

OPINION

The Appalachian

Your student newspaper since 1934.

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Our Perspective ...

Off-campus students must fight for rights

With a housing shortage in Boone these days, more students are living off-campus, and as they move, they have to face leases, landlords, apartments and rent.

According to information released at the June 6 Board of Trustees meeting, more than 60 percent of the student body now lives off campus. That makes the above matters more important to Appalachian students than ever.

So why are so few Appalachian students aware of their legal rights as tenants?

Due to so many students needing housing, they're usually willing to sign the lengthy and detailed leases, often without reading them.

Almost every students has heard them--horror stories about unrepaired leaks, being charged for basic services as cleaning carpets, apartments having shoddy construction and their complaints falling on deaf ears from landlords.

There is a series of state and local statutes which protect tenants' rights.

Landlords can be sued if they fail to abide by these laws and repeated complaints by the tenants are ignored.

In a perfect world, rental companies would obey these laws of their own accord, in the interest of fulfilling their obligation to their tenants and maintaining a safe property.

However, we don't live in a perfect world.

Rental companies often take advantage of students' relative lack of knowledge and clout to avoid living up to their end of the deal.

The recent problems with behind-schedule construction at Mountaineer Village, with students moving into some apartments without doorstops and other basic features, is just one example of rental companies not being entirely up front with students.

Last year, Blue Ridge Light & Power finally ended a policy that would freeze off-campus student accounts if power bills were not paid, a policy that was illegal.

As with so many other areas in life, students need to take the lead in educating themselves about their own rights and pressing to have those rights protected.

Students also need to read their lease agreement thoroughly, with a knowledgeable third party if possible.

Students also need to become familiar with both state and local laws, both to learn what landlords have to do as well as understanding their own obligations.

Tenants have an obligation to keep a safe and clean apartment and pay rent on time, but landlords also have obligations to keep up their end of the deal.

As more students move off campus, it's time we started pushing for them to do so.



Glued to MTV during youth, hyped in profile

I'm going to be honest: MTV scares the hell out of me. I remember in my youth being glued to that infernal station, watching people have super-special spring breaks with performances by Coolio or whoever else was trying to push out a few more units of their debut (and usually only) album.

In retrospect, I am ashamed that an Orwellian Big Brother like MTV swayed me. While I was suckered into buying the latest Offspring album, I missed out on some of the best up and coming hardcore and punk acts around. Never again will I see Fugazi for five dollars in a high school gym...I was too busy watching "Say What? Karaoke."

But things have changed, and I am proud to say I have freed myself from the chains of bondage that once held me to a mini-mall culture. Still, I find myself staring at the airbrushed face of a generation, an MTV generation to be exact.

So MTV has come to Boone on a profiling mission. It goes without saying that every person out there thinks they have what it takes to be the subject of a half-hour block



Kevin Delury

of time that could be used to push shoes or shampoo or the new Shakira album. I had to go. I had to see what kind of humiliation and utter degradation my fellow students would be put through.

In the end, I learned it all depends on the person. As I sat in an empty room with only a yellow piece of cloth separating everyday students from their shot at stardom, we quietly filled out forms that would be used to decide our televised fates.

My fate, being a journalist, was decided from the get go. There was no way I'd get on there and possi-

bly muck things up. Still, I thought it would make for some good laughs.

Being profiled by MTV, it felt so natural. These people really liked me! I had a shot! I was going to be someone special!

It was better than talking to the operators on the teen crisis hotline.

The they asked me about the "nasty article" someone wrote in the school paper, the one that referred to them as "worker bees."

I felt like David after he laid a rock upside Goliath's head. Finally, I had stuck it to the man. Yet for some odd reason, they kept talking to me more and more, interested in what I had to say about life.

Still, the more I talked, the more I succumbed to the hypnotic powers of Music Television. I felt myself getting hyped up more and more at the thought of being stuck in the time slots between "Fraternity Life" and a rerun of the "MTV Video Music Awards."

Could this be it? I had to think of something quick, anything that would be sure to make a rock and roll pariah like me a prime time

possibility.

"I'm running for Homecoming King."

The minute the words escaped my lips I felt like Ralphie from "A Christmas Story" after he said "Oh fudge" in front of his dad. I slipped up. I gave in. After years of beating back the addiction, I was off the wagon.

Anyway, I'm not running for homecoming king. Personally I think the whole thing is ridiculous and would rather be strung up by my thumbs than go through with homecoming court. But that doesn't change the fact I gave in and did their dance.

