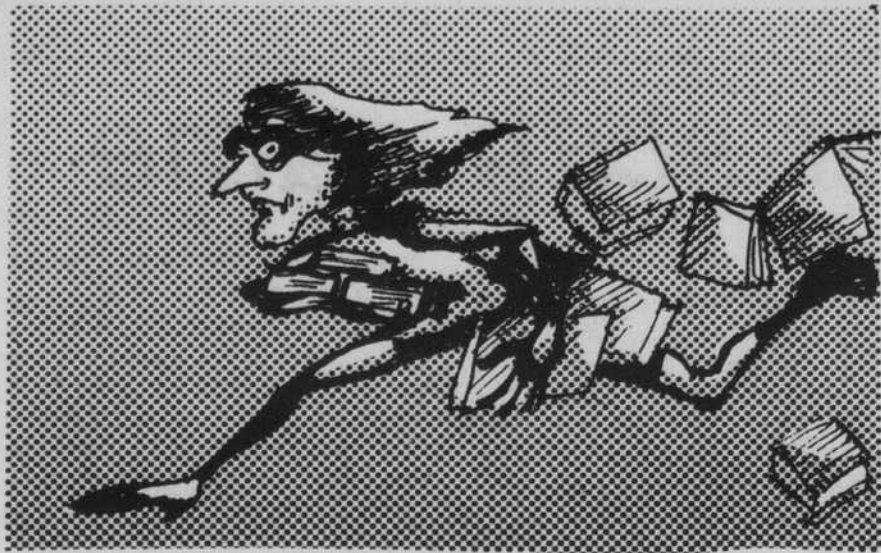


Book thefts plague library



Graphic by Tom Ettel

By CHRIS DOLGENOW
Of the Emerald

The University library, long a stronghold of wisdom and culture, has also become a target of theft and vandalism.

Statistics provided by librarian William Axford reveal an annual loss of 600 to 900 books, worth up to \$12,000. And that does not include "books we don't even know are missing or damaged," says Axford.

Whenever possible, books are replaced through a lost book fund, says Axford. Yet many are irreplaceable, and the significant loss has spurred the administration to consider adopting a more sophisticated security system.

Although it is Oregon's largest library, the University facility employs a conservative security system.

Students posted at turnstiles inspect the backpacks of all those leaving the library. While the students do their best, the tedious procedure becomes lax at times, and books wander outside unchecked.

Axford agrees that this method "puts an unreasonable burden on the students" who are "resented

for the policing job that nobody likes."

Axford says the present system can be maintained with a fair percentage of stock being lost, stricter checking procedures or the installation of an electronic detection system.

The electronic solution is most favorable to library personnel, but the expense is staggering to the library's budget. Axford estimates the cost of equipment at \$9,000 and the cost of sensitizing each book at seven cents. The library has well over 1,000,000 volumes, and if another few thousand is tacked on for labor, the budget is far overreached, Axford says.

Axford is skeptical that a system will be installed this year, but may be possible in the future.

Excluding inflationary increases, the library has had no boost in budget for the last several years, he says.

Though Axford says he accepts the \$9 to \$12 thousand annual loss from book theft, chalking it off as the "cost of doing business," he would favor an electronic security system.

"Implementation of an electronic system would be at the ex-

pense of something else," Axford says.

Due to the high incidence of theft, the campus law library and the architecture and allied arts library have both installed their own electronic systems.

But one flaw Axford sees in electronic surveillance is the loss of the "human element." He says machines would sacrifice an aspect of the friendly, personal atmosphere found in the library.

"There's only one system I know of that's completely fool-proof," he says, "and that's to have everyone come in stark naked and leave stark naked."

Meanwhile, in the library's Douglass Listening Room, records in their jackets "just grew legs and walked out," says supervisor Karen Schleidcher. In less than a year, nearly 40 records have been stolen. She notes that popular music, primarily folk and rock, is most often pilfered.

Unlike other library supervisors, she detects a definite increase in theft, but is uncertain what its cause might be.

"I don't see any way we can increase security here in the Douglass Room," she observes.

Down the corridor in Humanities is infuriated supervisor Ed Soule. He believes culprits should be "bloody-well ashamed of themselves...evicted from school." While much of what was previously shelved is now kept in storage, thieves are not easily dissuaded.

Other Library personnel say there are those who steal "just for the challenge." In order to lessen classroom competition for an article, some students will tear it out and take it. Others may mean to return their unchecked books but "never get around to it."

Rally supports GTFF

ASUO Pres. Ramon Herrera and Irv Fletcher, executive secretary of the Lane County Labor Council, are among the speakers scheduled to appear Wednesday at a rally in support of the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation.

A faculty member and a representative of the Oregon State Employees Association

will also speak at the hour-long rally, scheduled for 12:30 p.m. in front of the EMU.

GTFF leaders are staging the rally to "provide support for the GTFF situation" and to urge union members to attend a strike vote meeting scheduled for Thursday, at 7:30 p.m. in the EMU Ballroom, according to Bill Rattee, GTFF vice president.

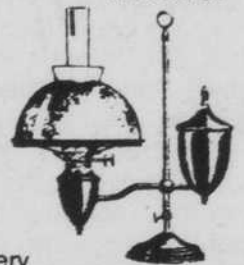
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