

# Transients

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ment, according to Scarpelli.

"Most of them (transients) aren't allowed in the store for various reasons, so consequently they don't bother to come around here as often as they used to," Scarpelli said. The ones that do "watch their p's and q's, because they want the privilege of coming in here," he said.

As for the University Bookstore, transients are a minor annoyance — an "inconvenience," according to Bob Spencer, the bookstore's merchandising manager.

"We spend a lot of time and effort on keeping a high-profile professional image for the store and having the transients urinate on the benches outside certainly doesn't help any," Spencer said.

Other store owners haven't seen any change in the intensity of the problem. The transients scare away customers, engage in annoying panhandling, and intimidate employees. The transient problem is not moving on, in fact, it's growing roots in the lucrative business district.

"It is unquestionably more severe now than it's ever been, there is no comparison, the present and the past have little in common in that respect," said Bob Lee, who owns Face the Music on East 13th Avenue.

In the five years he has operated his business, Lee said the transient situation has never been worse. Disorderly, "belligerent" transients must be forcibly removed from the store at least once a week, according to Lee.

However, there are transients, and then there are transients. Lee stressed that many transients mind their own business and do not get out of control.

"They have a right to be here in the world," Lee said. "I don't think they have a right to harass anyone, it's one thing to ask somebody for change, it's another thing to follow them down the street and threaten them."

The owner of Rainbow Optical, Richard Greene, considers the problem much less worse than in years past, but would like to see the police establish a walking beat in the East 13th Avenue area to further discourage panhandling. The transients drive away customers, even though he perceives their numbers have diminished. People feel uncomfortable in the area knowing they will get panhandled, or see "somebody irrationally screaming obscenities, waving around a whisky bottle or whatever," Greene said.

A police officer walking the beat on 13th Avenue would be a "neat idea," Hansen said, but the understaffed EPD cannot afford to have an officer on foot patrol.

Some store owners want an "anti-panhandling" ordinance directed at the more aggressive transients. Portland has already put such a law into effect.

Portland's "Aggressive Begging Ordinance" prohibits interfering with free passage on the street and offensive physical contact or threatened contact. It does not ban begging specifically, but attempts to make the in-

timidating tactics of some panhandlers punishable by law, according to Bob Tilley, a crime-prevention officer with the Portland Police Department.

Transients prosecuted under the ordinance, in effect since

April 1987, can face fines ranging from \$250 to \$500 and/or 10 days in jail, along with doing community service time. The offense is considered a misdemeanor.

This brings up some obvious

questions; how can a transient be fined, and how is jail a deterrent for someone living on the streets?

Under the Portland or-

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