



Photos by Steve Ivey

denied that he has issued any such directive.

"Maybe there wasn't one, then," he said. "Over a long period of time there has been increased concern on the part of councilmen and myself. One of these days something had to be done about the increasing number of violations."

For the moment, the mystery remains. If there was one, who issued it? And even if there wasn't one, cyclists beware, Straley confirmed borough police are ticketing more frequently.

The police chief said he has instructed police officers to issue tickets so that the violator is assessed with the minimum fine, if enforcement action is necessary. So far enforcement has been under borough ordinance, rather than state law. State law classifies bikes as motor vehicles along with automobiles, Straley said.

"If a ticket is what it takes then ticket it must be. We are trying to gain citizen compliance. We hope this kind of enforcement violation is a deterrent to further crime," he said.

"We have tried to say to the public, here is the law — it must be obeyed. The law is the law, I don't write it, I just enforce it," said Straley, who has resigned as chief of police, effective Oct. 31.

Law or not, recent strict enforcement has dissatisfied many bike riders, used to getting away with violations they now can receive tickets for.

Of 16 people interviewed by The Daily Collegian, Matt Hodges' (10th-art) complaints are typical.

"If they are going to enforce the rules they should get more racks," he said. There are two bicycle racks downtown, one in front of Hammond and one behind the Tavern Restaurant.

But for the approximately 3,600 registered bikes on campus and 3,000 in town, as well as the unregistered, two racks are not enough for cyclists who pedal into town, and try to find a bike rack.

Councilman James McClure, a bicycle enthusiast, said racks pose problems because they get in the way of street cleaners and snow plows. Councilman Richard Kummer said council is considering a recessed slot type of rack which would "not be an eyesore and not be in the way of people who clean the streets."

Insufficient bike racks in town is only one complaint local cyclists have. Many have pressed for the construction of hike-bike trails.

Centre Region Hike-Bike Association is pushing for the adoption of House Bills 189 and 190, according to secretary Sue Smith. These bills, which now are in the House Conservation Committee, would establish

hike-bike trails throughout Pennsylvania.

Both have the same provisions, Smith said, except HB 190 provides for liability insurance for property owners of the land trails would go through.

"Without it there is nothing anybody can do about making trails," Smith said.

The Hike-Bike Association also is "displeased" that bicycles are governed by the motor vehicle code. "It is not reasonable. There should be a separate code for bicycles," she said.

Stricter enforcement, increased ticketing, and mounting bike accidents and theft add up to only one thing — confusion, for borough and university officials, pedestrians, automobile drivers, and of course, the pedal pushers.

The bike problem in the borough and on campus has reached the point where some immediate action must be taken to try and resolve it.

The Student Environmental Consulting Organization may be able to provide that guiding light.

Borough Council agreed to have SECO undertake, at SECO's expense, a fact-finding report of the problem and issue a preliminary report to Council Nov. 5.

"We are attempting to determine who has done what on the bike problem and then propose to borough council that they recommend SECO to conduct an in-depth study jointly with the borough and University," SECO Director Chuck Cohen said.

"We can present a non-biased study of the situation with in-depth research," Cohen said, emphasizing that SECO is designed primarily to help small communities with environmental problems, and is not a club of bicycle enthusiasts.

"Bikes are a danger to pedestrians, and riders are endangered by motorists. The bike problem is a big one and should be taken a look at," he added.

Cohen expressed optimism that council will be receptive to financing SECO's bike study.

"I think it will be supported. It becomes quite obvious the bike hazards are there," he said.

The study, complete with future recommendations, could be done during the winter, when bike usage decreases, and ready for spring, when bike riders reach a peak.

Council President Perez said he favors a student group, such as SECO, studying the problem jointly with the borough and campus.

"There's no point of the borough spinning our wheels and not have the students like it," he said.

Maybe with SECO's help in studying the bike problem, they can get the bicyclists' wheels spinning in the right direction.

