

5-15-1981

RISD Events May 15, 1981

Students of RISD
Rhode Island School of Design

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Recommended Citation

Students of RISD and Archives, RISD, "RISD Events May 15, 1981" (1981). *All Student Newspapers*. 115.
<https://digitalcommons.risd.edu/studentnewspapers/115>

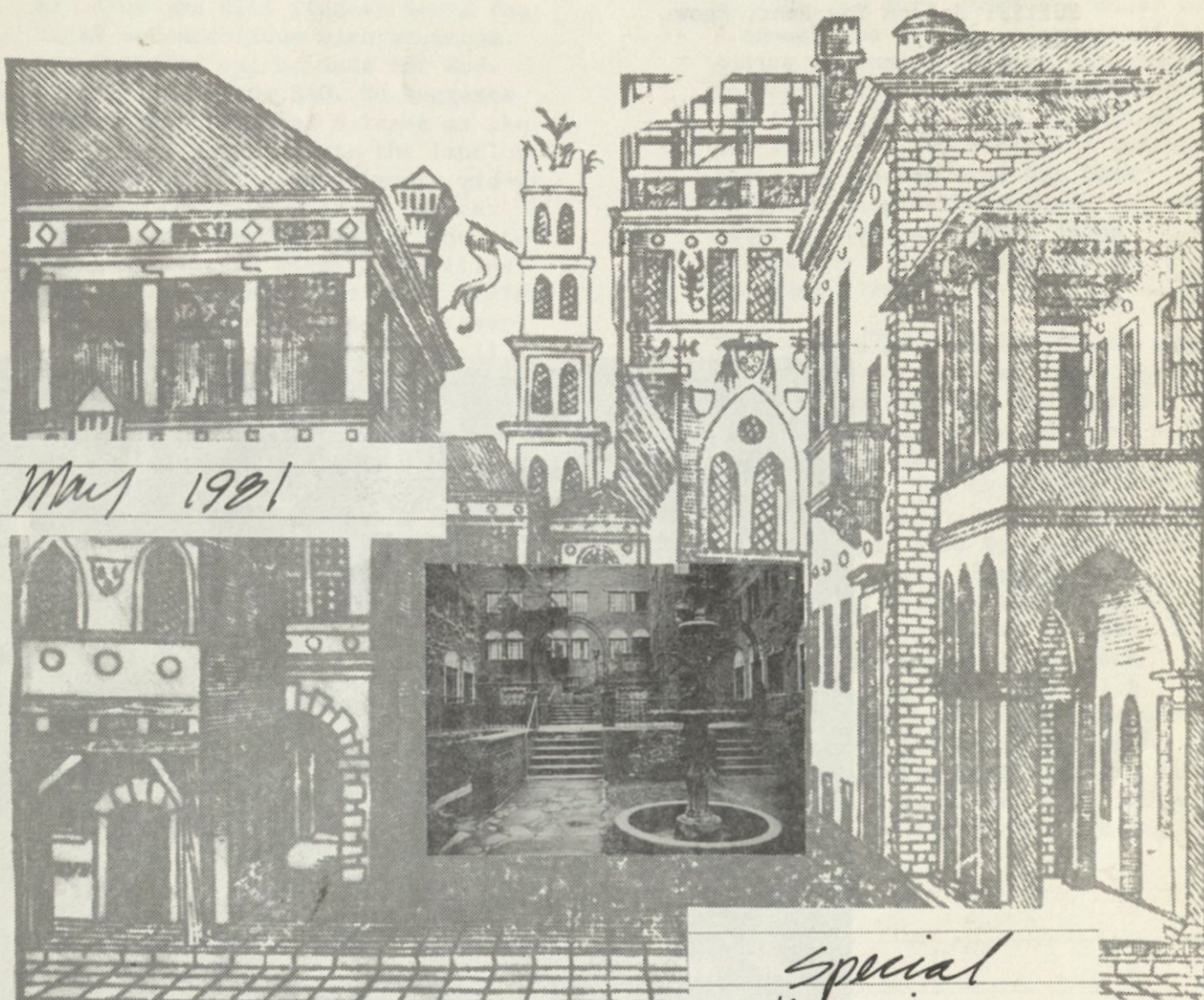
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May 1981

Special
Housing
Issue!

