANT'S HANDBOOK ONLY AT THESE WORKSHOPS;  
GENERAL DISTRIBUTION SET FOR MAR 6

by Roane Akchurin  
Manager, Community Housing Office

Just to set the record straight, the two-page rental-housing advertisement that appeared in the February 12 edition of the Daily Nexus was not sponsored by the Community Housing Office.

In fact, the ad was placed by a independent consortium of landlords and management companies seeking to take an early marketing initiative to compensate for the sluggish pace of business last spring and summer.

The ad would actually have appeared a week or so earlier had its sponsors not deferred to CHO's requests that it be withheld until our 1992 Renters'

Workshops were imminent.

Meanwhile, we're looking forward to seeing a record crowd for our first presentation, in Carrillo Commons on Monday night at 9pm.

In addition to having a new (and professionally produced) video this year, we've also redesigned the Tenant's Handbook to include a lot more information about tenants' and landlords' respective rights and responsibilities.

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

## IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD Perspectives on Isla Vista Housing

### 4. Brendan Busse (SB Co Solid Waste Mgmt / 681-4348)

*Brendan Busse can talk some serious trash.*

*In fact, it's his job not only to talk trash but also to do something about it, especially when the trash in question is violating particular sections of the County Code.*

*Brendan Busse is an Inspector for the Solid Waste Management Division of Santa Barbara County's Public Works Department, and his beat includes northern Goleta, most of the county's northeast corner, around Cuyama and New Cuyama, and Isla Vista.*

*While Busse was raised in Carlsbad, on the coast between Los Angeles and San Diego, he attended UCSB and graduated in 1990. He actually majored in English, which made the first question pretty obvious.*

**HW:** How did you move from an academic emphasis on English to a job in solid waste

management?

**BB:** Part of my financial aid package at UCSB involved a Work Study Internship. The one I got was with the enforcement division of the California Coastal Commission. The Commission's mandate, for anyone who's not familiar with it, includes jurisdiction over any kind development within a certain radius of the shoreline. I was assigned Ventura County, Santa Barbara County and San Luis Obispo County, and I worked that beat for three years. That's what got me interested in environmental issues, and it was the experience I got in the internship that got me the job.

**HW:** Would you give us a brief rundown of your duties.

**BB:** The Public Works department I work for, Solid Waste Management, runs all County landfills and enforces the County codes that regulate the

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## IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD: Perspectives on Housing in Isla Vista

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fills and enforces the County codes that regulate the disposal of all garbage and refuse, with the exception of hazardous materials. We also have jurisdiction over abandoned vehicles.

HW: Are abandoned cars a major problem?

BB: Well, I'll tell you about the situation in Isla Vista last summer, around move-out time, then you tell me how bad you think it is. After IV emptied out, I found better than fifty cars out there. Not just in one location, scattered all over the place. Most of them had been stripped or at least seriously vandalized, you know, wheels missing, the engine gone, pulled up on cinder blocks. Anyone who saw them would've known right away that these cars weren't going anywhere.

HW: So why wait until summer to move them if it was so obvious they were abandoned?

BB: I couldn't see them. Unless someone tips me off about a particular car, I don't have time to go hunting for them. Whoever had abandoned them had hidden them pretty carefully behind other cars, so only when the other cars took off for the summer was it possible for me to see where the abandoned ones were. The kicker here is, those cars were taking up more than fifty parking places. We all know how scarce parking is in IV. If I saw a car just

sitting there, obviously abandoned, in a spot that it was preventing me from parking in, I wouldn't hesitate to get someone to come and move it.

HW: The someone, in this case, being you, right?

BB: Right.

HW: How do people contact you?

BB: I'm based in the Transfer Station on Calle Real. My phone number is 681-4348. Because of the nature of my job, I'm out on the road a lot, but people can leave messages for me on the answering machine.

HW: How many calls are you getting now in an average month from students? What are they about?

BB: About four or five a month, usually with questions about some situation that they think may be a potential health hazard. It's Chapter 17 of the Santa Barbara County Code that contains the relevant information. About how many containers property-owners are supposed to supply, where the containers are supposed to be placed, if it's OK for them to be on the street, that kind of thing. That's what I'm looking for when I'm out on the streets myself. Does garbage on a given property represent an eyesore or a public nuisance? Is it a health hazard? A fire hazard? Those are really important

considerations in a community as tightly packed together as IV. Does the container have the proper lid so dogs can't turn it over and spread garbage all over? If garbage has been dumped in an empty lot, who does the lot belong to? Most of the time, all these things go back to the property-owner, even if it isn't his or her fault, but that doesn't mean tenants are automatically free of any responsibility. What I try to do when I see a violation is tell the person responsible how to fix the problem, then give them reasonable time to take care of it.

