

Crime rate rising; students advised to be alert

By Lisa Brown

An estimated \$26,888 of property was stolen from UNL students living on campus in 1973.

That much or more may be stolen this year unless students become more observant and take crime prevention measures, Phil Cross, Special Services Officer of the Campus Police, said Tuesday.

Statistics show that the total criminal offenses for the fiscal year 1974 to date are fast approaching the 1973 totals, Cross said. A peak period for crime, November and December, is just beginning, he said.

In one division of crime, the 1973 total has already been doubled. In 1973 there were seven cases of indecent exposure and molestations, while in 1974 there have been fourteen. Molestation is sexual assault short of rape.

In 1973 there were 16 total assault cases reported, and this year there have already been 15, Cross said. Assault is attacking someone by using a knife, gun, fist, or club.

To date, there have been 271 reported larcenies and 40 burglaries, Cross said, compared to 377 larcenies and 66 burglaries in 1973. Larceny is theft of any property, while burglary is theft which requires force for entry.

Larceny increases

Cross said in the last two months there has been a sharp increase in larceny, and although so far the amount of larcenies compared to last year is stable, if the trend continues, there will be another large increase in total criminal offenses this year.

Other criminal offenses spiraling upward in number this year include a mixture of 124 offenses not mentioned in the above categories, including trespassing and disturbing the peace.

Cross said that many of the trespassing violations might have turned into burglaries or larcenies if the suspect had not been captured or frightened away first.

He estimated that about \$35,000 of property was stolen by means of either larceny or burglary on the UNL campus in 1973. Approximately 17 per cent of property stolen from students was recovered, Cross

said, and he emphasized that property stolen and not reported may never be recovered.

The National Crime Commission has estimated that in excess of 50 per cent of burglaries and larcenies go unreported.

Students and staff members may help to curb the rise in crime on the UNL campus by taking several measures to help prevent it, Cross said.

The student should "be alert for suspicious circumstances, and then be concerned enough to do something about them," he said.

Crime check calls

The Campus Police welcome information relating to any suspicious or criminal activity, Cross said. People can make a crime check call to the Campus Police, giving as much complete information as possible, without having to leave their name or phone number, he said. The majority of the citizens reporting a crime leave their names and addresses, he said, and are a valuable aid to the police.

If a student is the victim of theft,

molestation, assault or other criminal offense, Cross said the person should contact the Campus Police immediately.

If a crime is reported immediately, he said, there is a five times greater chance of making an apprehension and recovery than if it is reported 24 hours later. If the crime is not reported for a week or more, the chances of apprehension and recovery are negligible.

A crime prevention measure available to students free of charge from the Campus Police, he said, is a scriber, an etching machine which will etch a student's identification number into wood, metal, or plastic. Students may stop by the police office and check one out, he said.

28 per cent decrease

Cross said that in a major city in Florida where the police had made a mass push for the scriber program, there had been a 28 per cent decrease in burglary.

Other preventive measures include locking rooms, cars, and bicycles.

Cross said if a person sees someone trying residence hall or car doors, following a woman, or any other suspicious activity, he should contact the police immediately.

A major cause of the universal increase in crime is the tight money situation across the country, Cross said.

"The present economic situation possibly hit the college student harder than other groups," he said, "because many students pay for their own food and transportation, rather than relying on their parents' money, and the costs of gasoline and food are rising the fastest."

Peak periods

The peak periods of crime on campus are at the beginning and end of both semesters, Cross said. At the beginning everyone is a stranger and no one knows who belongs on the residence hall floors and who doesn't. At the semester's end, property is in a mass confusion during moving, and items may not immediately be missed, he said.

From 1973 to 1974 there was a 13 per cent increase in total criminal offenses, he said, and without strong support from the student and faculty, the trend for an increase can't be halted.

Beware of thieves

The Campus Police wish to alert students that they are currently investigating six cases which they have connected by the same modus operandi—way of entry.

A male goes from room to room in a residence hall asking students if they know someone, whom he identifies by an imaginary name, and then starts a conversation with the resident. He enters the room by asking to borrow a match or use the phone book, and then scans the room to see where valuable items are stored.

During the conversation he learns the resident's name, something about him or her, and when he or she will be absent from the room. Later he returns and breaks into the room, and if questioned by someone on the floor, can provide a fairly logical explanation by using the information gained in conversation with the resident.

Contact the Campus Police immediately if you have any information on such a case.

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