

# Cheap Furniture Cannot Be Taken for Granted

■ Students in search of bargains must hunt around the Triangle area.

BY MARSHALL BENBOW  
ASSISTANT FEATURES EDITOR

Furniture is something many people take for granted. In almost every house and apartment there are chairs to sit in, beds to sleep on and tables to sit around and have meals.

Growing up at home, one might not stop to think about where all that furniture comes from. But when students start apart-

ment hunting, they realize the futon that served so well as a couch/extra bed in the dorm room is no longer going to cut it.

So students hit the trail, looking for that perfect coffee table or lamp that makes the right statement about who they are and what they want to be.

Furniture shopping may also bring to light the harsh reality that comfort and style cost more money than originally factored into student budgets.

Nicole Smoot, a rental consultant for Cort Furniture Rental in Durham, said that for students on a budget, she recommended renting furniture over buying.

"Renting is always a good choice, because nine times out of 10, (students) are

going to go back home for the summer," she said.

Smoot said Cort also had a clearance center in Raleigh that sold previously rented furniture. She said she would often refer students who were looking for only one piece of furniture to the center because it would save them money.

Kevin Crosby, an assistant manager for Aaron Rents and Sells Furniture in Durham, said students rented furniture from Aaron's because of the convenience.

"A lot of people (rent to) avoid hassle," he said. "They can come in here and rent furniture and pay one fee. We take it out to them and pick it up, and they don't have to get rid of it at the end of the semester."

He also said that buying used furniture from a rental store was a good idea because the customer could get high-quality furniture for a lower price.

For those students who are feeling ready for the responsibility of having their own furniture, used furniture stores, such as The Trading Post on 106 S. Greensboro St. in Carrboro, offer prices made to fit the student budget.

"It's usually going to be about half as much (at The Trading Post as compared to new furniture)," said Richard Moody, the store's owner.

The furniture rush usually hits in August when students come back to school, Moody said. To beat this rush, he suggested buying furniture in June or July, when the selection hadn't been depleted by the returning masses. The Trading Post will hold and store furniture that students buy early.

Some apartment complexes, such as Mill Creek and Kensington Trace, come already furnished. This eliminates the hassle of trying to buy, rent and move bulky

bedroom suites and kitchen tables.

Karen Calkie, a junior from Greensboro, said the fact that Kensington Trace came furnished played a large part in her decision to live there.

"At the time, none of us thought we had enough furniture to furnish a whole apartment, and we didn't feel like spending the money either," she said.

Often students need not look beyond the storage room at home for free furniture.

"One of my roommates redid a dining room table of her grandparents, and she reupholstered the chairs and redid a TV cabinet," said Audra Goodwin, a senior from Fuquay Varina.

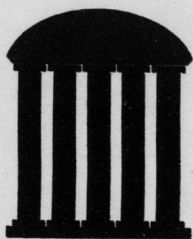
Goodwin said her dad built a loft for her room and built her a desk. Almost all their furniture was cheap, Goodwin said.

"We either had it or made it or took it from family members," she said.

Students can also check the dumpsters on moveout days during the school year and scavenge discarded couches and chairs or check the classified ads for other furniture bargains.

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## Average Rental Rates High in Chapel Hill

BY DANA WIND  
STAFF WRITER

When students first think about living off-campus, usually their first question is "How much?" When their parents get wind of the idea, after vetoing it immediately and saying, "You're not old enough. You can't cook for yourself," their next thought is, "How much?"

Because this is the time of year when students are signing leases and emptying purses into the hands of landlords, here's the quick rundown on average prices.

According to Triangle Rental Resources, the average rate for a one-bedroom, unfurnished apartment ranges from \$500 to \$700 a month.

For a two-bedroom the average is \$600 to \$800, and for a three-bedroom the rate is \$800 to \$1200.

But according to the same source, rates in Chapel Hill are about 18 percent above those averages and 17 percent above the national average.

There are other aspects to take into account.

If an apartment is furnished, within a 2-mile radius of campus or offers special facilities, the rental prices may be higher.

For example, to rent a three-bedroom,

unfurnished apartment at Laurel Ridge costs up to \$1200. This is in exchange for a one-mile walk to campus, one of the largest pools in Chapel Hill, two tennis courts, a playground, new appliances, new carpet and lots more.

Houses are a different matter. The Triangle Rental Resources Guide lists a three-bedroom home renting for anywhere from \$800 to \$1800 a month and a four-bedroom from \$1000 to \$2500 a month.

Splitting the cost is a simple matter of math; the more people living in one place, the lower the rent for each one.

But many complexes have restrictions on how many residents are allowed to live in one apartment. Many others have limits on who can live there; often undergraduates are not welcome.

Most complexes do offer certain luxuries or promotions. Most have a pool and some have tennis courts, some offer their own game rooms. Others offer student discounts or prizes for signing a lease. Estes Park gives students discount coupons to apply toward each month's rent. Laurel Ridge is giving away bikes to new renters.

So that's the basic rundown. Remember that prices can fluctuate either way, and no matter what, parents will gasp at first.

**LEGAL QUESTIONS**

FROM PAGE 2

hold deposits in a trust account and to tell tenants where their money is being held.

The landlord is also required to return the security deposit after 30 days upon termination of the lease, or to give the tenant an itemized statement of the damages.

One client at Student Legal Services was actually the victim of a crime due to a repair problem in her apartment. The tenant complained to the landlord about a faulty lock, but the repair request was not attended to promptly and someone broke into the apartment and raped the woman, Bernholz said.

Bernholz explained that contributory negligence got the landlord off the hook. According to the law, it was the woman's fault for knowingly sleeping in an unsafe

place. "We take these things very seriously," Bernholz said. "Now if a lock is broken and if it is not fixed within 24 hours I tell (the client) to move out." She advised submitting repair requests in writing.

Sometimes it is possible to negotiate aspects of a lease. Bernholz said it was very important to get any changes in writing and to have the landlord initial the changes on the lease.

If tenants are not careful, they could find themselves obliged to spend another year in their apartment. It is the responsibility of the tenant to submit a written statement to terminate their lease within 30 days of moving out, Bernholz said.

Student Legal Services is prepaid in student fees, so all legal advice and action is free. Bernholz said, "If (students) have a wrinkle in landlord-tenant relations, come see us."