

# No security handle on student bicycle thefts

by Doug Whittall

If you're a student whose ten speed bicycle has been stolen, chances are you will never see it again. Every week in spring and summer, 24 bikes are stolen in metro Halifax, out of that 24, one is from the Dalhousie campus. No matter where it's stolen from, though, you will have a hard time getting it back; even if the police recover it.

Student Council Vice-President Internal John Russell is very concerned about thefts on campus.

"Student council and security services are not geared to handle the problem," said Russell. A rash of thefts in the spring prompted Russell to start searching for a solution to what he calls "gutsy, well planned raids".

Max Keeping, director of the university's security services, said the theft figures are "about average" for the spring and summer, although the thefts usually occur in rashes and do not reflect a steady rate.

Metro police sergeant Paul MacKenzie said from his experience the number of bicycle thefts in Halifax hovers around 1,000 every year with little change from year to year.

According to MacKenzie, there are three types of bike thieves. The most serious group is the organized bike snatcher who travels in a van or pickup and uses industrial bolt cutters to free the bike. These people usually steal in order to sell it to a flea market, or to anyone wanting a bike.

Kids who steal bikes for the individual parts which (usually) go on their own ten speeds are responsible for a large part of the crime. These people are hard to catch because individual parts are almost impossible to identify.

The third group are the "joy riders", who will steal a ten speed and dump it once they get where they are going. MacKenzie said the police usually recover a bike stolen in this way after it's been dumped at the side of the road.

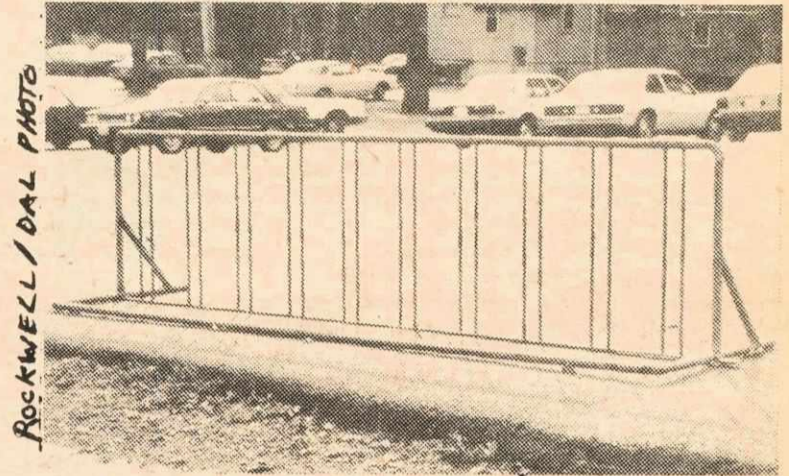
Security director Keeping doesn't think the campus thefts are carried out by kids. He said he thought organized gangs roam the campus looking for isolated lockups that house expensive ten speeds.

"We caught one guy last year going around in a van with bolt cutters and all," said Keeping. "And he was no kid."

Russell is looking into a number of possible solutions in conjunction with campus security and other university services.

One plan calls for the purchase of "Cycle Safe" self-contained lockup stalls. However, these units are expensive. They cost about \$640 each, and Russell is having problems designing a viable management system to provide equal access for users. Each stall can secure two bicycles and the purchase would be financed on a user-pay system to ensure that students who do not ride bikes will not have to pay for the purchase.

"The problem is that security is a little expensive and council's budget



Cyclists discover a new way to befuddle would-be bicycle thieves - would you believe this rack is full of invisible bicycles?

isn't flexible enough to accommodate that expense," said Russell.

Sgt. MacKenzie said the thefts are a problem but also admits there is very little the police can do about recovery once a bike is stolen. Even if the bicycle is recovered, without the serial number or a list of positive identification marks, the police cannot return the property.

"We have hundreds and hundreds of ten speed bicycles that go unclaimed because people don't record their serial number," said MacKenzie. Without proof of ownership, the bike remains with the police because "it comes down to one person's word against another's," said MacKenzie.

Russell, MacKenzie and Keeping agree that the simplest and least expensive solution would be to invest \$40 in a high quality "Kryptonite" lock. The manufacturer claims only an acetylene torch can cut through this lock. Russell and Keeping are presently negotiating with a lock manufacturer, trying to arrange a cost marketing system where the campus bookstore would sell them at cost.

"The easiest solution rests with the students," said Russell. "They should consider the value of their transportation and buy a good lock."

Sergeant MacKenzie said a lock acts as a good deterrent but he maintains it only solves half the problem. A lock will not ensure a bike is returned to its owner if recovered. MacKenzie said the police have devised a system which can prevent theft and help return the property.

The police have their own serial numbers which they will engrave on your bike free of charge. The code is engraved on both wheel rims, the chain sprocket and the frame. The numbers are fed into a computer which any Canadian police officer can use to check a bike's owner and origin.

"If we had the time and there were, say, 50 students who were interested in getting their bikes engraved, we'd come down to the school and do it," MacKenzie said.

