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GENERAL BOOKS 686-3510 ROOKSTORE Sat. 10:00-3:00



Students present for the biggest shoplifting problem at McKay's market — last year they accounted for more than 40 percent of all the shoplifters, according to the store's security head.

Campus area store leery of shoplifters, typical offenders are University students

By Michael Doke Of the Emerald

A University sophomore described as a good student from an upper middle-class Portland neighborhood left McKay's market last term with more then he'd bargained for.

After walking through the check-out stand and leaving the store, a McKay's security officer approached him and discovered a \$2.89 bottle of aspirin in his pocket that wasn't paid for.

The student was put under citizen's arrest for shoplifting by security. And after being charged for the misdemeanor, the student left college shortly after his conviction, says Officer Bob Holland of the Eugene Police Department.

The story is not unique to the campus area, says Tracy Weston-Ladnow, who heads the security force for McKay's on Franklin Boulevard. McKay's is second only to the University bookstore in shoplifting arrests in area businesses, Weston-Ladnow says.

Between September last year through March this year, 40 percent of the shoplifter's stopped at the store were University students, she says. Transients account for only 24 percent of the crime at McKay's during the same period, she says.

With one full-time and five part-time security members in force seven days a week, McKay's is not the wisest place to attempt a shoplifting, she

"We don't take shoplifting lightly at the store thieves shouldn't take it lightly either," Weston-Ladnow says. "We refer 71 percent of adults we arrest to police. No matter what, people who steal will pay."

The outright fine for shoplifting in Eugene can be as high as \$200, Holland says. On top of that, an additional \$150 in civil penalties can be weighed against the offender, he says. And a six month jail sentence can be imposed for the Class A misdemeanor, he adds.

Allison of EPD concurs with Holland that fines, a jail sentence and a damaged record should deter the possible shoplifter.

"I've dealt with students who have had to change their educational direction. Some have left school, but others find it very difficult to get into the occupations they want," Allison says.

Many firms or professional fields like the legal or medical areas already have many qualified individuals to choose from, Allison says, and those with a criminal history tend to get weeded out.

'You can't get a teaching certificate," Holland says. "If you get asked about your background during a polygraph test, you'll have to admit to the crime. Retail corporations won't hire you and there will always be a question of your trustworthiness.'

"Once you're in a field, that's fine. But try to apply for a job with a misdemeanor on your record. Why would an employer hire someone who has already demonstrated a flaw?" Allison

According to Weston-Ladnow, people who shoplift often have the money to pay for what they steal. Approximately 70 percent of the items taken cost less than \$5, and grocery products including candy and meat - account for 40 percent of thefts, she says.

Drugs make up 13 percent of what's stolen at McKay's, and alcohol products account for 5 percent of the incidents, she says.

"In stealing, anything and anyone goes," says Weston-Ladnow. "We've caught professionals and housewives. These account for 20 percent of arrests. But students are the biggest problem.

"People steal because of peer pressure or because they think they can get away with it," she says. "And the people we do catch shoplifting are only a small percentage of what is really going on.

"But those we do catch can, especially if they are repeaters, can expect to see jail."





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