

OPS, riders need to work out a solution

It's happened time and time again: a University student comes out of class, expecting to get on his or her bicycle and ride to the next class. Instead, he or she finds a severed lock, or very often, nothing at all.

This year, bicycle thefts at the University are rising at an alarming rate — up 25 percent from just one year ago.

In the first nine months of 1988, 823 bikes were reported stolen. Through September of this year, 1,031 have been snatched.

A number of factors can be blamed for the thefts. Increased bike riding on campus, failure to lock the bikes securely, or locking them to the wrong things are just a few reasons.

The lack of parking space around the University has caused many students to give up their cars in favor of bikes. This will not be an easy problem to alleviate. The University is doomed to large amounts of bike traffic because many students can not even afford cars, let alone find spots to park them.

Another reason for lots of bikes around the school is the high price of automobile parking permits, and the stiff fines for expired meters. With more bikes around, and the cost of bikes continuing to skyrocket, thieves find stealing bicycles not only easy, but profitable.

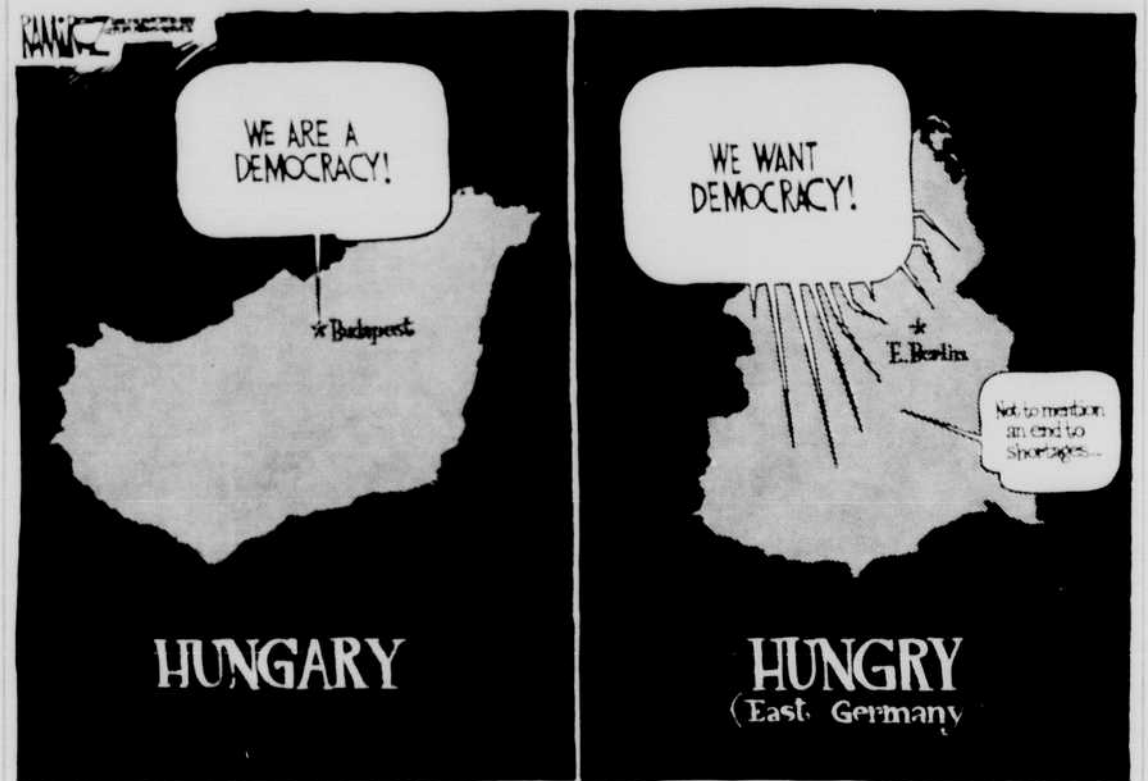
While these problems will be tough to fix, the others are not. Forgetting to lock a bike, or just plain neglecting to, is not a very smart move. Bicyclists should know by now leaving bikes unlocked is just an engraved invitation to steal them.

But the University Office of Public Safety is, in part, partly responsible for the increased thefts. OPS officials know there are more bikes on campus. The cold hard fact is there aren't enough secure bike racks to go around. The OPS hands out heavy tickets to offenders who lock their bikes to trees, parking meters or whatever else is handy. By penalizing people for its own mistakes, OPS is just part of the problem, not the solution.

Bike-snatchers have a really nice situation. They have an unlimited supply of material, and are almost guaranteed to get off scot free. Stolen bikes are rarely recovered. All a thief needs to do is repaint the bike, or just take it to another city.

Clearly, some middle ground between the bikers and OPS must be found. OPS needs to provide more bike racks, and riders need to start buying locks and then using them.

No one is totally to blame for the problem, and no one is totally blameless. Both sides need to work to solve the problem.



Eugene's 'livability' reputation is rising

No one is saying that our fair city is a veritable paradise on Earth. But if you consider recent polls that rank cities in terms of "livability," then Eugene must be doing something right.