HW: Move-out must be a major nightmare for you. Has the IV GIVE program made a difference?

BB: Mar Borg picked up more than 250 tons last year alone at move-out. The thing that's really tough to understand about move-out is why more managers and landlords don't take advantage of Mar Borg's offer to do additional trash pick-up runs. That's a good part of the reason why trash sits around in the streets for weeks after everyone's gone. There are other landlords and managers who not only pay for the extra runs but go out of their way to help their tenants get rid of unwanted belongings in a responsible way. I really appreciate that. Yes, I think IV GIVE's program, having people bring in couches and other stuff for alternative disposal, whatever's in good shape to be passed on to needy local families, helps a great deal. For one thing, there aren't as many couches lying around in the dumpsters waiting for someone to torch them. I think it's an excellent program. And there's another benefit from IV GIVE. What you see is people who take pride in their community. If everybody followed GIVE's example, my job could be eliminated.

## UP TO CODE



*continued from page 1*

ager 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 couple of 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 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.*

Bring it here, to AS Legal Services, or take it to the Community Housing Office. Roane or I 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.



# SAFE KEEPING / KEEPING SAFE

by Cheri Gurse, with Jeremy Janes

*(Cheri Gurse works out of the Women's Center as Coordinator of the Rape Prevention Education Program)*

The statistics, for women, are distressing. Research indicates that as many as one woman in four is the victim of rape or attempted rape during her years as a student. FBI reports show that one woman in three is the victim of sexual assault during her lifetime. How many men, responding to college-sponsored surveys, described their participation in a sexual assault but then denied that the incident actually constituted an assault? One in twelve.

Nearly all assaults against women are committed by men who are known to the woman, not by strangers. This is not comforting news either for women or for men, but involvement now in rape prevention efforts and in the initiation of large-scale social change can do much to improve this situation.

Although the documentary evidence of sexual assault statistics suggests differently, it is the fear of stranger assault that haunts many women during their search for housing in Isla Vista.

Protection against acquaintance sexual assault entails understanding clearly that it could happen to you, learning assertiveness, setting well-defined boundaries in relationships, claiming the right to say "No" or "Yes" and to change your mind, studying and grasping the dynamics of oppression and social change theory.

Protection against stranger assault is different: This involves good locks, good lighting, escorts and physical security systems. All this, of course, would become unnecessary if men who commit rape would stop.

Because such "hardware" techniques and strategies do make a difference in deterring certain kinds of crime, the Community Housing Office together with the Rape Prevention Education Program sponsored by the Women's Center and the Police Department offer the following guidelines addressing personal safety issues regarding stranger assaults. While the advice that follows is designed specifically to empower women to assert stronger control over their lives and thus actively diminish the odds that they will be victimized by stranger assault, much of it also has a common validity for men: These precautions will serve anyone well who wishes to minimize their exposure to burglary, theft or assault.

## Women and men can take steps to enhance the environmental control that they exercise over their own lives.

Your exercise of control over what might and might not happen to you demands first that you look at your home environment skeptically and critically.

Ask yourself, "If I were an intruder, would this place look like one that would be easy to break into? Is anyone paying attention?" How well is the exterior maintained? Poorly maintained yards or grounds are like a beacon to the wrong people. Does the building have a criminal past? The Foot Patrol will tell you of any reported break-ins, sexual assaults or even suspicious circumstances logged in over the past year.

Knock on nearby doors. Look for women neighbors. Ask them if they feel safe. Find out how management responds when a problem that affects safety is reported.

Enlist a friend for company and walk around the place at night. Is there a lot of coming and going? Does it feel safe? Check how well the common areas are illuminated. Common areas include parking areas, front and back doors, stairways, and so on. How near is the front or back door to the parking area?

There's nothing in the law that requires landlords to purchase deadbolts for their tenants' doors, so, if your apartment's access doors are not equipped with one and your landlord declines your request that deadbolts be obtained, you'll have to do it yourself--but only after you've got written permission. The same rule applies to peepholes that might allow you to identify the person knocking at your door before you open it. Even if you don't install a peephole, never open the door until you've checked out visitors by looking at them through windows adjacent to the door. Insist that any maintenance workers show you a picture ID before you let them in.

