

Theft major concern for Eugene cyclists

Editor's note: This is the second part of an analysis on the problems the university and community face because of the major influx of bicycles. Wednesday's first installment by Dean Wheeler dealt with the actions taken by the assistant director of parks and recreation, Ernie Drapella, in attempting to improve bicycle facilities in Eugene.

What else has been discussed . . . other than bicycle paths and such? As most anyone who rides a bicycle will tell you, a major concern is theft. One never knows when he leaves class if the only transportation you own will still be there. Figures on bicycle theft in the University district alone are shocking.

Fred Mohr, of the University office of Institutional Research, has rejuvenated an ASUO suggestion that the University purchase several bicycles from the city, paint them a distinctive color, and use them as a University bicycle pool. Just ride the bike to class, and leave it there—someone else will probably use it before you get back though. The best thing about this proposal is no one would really like to steal these bicycles; Mohr suggests the University purchase the wheeled mechanisms at the city auctions of stolen—and unclaimed—bicycles. However, he isn't too sure about financing because he doubts the city would sell these bicycles for a dollar or so a piece. Nice idea, but what about the bicycles stolen from apartment houses, homes, dorms, et cetera, et cetera???

As usual, the police have a suggestion on that score—register your bicycle. The city charges a meager sum (\$1.00 every three years), for the trouble of recording the bicycle serial number and issuing a license sticker which is used as means of identification in case of

theft. However, the likelihood of retrieving a stolen bicycle is very slim—even the most simple-minded thief has a habit of filing off incriminating evidence.

And now . . . what happens next? Drapella's committee will now tackle the job of making proposals to the city council. What will they be? Most likely there will be suggestions on bicycle safety education programs, bicycle route signs and maybe even bicycle paths planned. It would be nice if the CRAP suggestion of turning alleyways over to the bicycles could be effected. Nothing better for getting across and through town has yet to show its face in Eugene.

All this pertains to the city—what about that separate entity, the University. Here too, plans are being laid for the bicycle traffic problems. The Open Space and Landscape sub-committee has considered four solutions to the dilemma. They range from banning bicycles on campus to developing pathways parallel to the existing pedestrian trails.

The committee refused to act—they deferred for further study—which may be good in this case. After all, they can only find different plans, and some of them might be better.

Well, smog might be taking over the air, but bicyclists are trying to fight back—and they deserve community support . . . and that includes motorist support.

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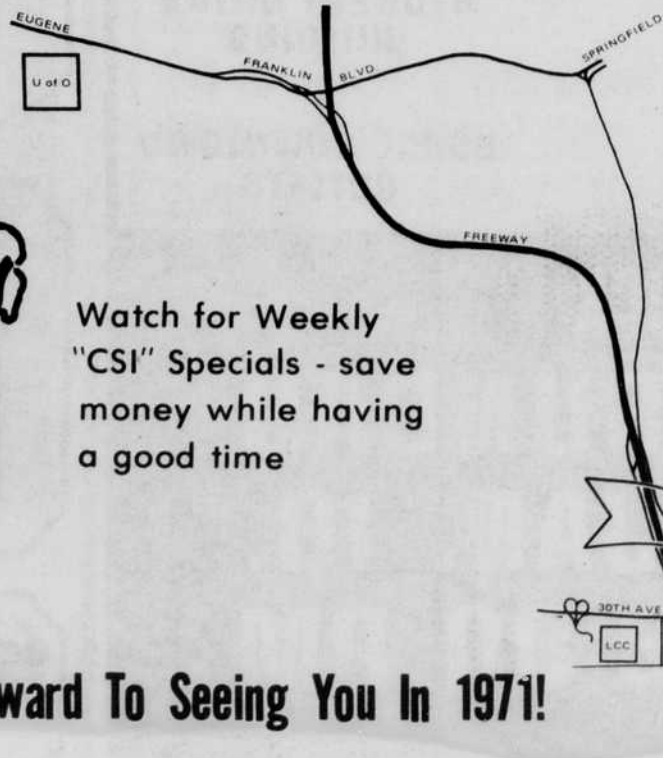
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