

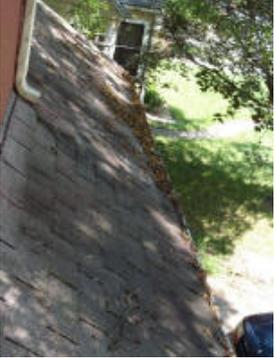
Journal of Mold Problem at 219 Melrose Court

House owned by the University of Iowa and managed by Heritage Property Management.

Entries in reverse chronological order. Read from the bottom up for full narrative.

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| September 25, 2008 | A second used couch is purchased and I have a headache within a day. Individually, I ask four friends to give me their opinions. No one else smells anything peculiar. I realize that I've become unusually sensitive. | |
| September | I've taken a couple trips since moving out of 219 Melrose Court and experienced absolutely no health effects when returning home. It figures. | |
| September 16, 2008 | Visiting Lebeda to purchase a mattress, my nose tingles and my face flushes as I enter the store. I start to feel dizzy. The salesman explains that they took on water during the June floods and that there may be mold in the basement. This has become common: I smell and react to mold in places, like my own church, that I never experienced before. | |
| September 15, 2008 | Advised to jettison my spore-laden porous furniture, I purchase a second-hand leather couch. The next day I realize I'm experiencing an allergic reaction to the couch. There's no sign of a mold history and the previous owners swear it was in their front room for the last four years. | |
| September 1, 2008 | I move into a townhouse that appears to be healthier. | |
| August | Remember all the illnesses I experienced when I traveled? How I thought they were related to airplanes and high altitudes? Well, I got to observe things a little more closely when I traveled in July and August. It turns out that I never get sick GOING but I always got sick when I returned HOME to 219 Melrose Court. Now I understand the role that mold, allergies, sinuses, etc. had to play in my health. And to think I gave up a tooth! | |
| August 10, 2008 | I experience allergic reactions to condo. Management agrees to release me from the lease. I camp out at other's houses as much as possible. | |
| August | I start with allergy medication and my headaches (and toothaches) go away. Moving into my condo means having to clean my possessions to remove as much mold spore as possible. With the help of friends, solid things like kitchenware and furniture are washed with bleach water outside the condo before moving them in. All the porous things I wish to keep need to be cleaned, so all my clothes are lugged to a laundry and dry cleaning service. | |
| August 2, 2008 | I stop by the house to drop off some brackets. The current tenants report that the UI has offered to pay their electricity bill if they keep the A/C on all month. I ask if they know if the ductwork was cleaned. They say, "nope." | |
| August 1, 2008 | I stop by the house to pick up some remnants from the garage. A maintenance person is finishing up. I ask if anything was done in the basement to air out the walls and remove the affected drywall. He grins that I-work-for-a-low-budget-outfit grin and says, "no." | |
| July 31, 2008 | The press is on! I'm told I need to be out by the end of the day. The house is full of mold spores as there's now TWO large rug-drying fans running in the basement (which, by the way, has no ventilation except for the stairway to the main floor) and the workers have turned on the A/C again. An old man shows up with no protection and a bucket of paint to cover over the mold on the basement walls. I ask if he was |  |

