



Are the streets safe at night?

Common-sense precautions deter crimes of opportunity

Three University women have been raped on campus this academic year. The incidence of other crimes — ranging from bike thefts to shoplifting and burglary — is skyrocketing on and off campus.

But increasing crime doesn't mean there's a campus crime wave, says Sgt. Rick Allison of the Eugene Police Department.

While the campus rapes are appalling, says Allison, the EPD director for campus law enforcement, "that's certainly not an epidemic."

The real crime problem on campus, says Allison, is crime against property.

Lots of people and lots of possessions concentrated in a small area make the University a "magnet" for thieves, he says.

Two of the three rapes this year have happened in University dormitories, and Campus Security officials have undertaken a massive "security check" to check accessible dormitory doors and windows for breaches of safety.

"The University has initiated (the) survey of the dormitory area with the specific objective of improving the prevention of such crimes," Acting Pres. Paul Olum said.

"We will do everything we can. At the same time there is a need for increased vigilance on the part of all of us."

To avoid trouble, women are urged not to cross campus by themselves. Several dormitories and campus security provide escort services, and fraternities are considering reinstating their escort service.

According to Mark Hallquist, president of the Inter-Fraternity Council, the fraternity service died last year from "lack of participation."

Allison said the escort services are "certainly worth a phone call," though it's understandable that women are hesitant at bothering strangers "just because they're going out of the house."

The trend on campus, however, is for female friends to accompany each other on

cross-campus jaunts, which lessens the need for escort services.

Universities with large populations of young, single women are prime ground for sex criminals. Likewise, campus law enforcement personnel have to handle pimps who loiter near dormitories to recruit women.

Rape, says Rape Crisis Network crisis program manager Gail Wiemann, is a matter women must deal with daily.

Laws recently adopted in Oregon have improved the recourse for a rape victim.

"It's a little bit easier for the victim to go through the whole process," says Wiemann.

And now with women investigators handling early interviews following the rape, "there's a little more concern on their part for what's happening to the victim."

Avoid walking alone, Wiemann tells women, and stay away from locations that might be hiding places for potential rapists.

"Walk down the middle of the street if you have to," she says.

On campus, Allison encourages people walking alone to avoid the walkways between Bean Hall and Agate Street, the architecture area, the Millrace, the walkway and Franklin Boulevard near the physical plant, the Hayward Field stands, and the area south of 15th Street on Agate.

Pioneer Cemetery has long been the worst spot for campus crime. Rapes, assaults and indecent exposures have been reported frequently in the graveyard in the past, but none have been reported this year.

Some women carry items like umbrellas and paralyzer sprays, says Wiemann. But they should be prepared to "use them in the pinch."

She says studies have shown physical resistance is an effective way of stopping rape, "unless you're in danger of losing your life."

Connections with potential rapists usually begin with party jokes or advances. A woman must make clear her feelings early, Wiemann says.

"She has to be very much aware of what she does and doesn't want to happen. Women have to make some decision about what they will put up with."

Rape is a crime of opportunity, experts say.

Wiemann agrees: "99.9 percent of all rapes can be prevented."

As the crime prevention struggle continues, staff in Acting Pres. Paul Olum's office are assembling a report on the recent rape of a University woman.

Olum's staff is investigating student allegations that a window through which police believe the rapist entered the woman's room had a broken latch.

"Rape is a terrible, terrible thing," Olum says. "I'm deeply concerned about its increasing incidence in society and am particularly concerned when the victim is a member of the University community."

Neighborhoods beef up safety measures

Concern over violent and personal property crimes sparked by the rape of a University woman last weekend has spread to neighborhoods surrounding the campus.

Neighborhood leaders are recommending security checks and burglar-proof locks for all houses and apartments. And at least one neighborhood group is planning workshops in rape prevention and self defense.

But some community leaders are worried that interest in security will last only as long as the publicity of violent crimes. Once the crime is forgotten, some say, so is the concern for safety and security.

"The problem is that most people think it won't happen to them," says Charlotte Lemon, chair of the West University Neighborhood crime prevention committee.

"It seems, unfortunately, that not until (a crime) happens do they get real excited about it and want to prevent it."

Because of the transient nature of the west University area, Lemon says neigh-

borhood leaders must be persistent in their attempts to beef up residential security.

"When something like (a rape) happens we get more interest (in crime prevention), but then people start forgetting about it," she says.

