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Shoplifting procedures questioned

Market charged with violating rights

By Julie Shippen
Of the Emerald

A local supermarket's procedure of prosecuting shoplifters violates customers' civil rights and borders on false imprisonment and extortion, says Bill Kittredge, director of the student advocacy office.

The store's security director, however, says the process used by security personnel at the Franklin Boulevard McKay's store is within Oregon law and is fairly applied.

Tracy Ladlow, who has worked for McKay's statewide security for more than five years, says her division usually calls the Eugene Police Department in the event of shoplifting. But in more minor cases — when less than \$1 is stolen, for example — the procedure changes, she says.

The suspects of such cases are instead taken to the store's office and informed of their Miranda rights, Ladlow says. Information on the suspect is collected and then a "subject statement" is prepared for the person to review and sign, she says. This statement is a simple account of what the security of-

ficer witnessed, written as if by the suspect, she adds.

At this point, Ladlow's office then discusses "civil restitution" of the matter, or payment of a \$150 penalty fine plus the amount of the item(s) stolen, she says. "We ask everybody to pay that," she says.

Ladlow adds that Oregon statutes hold the shoplifter liable to the store for \$100 to \$250, plus up to \$500 for repayment of merchandise, which the store rightfully can seek on its own.

But Kittredge, who says he has closely watched the supermarket's security activities for the past two years, says the cases his office has handled — particularly three recent ones — cause him to believe the store is acting unfairly and definitely outside the law's boundaries.

One case Kittredge cites involved a student who went to McKay's to get beer and was apprehended for shoplifting as he passed the register, arms loaded, with two single bottles of beer in his coat pockets. Kittredge says that even though the student had bought \$30 of beer, had \$20 in his wallet and of-



McKay's Market is under fire from the University's student advocacy office, which claims that the store's shoplifting prosecution procedures entail false imprisonment and extortion. Photo by Steven Wall

fered immediately to pay the \$1.09 for the "pocketed" bottles, McKay's still insisted on pressing charges.

The student ended up paying \$300 in court, \$150 to McKay's and ultimately left school because of financial problems, Kittredge says. "That \$300 was absolutely necessary to his continued survival," he says. "That was obviously malicious prosecution on McKay's part."

In another incident, a student and her roommate went to McKay's and were separated in the store, Kittredge says. The woman stepped beyond the register, her basket in full view, to look for her friend and was stopped by the store's security for shoplifting, he says.

Since her cheese block was worth more than \$1, she was arrested by Eugene police and

also was forced to pay the same fines to the court and store, he says.

Kittredge believes the third case in question, which was resolved out of court last month, should put an end to the store's "in-house" form of prosecution, he says.

Heidi Reiling, also a University student, went to McKay's with her roommate last September and, while shopping, opened a can of pop and began to drink it, she says. When she came to the "grind-it-yourself" coffee area, Reiling put the can down on a nearby shelf so she could use both of her hands, she says.

She continued shopping, leaving the forgotten can aisles behind, she says. Apparently security persons saw her do this and stopped her at the door,

after she'd paid \$30 for groceries, she adds.

These officers told her she'd have to stay an hour, and she was taken upstairs where they briefed her on her rights and proceeded in their usual manner, she says.

Reiling was told then and in following letters to send the store \$150 in monthly installments or she would be taken to court, she says. After consulting Kittredge's office, she and a student defender informed McKay's she wouldn't pay, and the store ultimately dropped the charges, she says.

What sticks in her mind most about the incident, Reiling says, is that security officers told her "she was lucky" that they weren't involving the police.

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Photo by Steven Wall

One 'final' reminder

Now that dead week is upon us, students and faculty should be reminded once again of the policies in effect this week. In 1982, the University Assembly legislated guidelines that state:

- No examination worth more than 20 percent of the final grade will be given with the exception of makeup exams.

- No final exam will be given under any guise.

- No project will be due unless it was clearly specified on the syllabus within the first two weeks of the term.

- No take-home final will be due earlier than the day of the formal assigned final date for the class.

Anyone who knows of any violation of this policy should contact SUAB members at 686-3720 or the Information and Grievance Center in the EMU lobby.

Bowling pins or silicon chips?

EMU computer center sought

By Dave Berns
Of the Emerald

Patrons of the EMU's east bowling alley will have to trade in their bowling balls for binary bytes if officials approve conversion of the facility into a new student computer center.

The plan, as finalized by an EMU Board subcommittee, would convert the older bowling alley — across from Sooter's Hair Co. in the EMU basement — into a "Student Activities Center" equipped with video machines, word processors and a variety of computer software.

"Students could write term papers, learn how to operate computers and gain hands-on experience with various computer systems," says ASUO Finance Coordinator Kevin Lewis, a subcommittee member who supports the proposal.

The facility would be composed of 15-20 computer rooms, with a larger room to house videotape machines, Lewis says.

Students would be charged a user fee based on the amount of time they spend on an individual computer system, he says.

The initial phase of the conversion would cost about \$90,000, EMU assistant director Frank Geltner says.

"This could be funded through a one- or two-term dollar increase in student fees or through the use of the Building Reserve Fund," Geltner says. "The cost of acquiring the computer software would be open to bids."

The EMU administration is required by state law to maintain a reserve fund for EMU projects. The most money available for use on any one project is \$99,999, EMU business manager Jan Hosmar says.

The EMU administration must approve projects this large, she says.

During the past five years, the old bowling alley has suffered from a lack of use, says Dexter Simmons, EMU recreation center manager.

"The space is hardly used because

bowling popularity is down on campus," Simmons says.

The recreation center at Stanford University recently was converted into a computer center, Simmons says.

EMU Board member Dave Rusk, another subcommittee member, believes the creation of a student computer center is long overdue.

"Students can use the computing center next to the law school, but they can't write term papers there," Rusk says. "We're trying to meet a need that is currently going unfilled."

Lewis is optimistic that if both the EMU Board and building administration accept the proposal, conversion could begin in the summer, and the center could open early in 1986.

Subcommittee members will staff a table in the EMU lobby Wednesday to receive public comment on the plan. The full EMU Board will hear the proposal during its 3:30 p.m. Thursday meeting at a location to be announced. Public comment will be welcome.