

Shoplifters: easy to spot, hard to catch

By DARRELL LANFORD

Battalion Staff
They usually take small items. Acne medicine. Mousetraps. Nasal spray. Bottles. They're shoplifters. If they are caught and convicted, they can receive penalties up to a \$200 fine or jail sentence if found guilty of a felony.
"I think at any retail store shoplifting is a problem," said June Lusk, security supervisor at K Mart. Ruben Galvez, assistant manager at K Mart, said three or four shoplifters are caught each month. "Anybody that is caught shoplifting, whether it's a dime or \$100, is prosecuted," he said.

Over a one year period, pilfered goods represent one per cent of goods sold in a year, Galvez said. "Usually shoplifters have nervous habits," Galvez said. "They're nervous, tense, they look up, they look around. They go off in the dark corners of the store."
"They never look at the item they're going to steal," Lusk said. She said more women than men shoplift.

"The majority of the shoplifting we have here is through group effort," Galvez said. "Usually they come in threes or fours or more. I would call them professional shoplifters."

Security precautions include one-way mirrors and "someone watching the floor at all times," Galvez said.

Sales personnel usually are the only persons watching over Fed-Mart, said Hermalinda Jackson, assistant manager.

Jackson said she sees about 20 possible shoplifting cases a month, but that she is unable to catch the offenders.

"Most people who steal here are regular customers."

"Most people who steal here are regular customers," she said. She said the store is reimbursed \$400 a month for pilfered goods by the Fed-Mart chain.

Store officials at Fed-Mart, Skaggs and K Mart said they knew of no extra percentage added to total prices in order to make up for losses because of shoplifting.

Managers at Skaggs and Safeway said that the amount of goods stolen cannot be determined.

"The only way we can tell how much is stolen is to put up cameras," said Oliver Bishop, Skaggs store director.

He said cameras were set up in another store for a week. The film showed that one person out of 30 shoplifted.

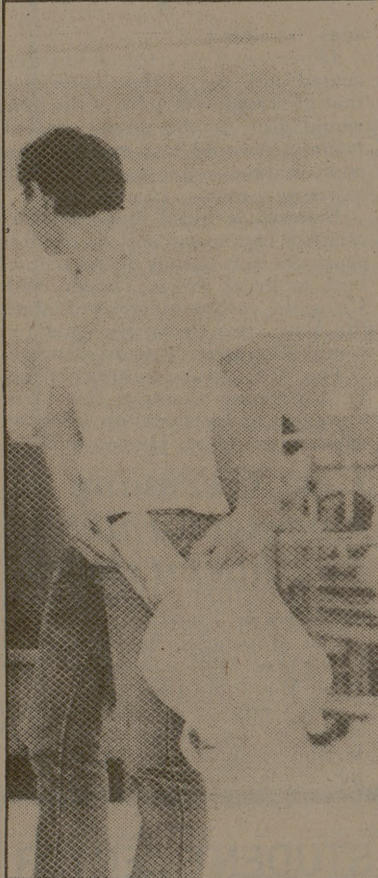
"We've caught some very prominent people," he said.

"It's surprising that most people we catch have a whole pocketful of money," Bishop said.

He said normally Skaggs policy is to prosecute. Statistics on the number of people caught were not immediately available.

Bishop acknowledged that the store suffered from employee pilfering.

"We try not to give employees the opportunity to steal," he said. "We have people working together."



There is a supervisor watching the store operation at all times.

Bishop said other security precautions include floorwalkers who have been or are policemen. Private investigators check on employees periodically and those found shoplifting are also prosecuted, he said.

Shoplifting suspects can be accused before leaving the counter, but usually they are confronted after passing the checkout counter, Lt. Jim Beamer of the College Station Police Department said.

Beamer said most shoplifters are charged with Class C misdemeanor, punishable by up to a \$200 fine.

The charge depends on the value of the good taken, Beamer said. Up to \$5 is a Class C misdemeanor; Class B, goods valued from \$5 to \$20; Class A, goods valued from \$20 to \$200. Over \$200 is a felony, he said.

Dr. Russell Duncley, professor of psychology at Texas A&M University, said there could be a number of reasons why people shoplift. He stressed that there is no one reason why a person does something.

"In the cases that I know of virtually every person reported some kind of excitement when they shoplifted," he said. "Part of it can be a kind of cops and robbers game."

"Also, people steal when they feel like they're getting ripped off," he said. "It could be a counterculture type thing to get back at the establishment."

"Kids might do it to embarrass their parents, to manipulate them, he said. "Also, it's just an easy way to acquire goods."

Fantasy movie filmed in Rome

ROME (UPI) — Director Pier Carpi is filming on location a science fiction, fantasy movie starring Anne Heywood, Irene Papas, John Philip Law and Martin Balsam.

The movie, "The Circle in the Dark," deals with a group of women who have superhuman and magical powers and are therefore excluded from normal society, Carpi says.

Noon seminars to highlight creative art demonstrations

The urge to stay outside increases as the sun keeps shining. If you would like to absorb a little culture along with the sunshine, bring your sack lunch and join the crafts shop for its Brown Bag Seminar.

Beginning Thursday, March 10, the Texas A&M University crafts shop will sponsor demonstrations of various types of artwork in various media. Cheryl Evans, crafts shop staff member, said the seminar will take place every Tuesday and Thursday from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. by the fountain in front of the

Memorial Student Center (MSC). The first demonstration will be given by Rhoda Krammer on throwing pottery (making pottery on the wheel).

Also scheduled are demonstrations on leaded glass (March 24), drawing and illustrating (March 29) and throwing pottery and primitive firing methods (April 21).

Other demonstrations tentatively scheduled are watercoloring, blacksmithing, weaving and batik, which is printing of fabric.

—Barbara Fricke

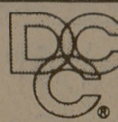




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