The west University area is a prime target for burglars and other criminals because of the poor security in many old houses rented by students, says agent Mike Marsh of the Eugene Police Department.

Many houses and apartments have inadequate locks on doors and windows that are easily broken, Marsh says.

"A lot of those older homes weren't made for security," he says. "Back then they didn't worry about it."

Marsh says the EPD offers free security checks for students concerned about crime prevention in their neighborhoods.

Many neighborhood groups also offer free crime prevention workshops and low-cost dead-bolt locks along with other

security measures for area residents.

The West University Neighborhood Center will install dead-bolt locks in area homes and apartments at a reduced rate, Lemon says. And the center loans engraving tools to residents for etching identification numbers in valuable items.

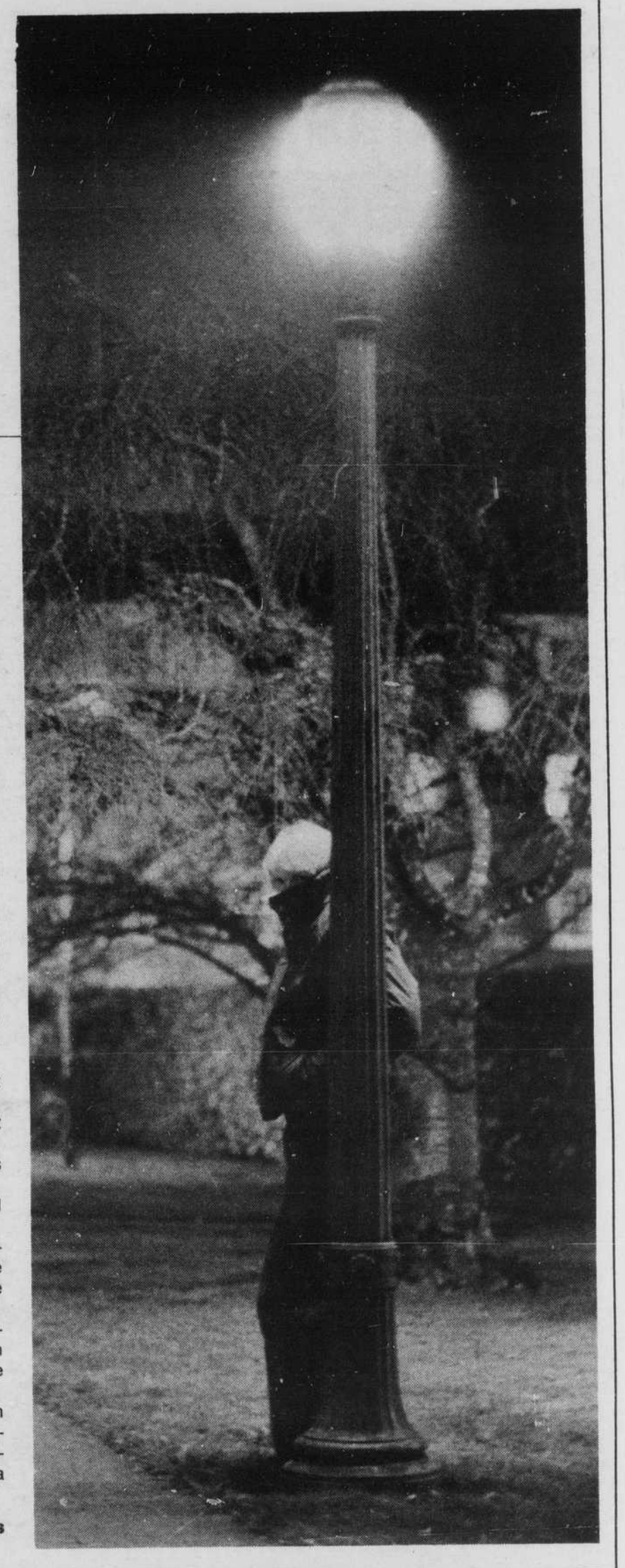
The center also is planning workshops on rape prevention and self-defense in the next two months.

Lemon encourages students living in apartments to contact their landlords if they have inadequate locks on their doors and windows. The landlord then can go to the center and request locks for the entire building.

"If tenants don't complain they won't get any locks," says Lemon.

"It's just real sad that someone has to suffer because maybe (the crime) could have been prevented," says Lemon.

Story by Bill Manny and Paul Telles
Photo by Erich Boekelheide



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