Enough self-flagellation. What I have to say to all you dear readers out there is that even though I don't agree with MTV's destruction of everything good in music, I understand the appeal of being on it. Much like smoking crack, we all know it's horrible, but people do it for a reason.

Kevin DeLury is a senior staff writer. He can be reached at theapp@appstate.edu.

Looking back at unrealistic, cheesy sitcoms

I long for the days when Zack Morris graced my television set.

The art of cheesy and unrealistic sitcom television has been rapidly declining, and that is not a good thing. Television sitcoms have been replaced by serious primetime adult dramas.

Here's a blast from the past, a look back at the top three cheesy yet wonderful sitcoms of my lifetime, with a couple of honorable mentions as well.

"Boy Meets World" is my first honorable mention. The show was funny, particularly George Feeny. The funniest sitcom moment ever came from this show as well. Towards the end of its run, Topanga gained a ton of weight. When it became so bad that everyone knew the viewers could tell, they had a special episode where she went on a diet. Just priceless.

"Fresh Prince of Bel-Air." Two actresses played Vivian Banks, and that drove me crazy. The producers brought in another actress after the first few seasons. That's probably the most annoying thing in the world. But on another note, Jeffrey the butler was an absolute riot. Onto the Big Three.

3. "Family Matters," Probably the earliest sitcom that I ever started to watch, and it was sort



Brad Norman

of like the father of sitcoms. The Steve Urkel character was amazing, even more amazing when you consider the fact that he was not even supposed to last after the first couple of seasons. This show is not without its mysteries though. After season three, Judy Winslow suddenly disappeared. It was later revealed that her character was cut from the show due to a budget cut. I hate when characters get cut out of shows but no one tells the viewers. If the producer has to cut a character, they should at least write it into a script with a plot that develops over three or four episodes. Think about it. What should have happened is this: Judy is playing catch with someone, anyone, and chases her ball out

into the street where she is immediately hit by a car. The conclusion, which could have also been the final show of the season, is the one where Judy lapses into a coma and flat lines. Cue the music and fade out. Not only does the producer set every imaginable viewing record, but the viewer has a sense of finality.

2. "Home Improvement." I find it absolutely staggering that hardly anyone else likes this show as much as I do. My friends and I still say quotes from this show everyday, namely "I don't think so Tim," a comment made famous by Al Borlin. My only complaint about this show is Mark Taylor. Yeah, he was cute as a kid, but as he got older he eventually just got written out of the script. They eventually wrote scripts where he was turned into a teenage delinquent, complete with dog collar and all, as a reason to not have him talk. As mentioned earlier with Judy Winslow, they should have just written a few episodes where he moved out or was given up for adoption. Wilson Wilson was amazing.

1. "Saved by the Bell." Did you honestly expect it to be anything else? Zack and the gang had an absolute television sitcom mo-

nopoly from my elementary school through middle school years. Much like my middle school years, this show has also been covered in a cloud of mystery. When the kids were in middle school, the school was located somewhere in a place like Indiana. Once they move on to high school, they are mysteriously in California, seconds away from the beach. The genius of this show is not appreciated until after it is over. If you go up to someone right now and mention Zack Morris, you will be engaged in a Saved by the Bell conversation for hours. When Mark-Paul Gosselaar was being interviewed on "The Jimmy Kimmel Show," he stated that even though he is married and starring on "NYPD Blue," everyone still comes up and asks him about Screech Powers. It was weird seeing Zack being called "MP" and his once preppy blonde hair become balding. When it comes down to it, this show was the best sitcom ever, maybe even the best TV show ever, in any category. Come back Zack, we miss you.

Brad Norman is a staff writer. He can be reached at theapp@appstate.edu.

Sadness not bad

Opera, country music, and rock have embraced sad songs so why pick on Emo? Emo is just a term used by marketing researchers and industry hounds to create a product for market consumption. No artist refers to himself or herself as Emo. Groups in the nineties didn't refer to

themselves as grunge; however, someone said it and the media pounced.

Market researchers spend a lot of money searching for trend setting individuals, a certain kind of kid, forward in their thinking, who looks outside their own backyard for inspiration. If companies can get in on a trend or subculture while it is still underground, they can be the first ones to bring it to market. As soon as marketers discover cool, it stops being cool?

The interesting thing is that most of these people dress this way so that you will not. Some people go to outrageous lengths so that their style is not imitated and mass-produced in some outlet store for \$40 and up.

