

Campus police face rising crime rate

by Bart Becker

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, with a population topped by only six other communities in the state, is beset by many of the crime problems faced by the large cities. But some unique situations arise, as well, and Gale Gade, director of campus security, said Tuesday his force is coping with campus crime.

National studies indicate crime rates on campus are growing and experts place much of the blame on young people who are careless about guarding their possessions. Gade said carelessness is one of the major factors contributing to crime at UNL, too.

He said the three most serious areas of crime on the Lincoln campus are larceny from autos, bicycle thefts and larceny from buildings. The latter category includes both larceny from living units and from class and office buildings.

As for aggravated crimes such as rape or assault, Gade said, "They have not taken place here."

The crime rate "hasn't gotten worse or better" except in the bike theft category, according to Gade.

"Bike theft is a growing concern," he said. "With more bikes on campus we thought bike theft would increase and it has. The expensive bikes are quite an attraction even if they're locked with a chain."

UNL's top cop said the campus force works together with the city force to recover stolen bikes. He commented that if the thief changes the

appearance of the stolen bike it is hard to recover.

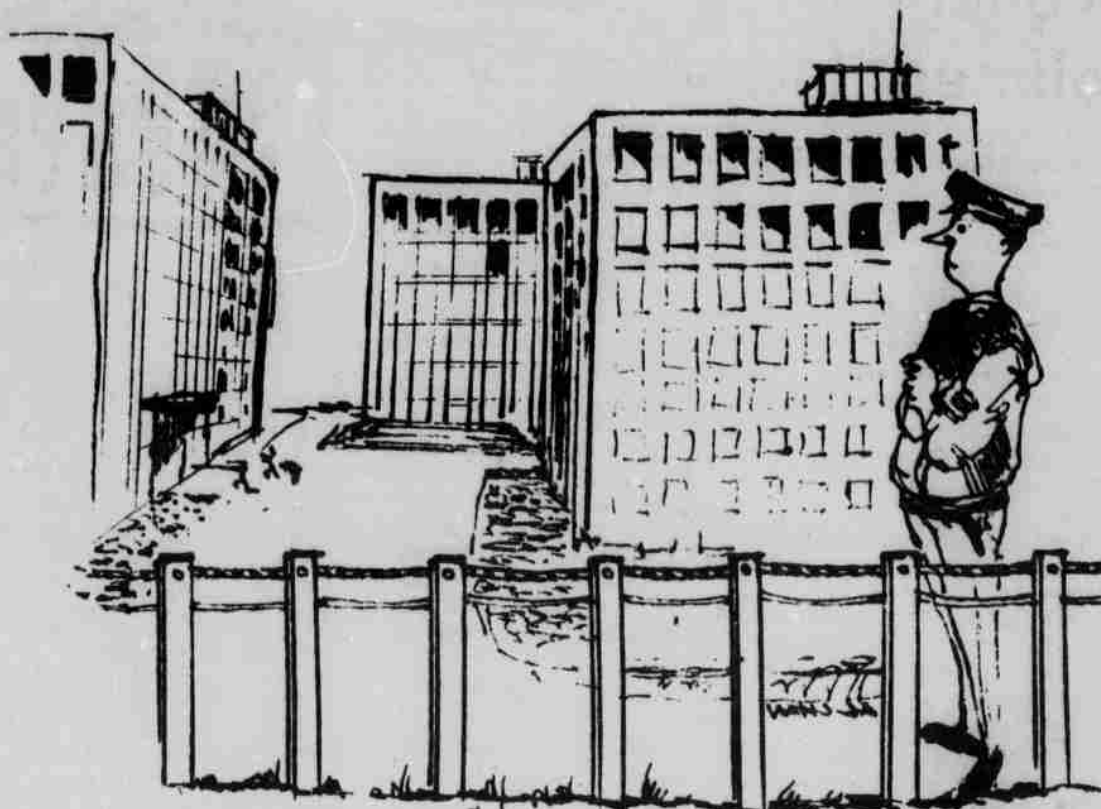
The force investigates each crime "until we run out of leads." But the police have a tough time because the public is reluctant to volunteer information.

Another area of concern is book theft from individuals and campus bookstores. Gade said the bookstores cooperate by keeping a file of stolen books if the victim of the crime reports the theft.

Thefts of stereo tape decks from automobiles is another area in which crimes are frequently reported. Gade said the University is battling the problem by increasing lighting in parking areas.

The peak period of crime, he said, is during the fall and spring when milder weather allows the potential criminal better working conditions. Most auto and accessory thefts are reported these times of the year.

He said the current campus security force of 37 officers is double what it was two years ago. The force also maintains a constant training program to offer "better service to the University community."



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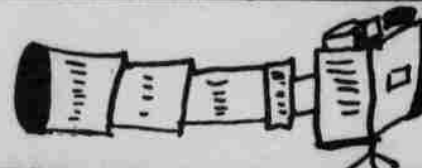
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