Last week, the *Places Rated Almanac* released its 1989 edition of the best places to live in the country. Seattle was ranked first among the 333 metropolitan areas considered, and the Eugene-Springfield area placed 38th in the poll. In the 1985 edition of the almanac, which was the last one published before this year, Eugene ranked 86th. You probably didn't realize that your quality of life had leaped 48 imaginary points in the past four years, now did you?

In addition to the *Places Rated Almanac* poll, the September issue of *Money* magazine rated Eugene as the 68th most livable city, up from 105th place in 1988. Both surveys considered such aspects as health care, economy, housing, crime, education, transportation, climate, and arts and recreation when determining a city's rank.

When one considers these criteria for grading a city, Eugene leaves a lot to be de-

sired in certain areas. Absurd housing costs in the campus area and the rising incidents of crime in the city are just two of the serious problems faced in Eugene. However, the city's good points, such as its scenic beauty and respected educational environment, shouldn't be scoffed at either.

But do these rankings have any merit or validity? It seems to depend on one's rank in the polls as to how that question is answered. We Eugenians should feel pretty good about our high marks. Okay, we don't live in a modern-day Utopia, but who does?

The Swedish do, it seems. According to *American Way* magazine, people in Sweden receive free health care for all, free day care for children, a minimum of five weeks vacation, 90 percent payment for work absence and 12 months paid maternity and paternity leave. In addition, the national unemployment rate is only 1.5 percent and 90 percent of the citizens earn between \$13,000 and \$25,000 a year.

Yeah, but we probably beat them in terms of annual rainfall amounts. So there.

Letters

Full circle

In response to your Oct. 20 editorial endorsing construction of a new medium-security prison in Ontario, there are a few factors you neglected to mention.

First, most of those to be incarcerated in this facility will be from the population centers of the Willamette Valley, which will make it difficult, if not impossible, for the families of these prisoners to maintain contact. The result will be the breakup of many families.

Second, the cost to the state of transporting not only prisoners, but attorneys, judges, hearings officials and all the support services which any prison requires, to the Ontario area will become an added financial burden to an already expensive system.

Third, luring competent staff to the outposts of the state is likely to be extremely difficult.

Fourth, and perhaps most ironic, a prison built under the guise of economic development (and with lottery funds) is likely to benefit the Idaho economy

more than the Oregon economy.

By isolating prisoners from their families, future employment sources and all the services available in a more centrally-located area, we are setting the stage for the next great "crime wave," which will undoubtedly come full circle and result in an outcry for yet more prisons.

The answer to the problem is a corrections policy geared toward change — not toward warehousing prisoners under the banner of retribution, and then releasing them destitute, rootless and embittered. Unless a change is made, there will be no end to the ever increasing corrections-related costs.

Edwin Coleman II
English professor

Not confused

Your Oct. 24 editorial "Rape victims need abortion financing" contains a major flaw in logic. The final paragraph is enough to justify Kirkegaard's famous journal entry.

The notion that one proves the unacceptability of rape by favoring abortion is a non-sequitur. I am certainly an opponent of rape — a crime which should earn its perpetrator execution. Yet, by no vigorous stretch of the imagination, can I be said to favor abortion.

The two acts mentioned are equally reprehensible and should warrant capital punishment. The President and most Republicans are spineless cowards. No abortion, unless the mother is mortally threatened, should be the rule — by which I mean nothing toward rape. The two issues are not to be confused.

Anthony Cracolie
Eugene

Think

If you shoplift you may be putting your career on the line. The penalty for taking a 50-cent candy bar is the same as that for taking a \$50 sweater. Nearly every merchant in town has a 100 percent prosecution policy. That means you cannot just pay for or return the item; rather,

the police may be called, a criminal charge may be filed, and you will answer to a judge.

Penalties for misdemeanor shoplifting range from a maximum of a \$500 fine and 100 days in jail, to a \$2,500 fine plus one year in jail, depending on the value of the item taken, and which court is handling the charge.

The merchant may also demand a civil penalty of \$100 to \$250 over and above any fines or penalties the court might impose.

It is true that some criminal records can be sealed after three years. In the meantime, you may have to report your criminal conviction on job applications for licenses to practice law, accounting or real estate sales, just to name a few.

By the time you come to see me, absent a good defense, all I can do is help minimize the damage. The City Prosecutor's office has a tough policy against shoplifters. Think before you act.

Ilona Koleszar
Attorney, ASUO Legal Services

Call it quits

The new no-tolerance attitude of the Eugene Police Department toward students is brilliant. One sure way to prevent riotous behavior is to make the students respect your authority.

Push some bicyclists around for horrendous offenses, such as running stop signs or night lights. Crack down on those jaywalkers. Who knows what kind of anarchy they'll start?

Don't forget the protesters. I can't believe you let the parking structure rally get as far as it did. There must be a direct correlation between the students fighting for a livable Alder Street neighborhood, and the riot last year when students fought for the right to party.

I want to congratulate the entire police department. You've made yourself seen. Put in a few gold stars from Bush's crack down on crime campaign. Then would you please call it quits for all our benefit?

Douglas Welsh
Architecture

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