Look very carefully at all those points at which an intruder might seek access into your apartment. The Foot Patrol or the UCSB Police can advise you concerning inexpensive ways of reinforcing the security of particular kinds of doors and windows, and the Foot Patrol will even run a Safety Audit of your housing for you.

Be picky about who you choose to live with. Talk with the people you may want to live with before you sign papers. Discuss personal values and needs concerning security. Will your potential roommates lock doors and windows at night? Will they make a commitment not to lend their key out? Will they protect the phone number from strangers? If everyone in the household does not share the same commitment to apartment safety, life could quickly get tense.

Leave a radio on when you go out. Put a couple of lights on variable time switches. The idea is to give the impression that someone's in the apartment even when everyone's out.

By heightening your awareness of potential problems in your home's security and then acting on this awareness, you empower yourself to exercise real control over your housing environment.

One last thing: Whether you've taken these precautions or not, if something happens to you, don't blame yourself: It's not your fault. Someone else exploited an unlocked door or found another way in. That person bears the responsibility for not committing the act. No matter what the circumstances of an assault or an intrusion may be, it's never the victim's fault.

### KEEP THESE NUMBERS HANDY

Isla Vista Foot Patrol	681-4179
UCSB Police (Non-Emergency)	893-3446
UCSB Rape Prevention Education Program	893-3778
SB Rape Crisis Center (24-Hour HotLine)	569-2255
Emergency	9-911
On Campus	911
Off Campus	911

\*\*\*You'll find additional safety tips on Page 9 of the 1992 Tenant's Handbook.

### HOUSEHOLD WORDS

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# MOVING OUT MOVING ON MOVING IN

## IT'S THAT TIME OF THE YEAR AGAIN

Spring is in the air.

Before you know it, the season's symphony of ecologically correct sounds will be joined by a chorus of landlords and managers showing off virtuoso chops in competitive variations on a theme of "Have we got an apartment for you!!!"

Indeed they do. There are a lot of terrific places to live out there, and most of the owners and managers are honorable, responsible people who take great pride in their buildings. You'll have a chance to meet many of them at the Rental Fair that's scheduled for Monday, March 2 on the promenade in front of the Community Housing Office.

But there are also a few places where you wouldn't want your pet swine, Rancid, to bed down. And there are a few landlords in whose proximity it's always wise to carry a can of industrial-strength Lysol. Even if you avoid those horrors, you still have to worry about the Roommates-From-Hell syndrome.

So, what can you do in order to avoid making bad decisions to whose repercussions your happiness next year could otherwise be held hostage?

Come to a Community Housing Office 1992 Renters' Workshop, that's what.

This year's presentations start on February 24. We have a new video presentation for you, ISLA VISTA 93117, produced and directed with professional pizzazz by Ken Hinton of Learning Resources from a script by our own distinguished and multi-talented student peers. And we'll have a panel of erudite experts on hand to answer all your rental-housing questions. In addition to the reward of information that will help you make shrewd choices as you start looking for next year's accommodations, you'll also be able to take away with you an advance copy of our 1992 Tenant's Handbook.

Anyone who's unable to attend one of our workshops will have to wait until March 6 to pick up a copy of the Handbook.

As you'll see from the schedule below, we've set aside two evenings specifically for those of you who are veterans of Isla Vista's rental-housing market; you'll still get your 1992 Tenant's Handbook, with all the Isla Vista listings we've been able to gather, but that evening's presentation will be geared to your needs and experience.

It's time to get moving.

Date	Time	Location
Monday February 24	9-10pm	San Rafael/Carrillo Commons
Tuesday February 25	7-8pm	Santa Rosa
Tuesday February 25	9-10pm	Tropicana Gardens
Wednesday February 26	7-8pm	UCen 2
Wednesday February 26	9-10pm	IV Community Relations Center 970 Embarcadero del Mar ***For Veteran Renters Only***
Thursday February 27	4-5pm	UCen 2
Thursday February 27	7-8pm	Santa Cruz
<b>Monday March 2: RENTAL FAIR</b>	<b>10am - 2pm</b>	<b>On Promenade in front of Community Housing Office, between Student Services Building and Storke Tower</b>
Monday March 2	7-8pm	San Nicolas
Tuesday March 3	7-8pm	San Miguel
Wednesday March 4	4-5pm	UCen 2 ***For Veteran Renters Only***
Thursday March 5	7-8pm	Anacapa

**COMMUNITY HOUSING OFFICE**  
893-4371, Monday through Friday, 8am - 5pm