You spoke of arrogance unequaled in today's youth. Have you heard of the Beat generation? Music is the outlet for emotions. To suppress them all into "happy" is denying the artist the full spectrum of the human experience. You

don't have to be happy all the time. Don't let others call you a grouch because you don't care how to get to Sesame Street.

Write a song. Create art. It's not bad to be sad!

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The opinions expressed in the commentaries appearing in The Appalachian are those of the individual columnists and not those of The Appalachian.

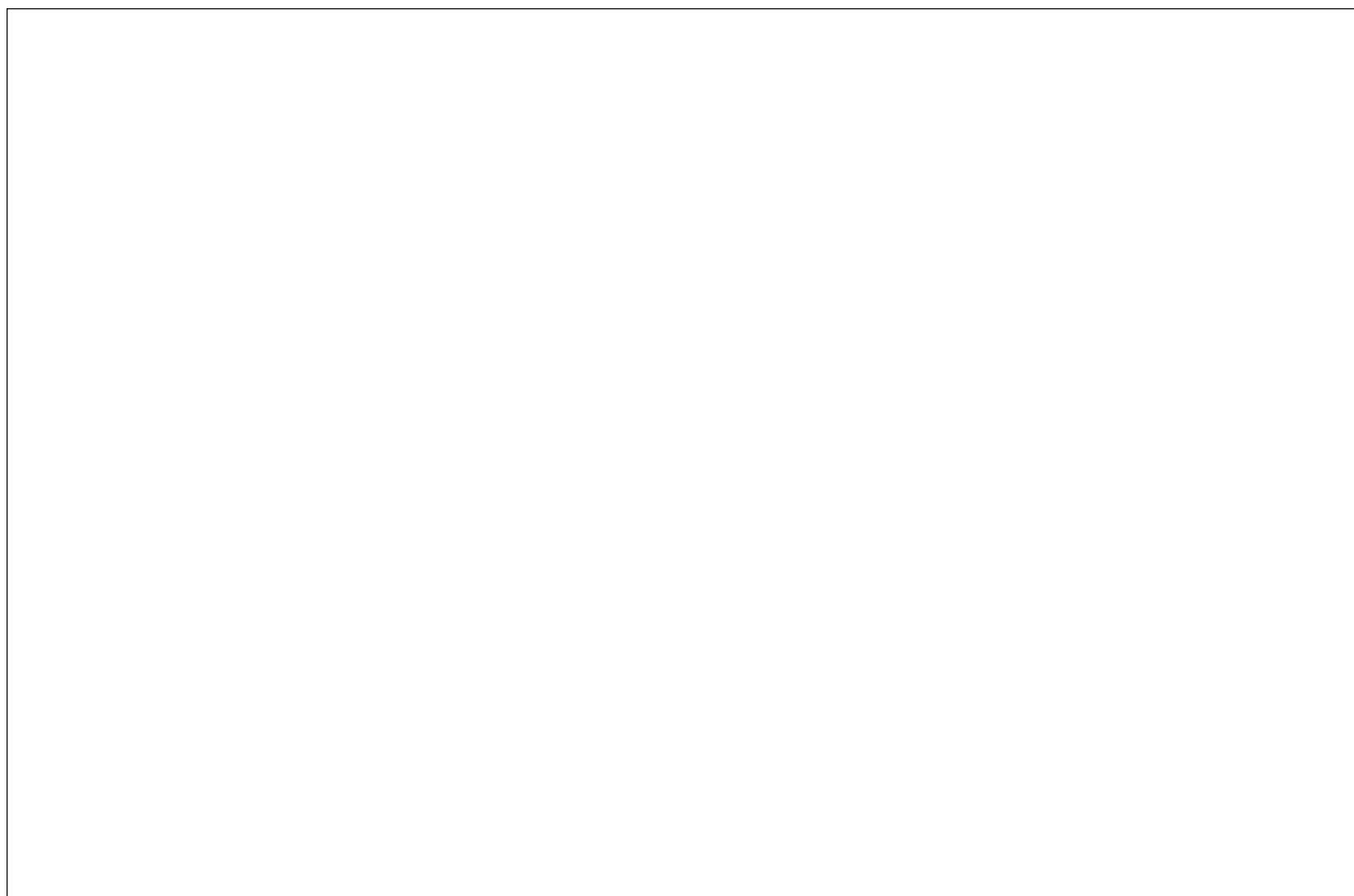
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