

HOMELESS

Continued from Page 4

looking for work or a place to live. The staff at the shelter provided welfare advocacy, taught parenting classes and referred residents to counseling.

Saturday night, the former residents all said they will miss the shelter's services, and are afraid of what will happen to them and other homeless mothers trying to deal with Eugene's 1 percent vacancy rate.

At about 2 a.m. Sunday, Eugene police arrived and told the campers they were camping illegally, but the officers left shortly afterwards when Eugene school district representatives wouldn't press charges. Margaret Nichols, district superintendent, said she was sympathetic with the mothers, and that she wouldn't try to have the protesters moved.

By Monday morning, Barnes, her three-year-old daughter Cassie, and Harmon and her grandson remained on the lawn

as staff cleaned out the shelter for the summer. The campers had received donations of food and supplies, and one man gave Harmon \$50 cash for formula and diapers for her grandson.

"I'm going to stay here until they take me off, until they come and arrest me," Barnes said.

Kevin Hayden, a shelter case manager, said he is actually "not too sad" that the shelter closed because "I think the shelter system has become a dumping ground for humans in a disposable society. But considering the mothers had no place to go, I'm sad for them."

"The government needs more houses instead of more excuses," he said. "They keep studying the problem, but the bottom line is they need more homes at lower prices."

"We've had a constant flow of people coming in here ever since we opened," Graham said. "I don't think that flow is stopping just because it happens to be the month of June."

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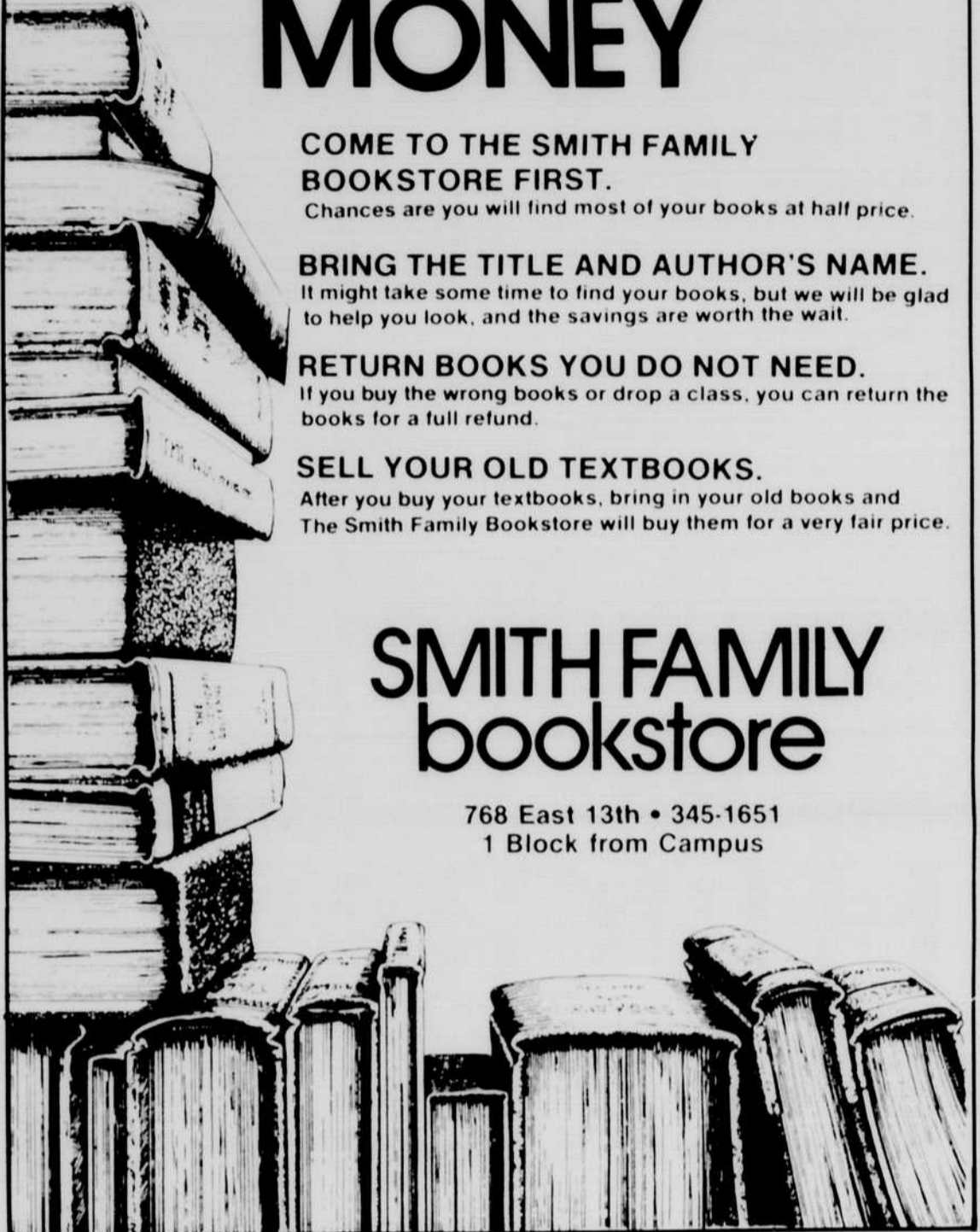
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