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| | <p>offered protection and he said, "no." He tells me that he has a mold allergy and is planning to rush home after the job to take his medication.</p> <p>Cathy calls to verify that I'll be out by the end of the day. I ask about mold remediation and she claims that people from UI Public Health (naming my friend, Peter Thome) have approved their plan and that the UI Health Protection Office has inspected the place and cleared it. I'm flabbergasted.</p> <p>I hire someone and recruit friends to help move all my stuff to my climate controlled unit and a friend's garage. I try to wear a mask in the house and avoid touching the really nasty stuff.</p> <p>That evening the new tenant shows up near tears. She's unhappy because she's heard that there's a mold problem (and indicates that she was informed that I caused it) and says that she and her friends were offered another UI house, but it had rats. She says she'd rather mold than rats. We give her the nickel tour to show the painted-over places and the nasty bits that remain. We have to turn off the THREE industrial fans now in play in order to have our conversation.</p> | <p>24 hours before new tenants move in, the mold is painted over while powerful fans dry the rainwater and blow spores around the house. (Click to enlarge)</p> |
| <p>July 30, 2008</p> | <p>Cathy called later. Found me a climate controlled unit at Garage Mahaul.</p> | |
| <p>July 30, 2008 From: Fountain To: Missen, Beach, Hollins</p> | <p>Cliff,</p> <p>Thank you for your note.</p> <p>We have some calls out to various climate controlled storage units and will let you know what we find out.</p> <p>Please give me a call when you have time this morning.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Cathy Fountain</p> | |
| <p>July 30, 2008 From: Missen To: Fountain, Beach, Hollins, Vespa</p> | <p>Just to keep everyone in the loop.</p> <p>I've consulted with mold experts with the UI's School of Public Health. They are in some disagreement (2 to 1) about whether I should toss or clean the porous items in my house. They are unanimous that I should NOT move any of my stuff – porous or non-porous – into another house until it has been treated. Their advice: move everything to a climate controlled space and gain some time to treat items before moving them into my new space.</p> <p>What I've learned is this: mold spores are likely all over my stuff. Only those things containing moisture (like my drums, instrument cases, and leatherwork) show mold growth. Even those things that have no moisture today will grow moldy when they eventually get wet. Spore-ridden stuff will contaminate the new house and cause mold, which is why it is important to clean everything as well as possible – or throw it out.</p> <p>I've called around to the storage companies in town with climate controlled spaces. None are available. I could move my stuff into a detached garage, but I run the risk that the mold will continue to grow in the humidity. I can't ask my friends to host a pile of moldy stuff in their attached garages.</p> <p>I've called around to a half-dozen mold remediation places and it looks like the soonest I can get my stuff treated is in six weeks. So, despite the fact that I'm in my busiest time at work, with classes wrapping up and several major grants due in the next few weeks, there's no one I can hire to manage this mess.</p> <p>I've spent days running around trying to take care of this problem and it has seriously detracted from my teaching and administrative duties, causing me a lot of undue stress.</p> <p>Last night I came home to find the AC on and the air nasty. I</p> |  <p>Before the painter showed up to cover the stuff, I estimated over 50 square feet of the basement walls were covered with black and grey molds. (Click to enlarge)</p> |

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| | <p>had to open the windows and leave for several hours while the building aired out. Please ask your workers to refrain from running the AC until the ductwork has been cleaned. The air moving equipment they have installed to dry the basement is kicking up spores like crazy.</p> <p>I'm glad to see you finally fixing up the house for the next renters, but you haven't done a thing to help me get my stuff fixed.</p> <p>I'm assuming your hands-off policy means that I'm free to hire whomever I need to manage this problem and that you're expecting me to present you with the bills.</p> <p>Meanwhile, I'm not going to be out of this house today. I've got to find a climate-controlled storage space and I'm teaching four hours this afternoon. I've got to go get ready...</p> <p>You could, of course, help out.</p> <p>-- Cliff</p> | |
| <p>July 28, 2008 To: Norm Cate From: Missen</p> | <p>Thanks, Norm.</p> <p>My allergist, who's treated me for 15 years, reports I have a new mold allergy.</p> <p>I'm finding mold on my artwork, my instruments, and my papers.</p> <p>Are there private contractors in the area who can assess mold and advise on abatement?</p> <p>-- Cliff</p> | |
| <p>July 28, 2008</p> | <p>Cathy Fountain stops by the house to see the mold and take photos. She does say, "Oh my God" but misses the "sorry" bit. Instead, she declares that Heritage Property Management was supposed to clean up the mold and install a dehumidifier a long time back. She hesitantly offers that I might get a month's rent refunded.</p> <p>However, I'm told in no uncertain terms that I have to vacate so the new tenants can move in. I ask about how they could possibly do mold remediation in such a short time. Apparently, this is none of my business.</p> | |
| <p>July 28, 2008 From: Missen To: Fountain, Beach, Hollins</p> | <p>Cathy, Mary Jane, and George,</p> <p>How discombobulating! I just got back to my house to verify Cathy's statements.</p> <p>The gutters are not cleaned out. They are still chock full of old brown debris. All of the gutters have gutter guards already -- they just happen to be clogged. The front gutter is still 90% covered with roofing tiles (who ever installed the roofing forgot to cut off the tabs along the bottom row.)</p> <p>No mold has been cleaned in my basement. There's more than 20sqft of black mold on several walls that hasn't been touched since I first complained about it-- and it's growing!</p> <p>I don't know who's telling who stories, but that's none of my business. My business involves preserving my health and preserving my stuff.</p> <p>Meanwhile, you're scaring me. I'm taking another round of photos to document this.</p> <p>Seriously, if you came to see the house you would, within minutes say, "Oh my God, this isn't right. I'm sorry." And then we could deal with the fixing the real problems.</p> <p>I'll be in and out all day. My cell 321-8543</p> |  <p>Picture taken July 28 after Fountain claims "The gutters were all cleaned out ... Our next step is to place gutter guard on to help keep debris out." Note clogged gutters AND pre-existing gutter guards. (Click to enlarge)</p> |

