

Theft still top crime on campus

Campus police say thefts of bicycles and other property remain constant problems

By Felicity Ayles
Oregon Daily Emerald

Every day, students leave class and start to head home when suddenly they realize their bikes aren't where they left them. Some are just forgetful — but more often than not, these students are victims of the University's most infamous crime, theft.

Theft, more than any other crime, remains the biggest problem on campus and around the city of Eugene.

At the University, personal property theft is the greatest threat, said Joan Saylor, University public safety administrative lieutenant.

"People are trying to take stuff all the time," she said.

Both bike and property thefts are problems.

"While these crimes don't seem very glamorous, they have the biggest impact on the community," said Jan Power, Eugene Police Department public information spokeswoman.

Saylor said although general crime on campus drops when the students are gone over the summer and during winter break, theft is still a problem.

"People know when the students are going to be gone, and you see people on campus look-

Incidence of theft (1997)

AT THE UNIVERSITY:
Bike theft: 281
Theft from buildings: 162
Theft from vehicles: 86

SOURCE:
University Office of Public Safety
Campus Crime Statistics

IN THE CITY OF EUGENE:
Bike theft: 96
Theft from vehicles: 170
Other theft: 170

SOURCE:
Eugene Police Department,
Monthly Report

ing around," she said. "But it becomes easy to spot individuals."

The campus Office of Public Safety has 15 officers who work in three shifts because it is a 24-hour, seven-day operation, Saylor said. The officers are divided into three different groups and assigned to three different areas of campus, she said.

Although the Office of Public Safety has an adequate staff, Saylor said, it works hand-in-hand with the Eugene Police Department and campus organizations to lower crime in the campus community.

The crime rate in Eugene has decreased by almost 8 percent, but the largest crime problem is still theft, Power said.

These thefts can be as insignificant as small change or as critical

as wallets and credit cards, Power said.

Another rampant crime is mail theft, she said. This crime, although it may not seem so to some, is very expensive and time-consuming.

Power said the Eugene Police Department believes most theft crimes are motivated by methamphetamine or other drug addictions.

As far as the campus is concerned, Power said, crime rates have remained generally constant and infractions such as property crimes have actually decreased. Car thefts are also down, but theft in general went up by 10 cases from 1997 to 1998, she said.

The Eugene Police Department divides campus crime statistics into three categories: personal, property and behavioral. In addition to working with the Office of Public Safety, the EPD cooperates with the Oregon Liquor Control Commission on behavioral violations, such as Minor In Possession citations.

Although theft continues to plague both the University community and the city of Eugene, Power said, the overall crime rate appears to be decreasing.

Felicity Ayles covers city development and the West University neighborhood for the Emerald. She can be reached via e-mail at fizzer@gladstone.uoregon.edu.

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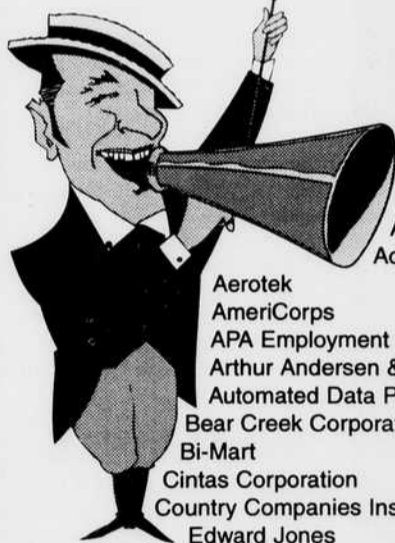
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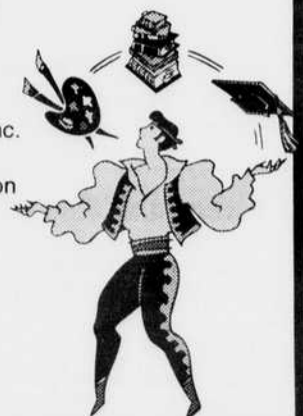
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