This is an EVENTS special issue, our last for the year. We hope you used the calendar, tacked it up, colored it in, and enjoyed those EVENTS you attended. Thank you for your support.

The information for this issue on Housing was gathered by the Editor during interviews with Dennis Owens, Director of Housing and Auxiliary Services, and with Gary Yesser, lawyer for RISD students. We gratefully thank Mr. Owens and Mr. Yesser as well as The NewPaper, which courteously allowed us to reprint the agency listing from their February article "BITTER SUITES: Before You Rent, Know Your Rights."

ONE IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The volunteer Student Security Patrol is now covering the upper and lower campuses on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights from 9PM to 1AM. They can be recognized by their white jackets.



Photograph by Alex Schlubach

HUNTING FOR HOUSING

Spring is here in all its glory and confusion. Summer sublet signs are blossoming faster than flowers, and prospective roommates are pairing up with as much anticipation as new lovers. On the green, Frisbees punctuate the talk: who is leaving which apartment, how much, when is the place open. The season necessitates the discussion of housing.

Most landlords are looking for prime letting with year leases, says Gary Yesser. Yesser is a local attorney hired by the RISD Student Board for legal consultations with students. Appointments can be made for Wed. from 1-3PM in the SAO. He suggests that students do get a lease as the legal document prevents the landlord from making rental adjustments mid-yr and from eviction without notice. The contract is binding for the student as well and these liabilities should be carefully reviewed, preferably with Yesser. Owens and Yesser both stress that students be well prepared before signing an agreement. The rush that many anxious students convey may lead them to trouble. A couple of the landlords in the area are notorious and students are advised to consider this and to check the landlord's reputation with fellow students.

What are students looking for? Individual bedrooms, cooking and laundry facilities, proximity to stores and general attractiveness are of varying importance. A car, bike and/or knowledge of the bus routes give the student the option of taking a better apartment even though it is further away from the classrooms. Often, the advantage of an apartment outside the usual walking distance is

the extra space. the crunch for studio space prompts some students to work at home. The major factor, however, is usually the rent. Rent may increase 10-15% one year, and not increase the next, says Owens, as landlords juggle prices to keep on top of costs without losing tenants.

This year's freshman class was placed in ten additional rooms in Homer Nickerson as well as in several outer houses. Plans to convert 187 Benefit, currently painting studios, to dorm rooms are under way. Although the school is committed to adding on-campus housing, according to Dennis Owens, Director of Housing and Auxiliary Services, locations are limited. Renovation of existing buildings in the area has been deemed economically unfeasible, and other options are still being studied by a consulting space-planning firm.

Next year's housing is filled, with a lengthy waiting list, leaving many students looking for apartments nearby. "Nearby" has extended as far as Smith and Federal Hills, notes Owens. The market of available apartments has dwindled as some are converted back to private homes or condominiums. Some of the Plantations apartments on South Main Street had been rented by RISD architecture students who work across the street in the B.E.B. A few parents have bought the new condominiums for their children, to keep as investment property until the students graduate. But, for most students, the search for housing continues.

hunting for housing-cont'd.

While Owens' office cannot mention specific landlords or alter the listings according to desirability, Yesser is well aware of potential difficulties which can arise as he hears most of the student tenants' complaints. Owner-occupied and smaller buildings tend to be better kept, notes Yesser. Large rental firms are in the business for the money; many ask for larger deposits. Security deposits, by law, are not to exceed 1 1/2 months rent. Yesser has heard of several firms asking for first and last months' rent under the terms "damage" or "rental security." Students rarely refuse, and the excessive deposits have not yet been challenged in the courts.

Students are grossly misinformed about their rights as tenants, and they are reluctant to go through any hassle to enforce these rights. Retaliation for legal action by threatening to evict the student is illegal. Landlords cannot begin action to repossess an apartment until the tenant is 15 days arrears in rent. Although it may seem easier to just leave, a legitimate complaint may be worth pursuing. Landlords rarely sue for broken leases, says Yesser, but students should not break a lease without consulting him. Risking the loss of deposits may not be worthwhile.