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| | <p>-- Cliff</p> | |
| <p>July 28, 2008 From: Missen To: Fountain, Beach, Hollins</p> | <p>Cathy, Mary Jane, and George,</p> <p>OK. I'm getting an all-too-subtle message that you're only hearing half of my concerns and are working on covering your butts rather than dealing full-square with the problem.</p> <p>Since I'm the one who has to live with this mess and the fallout, I'm going ahead and hiring the professionals and getting the job of protecting my health and stuff done right.</p> <p>You can work with me on the front end, make it easier for everyone, and possibly save yourself some money, or I can pile up the bills and come back with an attorney to make my claims.</p> <p>I know you're busy, but I'm in a vortex since I'm moving this week and need to make serious decisions.</p> <p>It's your call.</p> <p>-- Cliff</p> | |
| <p>July 28, 2008 From: Fountain To: Missen</p> | <p>Dear Mr. Missen:</p> <p>Thank you for your follow-up note. The company that tested the house did find mold spores this month and cleaned areas.</p> <p>We will address the concerns since the work that was done did not seem to eliminate the problem.</p> <p>The gutters were all cleaned out and the ADS drainage system power cleaned out a short while back. Our next step is to place gutter guard on to help keep debris out.</p> <p>Heritage has contacted an air conditioning company to check out the system.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Cathy Fountain Business Manager's Office</p> |  <p>Cathy Fountain reports that experts have looked at the problem and taken care of the mold. This is what "taken care of" looks like. (Click to enlarge)</p> |
| <p>July 28, 2008 From: Fountain To: Missen</p> | <p>Dear Mr. Missen:</p> <p>Thank you for your note.</p> <p>The University did have a firm go to the house mid July and perform a second mold test. They did find spores and treated them.</p> <p>The owner of Heritage will contact companies today to address.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Cathy Fountain Business Manager's Office</p> | |
| <p>July 27, 2008 From: Missen To: Beach, Vespa</p> | <p>Mary Jane and Tony,</p> <p>Here's yet another update on my three month mold nightmare.</p> <p>No one has showed up yet to address the mold problem in my house. It continues to grow while I grow increasingly more distressed. There's visible mold throughout the basement and both toilets grow a moldy ring within 5 days of being scrubbed.</p> <p>My allergist, who has treated me for 15 years, told me this week that I have developed a new mold allergy where I had none before. I'm taking medications to alleviate the headaches and respiratory problems. Mostly, I'm staying out of the house as much as possible, keeping all the windows open, and sleeping next to an open window. Last Friday my doctor had my lungs x-rayed and did some other tests to understand the</p> |  <p>Mold takes over while I'm traveling. I'm advised by experts to leave it alone because of my allergies. (Click to enlarge)</p> |

