Padlocks, watchful eyes deter campus bicycle thieves

By Kim Wilt

Bicycle thefts are increasing on campus, according to UNL police, and the problem is expected to get worse, UNL Police Investigator Bob Fey recommends a strong chain or cable lock, but a mechanic at the Mr. Bike shop

says the best lock may be your own eyes.

"The best way is to put the bike in a place where you can watch it," he said, "If someone wants a \$700 bike, they'll go through a lock to get it."

If it isn't possible to keep the bike indoors, police suggest securing it to an immovable object by a lock that goes through both wheels and the frame.

If only the rear wheel is secured, Fey said, a thief could easily remove the front wheel, especially if it is easily detachable (only by a wing bolt).

"If you're going to invest \$150 to \$200 in a 10-speed, why not spend a few bucks more for a good cable?" he said.

A PERSON SHOULD expect to pay at least \$10. John Wayne, manager of the Freewheelin' Bike Shop agrees with Fey and added that the safest type of lock is a plastic coated cable with a padlock, not a combination lock. Combination locks can be easily opened by a determined thief, he said. He added that a chain lock is also protective, but weighs three to four times more than a cable.

Waune also suggested passing the lock through both wheels and the frame, making certain the lock is attached to an immobile object.

"Parking meters are bad," he cautioned. "The lock can be slipped right over the top."

Metal U-shaped locks are not as safe, he said, because they can only secure the rear wheel, leaving the front wheel open to theft,

However, Van Forbes, a mechanic at the Bike Shop,

"The U-shaped locks, which are made by Citadel, are guaranteed by the company for the full price of your bike if it's stolen," he said.

Forbes said he does not recommend spending much money on a lock because a determined thief can cut through any lock used.

"THERE'S A POINT beyond which you shouldn't

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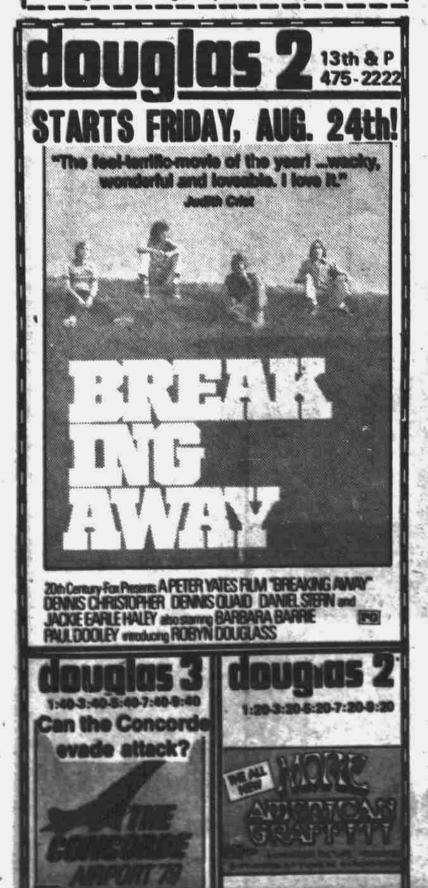
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spend any more money because if someone is going to steal it, they will. If somebody wants to rip something off, they can do it. I strongly suggest that they (bicycle owners) provide indoor space for their bikes," Forbes said.

Fey said another deterrent to bicycle theft is for owners to report anyone they see tampering with a bike, and to watch for "inappropriate individuals loitering around a bike rack-for example, juveniles on campus,"

If a bicycle is stolen, the chances are much better that it will be recovered if the owner reports it to the police immediately, he said.

In addition, a registration sticker on the bike will not only aid the police in finding it, but may also make a thief heistate to steal it in the first place, he added.

ALL BICYCLES must be registered with the city and the fee is \$1. An owner can register his bike at several

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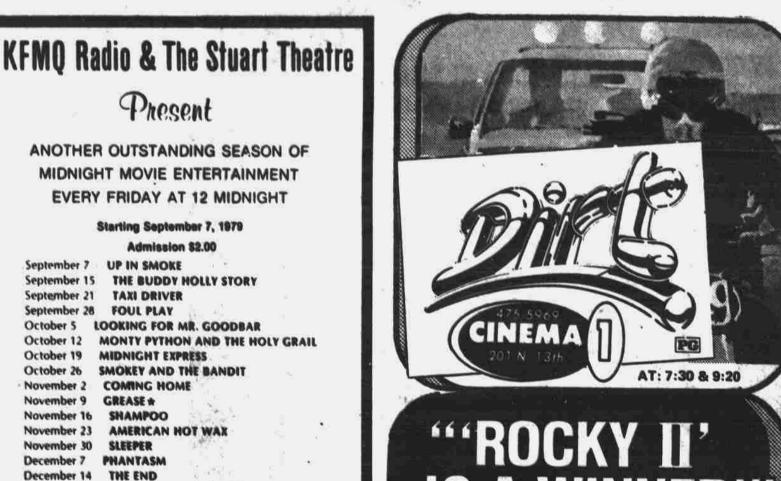
places in Lincoln, including the fire department, bicycle stores and the city and campus police departments. Fey said the UNL police will put tags on unregistered

bikes to remind owners that registration is required by city law. "I think we've made more than enough of an effort to

stop bicycle theft," he said. Many people whose bikes are stolen fail to report the

theft to the police because they don't think it will do any good. As a result, many bicycles wait at the police station for owners who never pick them up, Fey said.

"Several times a year the UNL police and the city and county officials sell a surprising number of bikes that were found and never claimed. Right now we have about ten bicycles here. I know they've been stolen, but how am I going to get them back to the people?"





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