Student council is in a holding pattern now while they talk to other university services trying to implement a feasible and comprehensive plan of action. "At this point, the cost of security is holding up our decision," said Russell. "We're working toward next year."

If you have lost your ten speed bicycle recently you should wait for the next police bike auction. Who knows, maybe you can buy your old bike back.

## Cafeteria workers trayed-in

VANCOUVER (CUP) -- An administration decision to change food contractors for Simon Fraser University's four cafeterias has left striking food services employees out of work.

Beaver Foods was awarded the contract to operate the cafeterias September 26 by SFU's board of governors. The cafeteria workers went on strike in July after negotiations broke down with the former contractor, ICL White Spot. ICL terminated its contract with the university in August.

Beaver Foods, a non-union employer, has offered to hire at least 25 per cent of the former ICL employees, although it is not clear if they will receive their pre-strike wage package.

SFU student society spokesperson Jeff Berg said the decision to hire a non-union contractor was a futile attempt to avoid this summer's labour problems.

"A decision to hire a non-union company is likely to create more problems than it's worth," Berg warned board members at the September 26 meeting.

"The board today has an opportunity to either affirm or deny its commitment to loyal employees that will reverberate throughout the campus," he said.

Some of the workers have been employed for up to 17 years at the university.

SFU Chancellor Paul Coté said "people are tilting at windmills that don't exist. I don't think unionism is an issue."

Coté said Beaver was hired

because its proposal was competitive and beneficial to the university. He added that in addition to hiring 25 per cent of the former ICL employees, Beaver will also hire students.

Berg said that although the decision to hire students was admirable, long term workers should not be displaced.

"We're all in favour of hiring students but you can't have that off the backs of people who've spent many years at the university."

None of the six companies that applied for the food services contract were union companies, although VS Foods said they were prepared to deal with the union.

Berg is urging students to send letters of support for the workers in care of the student society.

## Human rights for Prisoners of Conscience

by Mindy Maddox

"...in February 1980 they penetrated the Cabanas zone where they killed seven campesinos, humble peasants who were working cultivating. On 18 June a force of...guardia, police and soldiers came and assassinated eighteen...among them a young woman who was seven months pregnant. After they killed her, they sliced open her belly and took the child out...and threw him to the dogs..."

Refugees from Cabanas - on attack by security forces.

This is but one brutal example of the torture, imprisonment or death reported regularly to Amnesty International, the world-wide human rights organization. Many rural people in different countries are subjected to violence by their governments because they exercised basic human rights.

The Universal Declaration of

Human Rights has proclaimed that all people have internationally recognized basic human rights. These have been guaranteed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and include freedom of association, freedom of expression and the right to organize to defend economic and cultural interests.

However, many rural citizens live in fear of their rights being violated as they are out of the public eye. Many countries have no safeguards to protect their rural inhabitants from oppression. In civil war, rules of international law frequently break down when violence is directed to non-combatant civilians.

Poor communication, remote areas, language and cultural differences, low literacy, weak community ties, lack of legal information, and the absence of media all combine to give the average rural citizen little power in protecting themselves from oppressive governmental tactics. Help is not as readily avail-

able for rural people as it is for their urban counterparts.

Uganda, 1981: Doctors at a Red Cross mission treat wounded guerillas. Sixty people (half children) are killed in reprisal by government forces.

Civilians are particularly susceptible to the violation when government and opposition forces are in conflict. Security forces usually have authority to arrest them on grounds that they are guerillas or support them.

Amnesty International has knowledge of civilians being tortured or executed without any evidence of their armed activity "because of their ethnic origin or political sympathies imputed to them".

Members of the Durze community in Israel-occupied Golan Heights experience the hazards of being the ethnic minority. A number of them were placed under

house arrest/town arrest for their refusal to accept Israeli identity cards and for their opposition to Israeli annexation of the Golan Heights and its policies in the area.

The rural ethnic minorities in some countries suffer extensively at the hands of government forces because they desire the ultimate in human rights - that of autonomy and self-determination. Autonomy threatens the government. It is thought to be subversive and is stopped at much expense to human rights.

December 1982: Jan Kulag, leader of the Polish independent trade union of private farmers, Rural Solidarity, was placed under house arrest when martial law was imposed that month.

The cry of rural citizens does not go unanswered. Many rural organizations have developed, giving citizens a base to which they can cling for protection. The governments in many countries regard the growth

of these organizations as a threat to their control over larger areas of land.

Land rights are a common problem with rural organizations because they lack the resources to fight the large companies, land owners or government.

Despite ILO Convention 141, which provides that "all categories of rural workers shall have the right to establish organizations, free from all interference, coercion or repression", governments continue to repress the growth of rural organizations by imprisoning their leaders.

Groups such as Amnesty International are working toward the day when all citizens in all countries can exercise their human rights without fear.

(Ed's note: All of the subject matter in this article, including quotations, has been taken from Amnesty International's literature on Prisoners of Conscience Week.)