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| | <p>extent of the damage.</p> <p>Last week I took a stack of papers to my office and within an hour my office mates were complaining about the mold smell. I'm packing up to leave this house and finding mold in my artwork, in my papers, and in my books. (I can't run the A/C because it's overrun with mold.) I've taken boxes elsewhere only to stink up the storage space.</p> <p>Now I'm stacking my possessions in the garage with the depressing conclusion that I'm going to have to treat everything that's been in this house. That's going to be time consuming and expensive.</p> <p>I've contacted the city housing inspectors and will document all of this for the incoming tenants so that they understand the health risks.</p> <p>When I decided to not extend my lease three months ago, I was annoyed at the lack of good stewardship demonstrated towards this structure. Now I'm angry that my health, my possessions, and pocketbook have all suffered from the poor management of this property. It is contrary to my nature to pick a fight with my employer, but I intend to seek full remuneration for the damages, the health care costs, and the loss of a livable home these past few months. There's no reason I should have to pay for this neglect.</p> <p>One reason I rented a larger home was so that my sons could stay here when they wished. My eldest son packed up his band and move their practices elsewhere months ago because they were tired of schlepping all their equipment and rugs upstairs to dry outside. Now neither of my sons will come to spend the night because of the mold smell and I don't blame them.</p> <p>This has been a miserable experience for me.</p> <p>Unhappily,</p> <p>-- Cliff</p> | |
| <p>July 14th, 2008 From: Tony Vespa To: Missen</p> | <p>Cliff,</p> <p>We'll get Actually Clean back over to the house right away.</p> <p>Thanks,</p> <p>Tony</p> <p>*** NOTE: I have no evidence that Actually Clean had EVER been to the house. The visible mold on the wall and the water on the floor was untouched.</p> | |
| <p>July 13, 2008 From: Missen To: Beach, Heritage Property Management</p> | <p>Mary Jane and David,</p> <p>Just to keep you in the loop on matters at 219 Melrose Court (since no one has come by to investigate the previously reported problems.)</p> <p>Not only is the perpetually wet basement unusable and unhealthy for human habitation, I can no longer run the A/C without filling the house with the smell of mold and mildew. The water damaged fan in the back room has stopped working entirely. I have discovered patches of mold upstairs in papers and on several of my natural fiber African drums. I am visiting doctors to understand the sinus headaches and shortness of breath and documenting the visible signs of mismanagement and mold.</p> <p>I'll be gone this next week and will try to stay out of the house as much as possible before moving on July 31st. You might want to take a look yourself at the damage. I think you're going to have a hard row to how to make this building safe for your next tenants.</p> <p>Very unhappily,</p> |  <p>Only days after mopping the floor dry, more water seeps into the basement. (Click to enlarge)</p> |

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| | <p>-- Cliff</p> | |
| <p>July 28, 2008 To: Missen From: Norm Cate Senior Housing Inspector City of Iowa City</p> | <p>Hi Cliff;</p> <p>Doug Boothroy just gave me your email regarding mold at your 219 Melrose Ct. home. I'll try to answer your questions as best as possible. You asked is there a way to test a house and definitely say it is uninhabitable? Technically, no. There are no established EPA interior air quality standards. However, high levels of mold is recognized as a health hazard for people with allergies.</p> <p>You asked "how concerned should I be?" You should be concerned, but not panicked. Mold is something that is everywhere in our everyday environment. You may have high levels of mold in your house, but that doesn't necessarily mean your health has been compromised. If you're concerned about your exposure, you may get a test at an allergist to indicate your level of tolerance to mold.</p> <p>You asked what the City's role in this is? Because this is University property, therefore state owned, we (the City) have no jurisdiction or standing in this matter. However, you are a tenant and you have certain rights. The following is a link to the Iowa tenant/landlord law http://www.legis.state.ia.us/IA/ACODE/2001SUPPLEMENT/562A/</p> <p>Also, here is a link for mold information; http://www.epa.gov/mold/moldresources.html</p> <p>I hope this info helps. Let me know if any questions.</p> <p>Norm Cate</p> | |
| <p>July 21, 2008</p> | <p>Tooth is extracted</p> | |
| <p>July 21, 2008</p> | <p>I visit the allergist who's treated me for 15 years for animal and dust allergies. He conducts skin tests and tells me I have a new, serious mold allergy.</p> |  <p>My allergist has treated me for 15 years for animal allergies, but the mold and mildew is new. (Click to enlarge)</p> |
| <p>July 11, 2008</p> | <p>Endodontist tries to do root canal but finds a structural problem that makes a filling less likely to hold.</p> | |
| <p>July 6, 2008 From: Missen To: Doug Booth City of Iowa City</p> | <p>Doug,</p> <p>I live in a university owned house at 219 Melrose Court that is managed by a private property management firm. For the nine months I've lived here I've reported mold and water problems (clogged gutters, water in the basement, water in the walls, etc.) to no avail.</p> <p>Only recently, since the flooding in the rest of the city, have I read articles that describe the symptoms of mold allergy and I realize that I've experienced most of them.</p> <p>I have declined to extend my lease because of the poor management of this house; originally because I was unhappy with how poorly the house was being maintained, but now I'm seriously concerned about my health.</p> <p>Some of my colleagues have suggested that I live elsewhere until I find a new home, others have told me that I may need to dispose of all my fabrics, some have advised me to get a full</p> | |

