



University students crossing the jammed intersection of University Street and 13th Avenue have to dodge traffic that numbers up to four thousand cars per day.

Photo by Keith Allen

Traffic survival takes skill

By JIM GERSBACH
For the Emerald

When changing classes, University students are at the mercy of skateboarders, roller skaters, bikes, cars and other pedestrians.

The intersection at Kincaid Street and 13th Avenue, the Agate Street crosswalk, and the intersection of Agate Street and 13th Avenue are all areas where a student is likely to be run down, run over or trampled.

But worst of all is the intersection of University Street and 13th Avenue.

A survey conducted two years ago by the Campus Planning Commission found that three to four thousand cars a day pass through that intersection. Traffic peaks at about six vehicles per minute between 12:30 and 12:45 p.m.

Foot and bike traffic also peaks then, resulting in congestion, says campus planner David Rowe.

Thrown into this heterogeneous vortex, students emerge with mixed impressions of how to cope.

"I get impatient with the pedestrians. But as a pedestrian I make the same mistakes as the people I get mad at when I'm on my bike," admits Barbara Brown, a graduate student in Russian.

"Especially up here at lunch time it drives me nuts (with) all the people, because — like now — I'm just going to get something to drink, and I know I'm going to have to put up with a lot of people."

Freshman journalism major Janet Johnson, who says she has had more than one near-collision with pedestrians, claims, "The roads are for the cars, not for the people to walk on."

More stoic attitudes seem to prevail among most students.

"I don't mind really," says sophomore Neil Jones, a business major. "I stop and take lefts and rights just like a football player who's going through a goal."

Motorcyclist Marc Vidulich, a senior studying mathematics, says traffic congestion is all a matter of perspective.

"I don't think it's that bad," he says. "We were in New York this summer. If the people (in Oregon) could see New York they'd appreciate this place."

"This corner right here (13th and University) is about one-millionth as bad as Manhattan."

Sophomore Dan Morris, a science education major, agrees.

"In New York, geez, they just run you over. You're running for your life. Here, these guys here try and yield to pedestrians," he says.

Likewise, Shuji Ozawa, a native of Tokyo studying English at the American English Institute, says campus traffic is nothing to worry about.

"In Tokyo, riding a bicycle is very dangerous, more so than here," he explains. "But here, I enjoy riding a bicycle."

Duck basketball forward Jerome Williams, a sophomore studying business, also finds student foot traffic more relaxed than in his home neighborhood of Watts in Los Angeles.

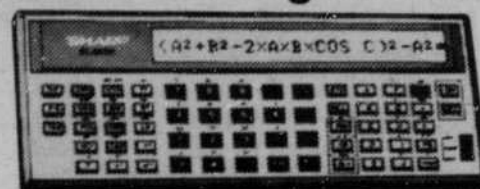
Pedestrians there "look

rough," he says. "Not necessarily mean, but unfriendly. They're more aggressive. They Bogart on people."

Williams says that in comparison, "Everybody here (in Oregon) is just mellow." Even so, he blames bikes for disturbing the peace.

"There's a lot of people pedaling bikes who think they're cars," he says with a chuckle.

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