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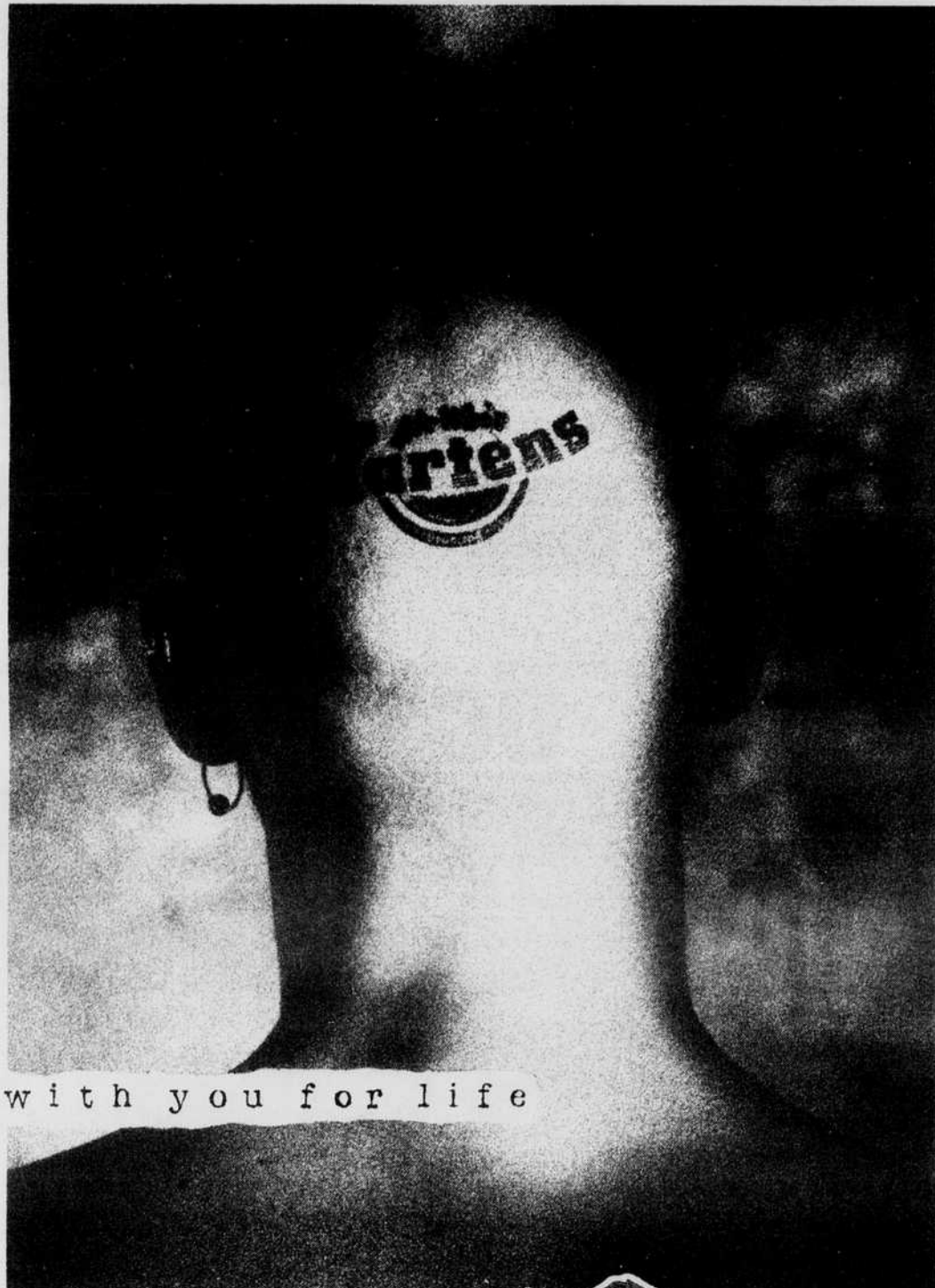


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13th Avenue sweeps stopped for now

■ **MAINTENANCE:** Some business owners and residents say the problem is under control and they're relieved

By Jean Bond
 Community Reporter

The initial sweeps of the 13th Avenue area have stopped, but more sweeps will continue as needed, said police officials.

"What's happening now is more of a maintenance," said Sgt. Dave Poppe, Eugene police officer. "There's no significant group assigned to the area now."

The Eugene police department's Rapid Deployment Unit swept 13th Avenue between Kincaid and High Streets in late September. The sweeps came in response to business and resident complaints about vagrancy and drug use in the area.

The unit made 137 arrests during the recent sweeps. Police arrested 34 people on felony charges, most of which were drug-related violations, said Sgt. Rick Siel of the Rapid Deployment Unit. An additional 103 misdemeanor arrests for crimes such as panhandling and loitering were also made, he said.

Poppe said, now that the problem seems to be under control, police will continue to monitor the area, but the Rapid Deployment Unit has been assigned elsewhere.

These sweeps were prompted in part by the occurrence of crimes in the area that were hurting people, such as aggressive panhandling, physical attacks and drug transactions, said Bev Mason, community service officer at the West University Public Safety Station.

Drug traffic, littering and vagrancy also have been problems in the West University area for some time.

"It's real clear that this has become the place to hang out," Mason said. "I've talked to people who came here from back East

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— **Bev Mason**
 Community Service Officer at the West University Public Safety Station

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Police said area response to the sweeps has been positive.

"We've certainly received a lot of positive remarks from businesses and residents in that area," Poppe said. "Visible activity has gone down, and the volume of complaints has gone down as well."


"We've received about a dozen calls and visits from people who want to tell us 'thank you,'" Mason said. "We've even received flowers."

"It's cleared up the area quite a bit," said Ryan Hartman, manager of Coffee People on E. 13th Avenue. "It's definitely better than last year. The store is more accessible to our customers with not so many people hanging around."

The sweeps have vastly improved the area, said Richard Greene, owner of Rainbow Optics. "It has been absolutely wonderful," he said. "People who wouldn't come down here before are coming here now. Basically, the sweeps have made this a safe area for people to come to."

Maintaining the area will have to remain a priority, Mason said.

"We all know it has to be maintained," she said. "Sweeps will continue, although probably not on the same scale. We'll do them as often as necessary."



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