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| | <p>checkout.</p> <p>How concerned should I be about the mold? It's so pervasive that I entertain visitors outside and cannot run the AC without smelling up the place.</p> <p>I purchased a mold testing kit last week and it looked nasty after 48-hours. (I sent it off to the lab...) Is there a way to test the house and definitively say, "This house is unsafe to live in?"</p> <p>What's the City's Housing & Inspection Services role in this?</p> <p>At what point should I seriously consider moving to a hotel?</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>-- Cliff</p> | |
| <p>Late June</p> | <p>My dentist cannot figure out why my teeth pain me after I return from a trip abroad. Refers me to an endodontist.</p> <p>My fingernails start turning various shades of brown in places. Looks like a fungus...</p> <p>Weird ulcer starts forming on leg.</p> | |
| <p>Mid-late June</p> | <p>While helping friends who were flooded out in in Idylwild, I receive a brochure describing the health affects of mold. I go down the list checking each symptom off: itchy eyes, headaches, sinus problems, fatigue, depression, etc. It dawns on me that my months of illness might have a cause.</p> | |
| <p>June 7, 2008 From: Missen To: Beach,</p> | <p>Thanks Mary Jane.</p> <p>After I sent this I realized that I was writing it for you and the management company, so there's a few peevish bits that weren't intended for you as much as the folks at Heritage.</p> <p>Still, I've been on the road a lot in the last couple months and it's a pain to return home to hours of clean-up when I'd rather be spending my limited time with family and friends.</p> <p>I'm shopping for a new place and have seen a clear distinction between those properties that are well-managed and those which are not. After this experience, I'm willing to spend more for good management. I'm going to guess that my current residence will always rent, as close as it is to the hospital. But with a single bath it's going to get beat up pretty quick if it hosts multiple students. If it were my property, I'd invest in making it solid and rent it to visiting faculty/clinicians.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>-- Cliff</p> | |
| <p>June 7, 2008 From: Beach To: Missen</p> | <p>Cliff,</p> <p>I'm asking George about where the ball has been dropped. Thank you for letting me know.</p> <p>One of us will get back with you quickly.</p> <p>MJ</p> | |
| <p>June 7, 2008 From: Missen To: Beach, Heritage Property Management</p> | <p>Mary Jane,</p> <p>While I might take comfort in the fact that my lease is up in less than 60 days, I cannot.</p> <p>I've spent inordinate time cleaning up my water filled basement, dealing with mold and mosquitoes and running the AC simply to dry out the house.</p> <p>While I have reported several times since last December that</p> |  |

the house's gutters are clogged and some are 80% covered with poorly installed roofing material, nothing has been done. So every time it rains the water pours down the sides of the house and the dripping, from the water stored in the gutters, lasts for a day or more after the rain is over. The walls smell of mildew and I vacillate between running the AC and opening all the windows to air out the place.