Returns of security deposits are to be made to the student at the designated address within 30 days of vacating the premises at the end of the lease period. Annual interest of 3% is to be returned with the deposit. Most landlords won't offer the interest or an itemized list of damages for which they have charged. Students are urged to notify the landlord in writing within the time specified for vacating the apartment and specifying the expected deposit return, and where it should be sent. Copies of any such correspondence should be kept. Penalties for non-return can amount to doubling the deposit, tripling the interest accrued and

include the court costs. Deductions for damages should not include painting or refinishing due to normal wear. Acting offensively by not approaching the landlord as if you were desperate or uninformed is the best way to prevent trouble.

Additional and specific information on tenant rights and the Minimum Housing Code (which list what facilities and conditions the landlord must provide) are available in the Housing office located behind the mailroom in Mem Hall. Listings are posted and maps of the area and a list of landlords who have rented to RISD students are left out for students to take. Owens has been calling landlords this week to generate listings, though he says students should not expect landlords to know who will be leaving in June. Present tenants have not yet given notice in many cases. New apartment listings will continue over the summer, and Owens advises students to check back if they are still looking at that time.

Owens also tells those students looking for summer subletees not to panic. Summer Session students arrive June 15, and they usually take only the closer sublets. Summer Session-waived transfers, grads, and Brown summer students may also sublet while looking for apartments for the upcoming year.

Mr. Owens encourages students to stop by the Housing office to discuss any off-campus housing concerns. The feedback he gets will allow him to evaluate what other services might be needed.



This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

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CLASSIFIEDS

SUMMER SUBLET- June 1 to August 1
2 bedroom or ideal single, located at
195 Benefit St., Apt. 2. Call Linda
at 521-9306 or box #696. Rent: \$270
utilities included.

SUMMER SUBLET- June 1 to August 1
3 room/1 bedroom apt. on 5 Congdon St.
Call Kirk at 274-2936 or write to box
#58

SUMMER SUBLET- June 1 to September 1
3 room apt. has large kitchen with new
electric appliances and a living room/
2nd bedroom. Also a fireplace, hardwood
floors. Quiet, clean, semi-furnished
and safe. Allows pets. Located on RISD
shuttle run- Transit St. Ideal for a
single or roommates or couple. Call
272-6048 or write to box #472. Rent:
\$180 (* with possible fall-spring 82
rental)

WANTED- Looking for a female roommate
to share a furnished, 2 bedroom apt.
on the corner of Benefit and George
St. RENT presently \$150 with heat and
hot water included but is due to IN-
CREASE. Call Carol at 521-5207

SUMMER SUBLET- June 1 to September 1
Large, furnished one room apt. with a
large kitchen and living room. Located
in Wayland Square. 10 min. walk/2 min.
drive from RISD and Brown. Close to
shopping and bus routes to and from
College Hill. Parking included. Call
Claudia at 331-3071 or write to box
#1155. Rent: \$250 (negotiable)

WANTED- An apt. for single, within
walking distance to BEB. Can pay up
to \$230/mo. Wanted for the fall but
can assume your lease. Call 272-6048
or write to box #472

ROOMING ABROAD?

Students considering traveling this
summer in the US or abroad can join
AMERICAN YOUTH HOSTELS, INC. A senior
pass is only \$14. Send for information
and a membership form from:

American Youth Hostel
251 Harvard Street
Brookline, Mass. 02146
(617)731-6692

EXPERIMENT in INTERNATIONAL LIVING

There will be a film of the Experiment
Summer Abroad Programs and alumni to
answer any questions you may have
about the programs. The film will be
shown on Sunday, May 10th at Inter-
national House, 8 Stimson Ave., Pro-
vidence, from 2-4:30PM. For further
information, call the New England
Regional Office at (617)547-7434 or
(800)451-4465.

STAFF

The Editor and the Staff
would like to sincerely thank
those people who helped us get
started and kept us going:
The Student Board; the Student
Affairs staff, especially
Elaine, Neil, and Johnette;
Dianne in the Copy Center;
Kathryn Keller of the Museprint;
and those students who listened.

Editor: Elly Williams
Graphic Editor: Jeff Nickerson
Assistant Editor: Kim McNiel
Typist: Veronica Lam
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Richard Smith

+ Will Rogers