The last manifestation of this poor management is a leak in the ceiling of the family room in the back of the house. The water is coming through the ceiling fan and staining both the ceiling and carpet. My guess is that the seal around the upstairs window was broken when the window installers did their very sloppy installation of the new windows. They left behind gobs of extruded insulation on the untreated and rotting sills, along with debris and empty containers. I'm going to guess that no one inspected their work. The broken seal was the perfect entry point for the water pouring down the side of the house because of the clogged gutters.

There are several species of ants now working their way through the house. I know that some ants are attracted to wet wood and hope that they are not causing any damage.

Finally, after seven months of requests, someone finally came by to do the landscaping promised in my lease (after a frantic call to David before guests were to arrive for my son's graduation.) Whoever showed up ran a mower over the small patches of lawn and blew the debris off of my deck. But they did not rake out the leaves from last fall, they did not pick up sticks, they did not trim up the storm-damaged bush, and they left behind the large garbage bin full of dead branches I had left prominently on the back sidewalk. I wound up pressure washing the deck myself before my guests showed up.

Three weeks ago I cleaned the blown insulation and debris out of the whole house fan so I could use it. I had reported this problem to David last fall when the insulation was installed.

It's one thing to waste a tenant's time and money, but trashing the house is self-defeating. Unless, of course, the plan is to milk the house for a couple years and then tear it down. Still, it would be fair to your tenants to let them know that this is the case so they don't expect better maintenance.

Grumpily,
-- Cliff



The near constant stream of water through the basement foundation was in part fed by poorly installed and maintained gutters. Note how roofing material covers most of the gutter guard – which Kathy Fountain tried to convince me was a new popular technique. (Click to enlarge)

June

Besides sore teeth, headaches, and throat irritation, I start waking up in a dreadful depressed state. While I don't feel suicidal, I do reflect that "today would be a nice day to die." I suspect my separation and impending divorce are weighing on me. After a couple weeks of this growing depression, I'm starting to worry. This is not me: I'm the kind of guy that annoys my housemates by waking first and waking happy. Oddly, I travel to East Africa and the feeling goes away.

Not only that, but I'm tired all of the time. And it's not just didn't-get-enough-sleep-last-night tired; it's muscle ache why-am-I-even-going-to-work kind of tired. Several times I experience being in a meeting with workmates and feeling so bone tired that I daydream about slumping to the carpet and napping right there on the spot. I tire walking to the water fountain.

The front motion detector light is finally replaced.

April/May

At least three more times we have to lug everything out of the basement because of water. My son abandons the space. We throw out sheet music, instrument cases, area carpets, and sound insulation materials. I clean up when I can, but I travel overseas for 2-3 weeks at a time during this period. When I return the place is full of water. I wear out a mop.

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| <p>March/April</p> | <p>The first big snow melt/rains come and the basement has 1-2" of water throughout. My son's band equipment is soaked. They have to lug everything outside to dry. I call Heritage Property Management to complain. The woman answering the phone claims "it's happening all over town" and says they will send someone by to dry out the basement. No one comes.</p> | |
| <p>February/March</p> | <p>I complain to my dentist that my teeth ache for a week or so after flying and ask if there's a connection between air travel and toothaches. He examines my teeth and finds nothing worth noting. Suggests I may have to see a specialist if it continues.</p> <p>Despite receiving light therapy for my psoriasis, my fingernails break out in what appears to be the first involvement in 48 years.</p> <p>The bulbs in my perpetually-on motion detector light burn out. The Heritage Property Management come by and replace the bulbs but not the detector. I continue to light up the neighborhood.</p> | |
| <p>February 28, 2008 From: Beach To: Missen</p> | <p>Cliff,</p> <p>Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I am sorry for the many inconveniences you have encountered breaking in one of our new properties. I will follow up regarding the interactions with our property management office, particularly Cathy, and determine how we can have a better interface with our tenants.</p> <p>MJ</p> | |
| <p>February 28, 2008 From: Missen To: Beach</p> | <p>Mary Jane,</p> <p>I'm writing a check this morning to Heritage Property Management for a repair to my rental unit, but it really gets my goat, so I'm writing to let you know about it. Mostly because my irritation comes not from the \$92 – that's not going to break the bank – but because of the way I was treated by your staff, Cathy Fountain, when I called to talk about the issue.</p> <p>I moved into a university owed property last fall, 219 Melrose Court, and, since this is a newly purchased property, have spent some time breaking the house in. Not that I mind. I've built a house, refurbished houses, and have been a homeowner for 15 years. Nothing major: tightening hinges, replacing missing drawer knobs, gluing outlet covers, putting Vaseline on leaky seals, humping a load of dead branches out to the dump, putting plastic on the very leaky windows, purchasing a splash guard for the bathtub to slow the damage being done to the wall, tightening loose curtain rods, purchasing a motion detector light for the garage, tacking loose trim down, replacing the bulb on the front porch light after every major thaw because the roof leaks through the fixture, chipping dangerous ice off front porch daily because the gutters are blocked by poorly installed roofing, etc. I do this because it's harmless, helpful, and neighborly. As a long-time UI employee, I'm glad to pitch in to improve the institution. It's what I like best about living in Iowa.</p> <p>But last November I experienced a major problem: the upstairs toilet clogged and water spilled over causing damage on three floors. I called the property management folks and they brought over a wet vac and then patched up the damage days later. Then I got a bill from Cathy. And I thought, "wait a minute, this is not fair."</p> <p>So I called Cathy and explained to her that while indeed the toilet had clogged as my son and I raced out to church, toilet bowls are designed to NOT overflow with a single flush. The reason it overflowed and kept flowing for two hours was because the flap valve in the tank was old and crusty and had stuck open. Who knew? Certainly not me. And I explained that, after the repair people had come and gone without replacing the valve, and after the valve stuck open a couple more times, I purchased a new one and replaced the thing. I told Cathy, I was</p> | |

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| | <p>willing to pay the bill, but I though she should understand that it would dampen my enthusiasm for making repairs around the house.</p> <p>That's when Cathy castigated me for fixing things. She insisted, rather forcefully, that I should not make repairs of any sort. When I explained that I was simply trying to be helpful and that it saved everyone money and grief for me to do these things, she told me that I needed to write letters of complaint to her and the property management firm. Trying to draw a bigger picture of how valuable these kinds of cooperative relationships can be, I related to her how I had squeezed myself out onto the porch roof to close an upstairs window that had been blown off its hardware and pinned against the outside wall during a blizzard at 2am. I wedged it shut for later repair, saving a late-night service call while getting me back into my cozy bed in only five minutes. Cathy informed me, rather stiffly, that I should have followed protocol and called the after hours repair folks (letting the heat escape from my house while snow piled up in my bathroom.) She then told me an amusing story about how her family enjoys watching the toilet bowl refill after every flush (in a way, I suppose, to teach me proper flushing etiquette.)</p> <p>I'll gladly pay \$92 to NOT have to deal with people like that. But I would hazard to guess that the university pays much more. I, for one, had no trouble deciding to move this summer rather than sign another year's lease after this experience with your office.</p> <p>As a colleague, I'm embarrassed for the university. As a customer, I'm dispirited.</p> <p>As a manger, I hope you'll appreciate this bit of feedback.</p> <p>Best regards,</p> <p>-- Cliff</p> | |
| <p>Every month from December to March</p> | <p>I'd write a note on my rent check envelope or give a call, explaining to David that water comes into the basement during heavy rains and that the gutters are clogged. I point out that the drainage tubes on the south side are badly broken open, allowing the drain water to spill out next to the house's foundation. After two reminders, someone comes by to change the tubing. It's left in a position that requires water to run uphill. Around February I note that the front gutter is mostly covered with roofing shingles. During the rains and snows, I note that the front motion detector light is either overrun with water or encased in ice from the non-draining gutters. At one point, David suggests that they should just disconnect the light. I get an extra motion detector lamp and let David know that I have a replacement ready.</p> | |
| <p>Within a month of moving in:</p> | <p>I called David at Heritage Property Management to complain of a moldy smell. A couple days later he informed me that someone had been by to test the house the day before and found nothing. I note that the motion detector light above the garage is always on (except sometimes at night.)</p> | |