

**News**

- [News](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Review](#)
- [Sci-Tech](#)

**Today's Column**

Michelle Myers



Welcome to Cal

**Gameday: The Shank Redemption**



**Archives**

- 1999 and Before
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003

# Theft of Free Newspapers to Be a Crime in Berkeley

By KATHY LEE  
*Contributing Writer*  
Tuesday, October 14, 2003

Stealing newspapers in Berkeley will officially become a crime after the City Council passes a new ordinance at tonight's meeting.

The ordinance will fulfill a promise that Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates made last year, after he pleaded guilty to stealing and trashing 1,000 copies of The Daily Californian the day before last November's elections when he was elected mayor.

Bates dumped the papers when he saw the newspaper endorsed his opponent, former Mayor Shirley Dean.

After paying a \$250 fine for an infraction, Bates promised to propose the newspaper ordinance and to support similar statewide legislation.

Bates also promised to speak to Berkeley public school students about impulsive decision making and to pay the campus paper a \$500 restitution fee for the cost of the trashed papers.

"This is something that I've said I'm going to do, and I'm fulfilling my promise," Bates said in an interview this summer.

Bates is the first person in recent memory to be prosecuted for stealing newspapers in Berkeley.

The current state law does not address the theft of free newspapers, making it difficult for prosecutors to charge those who steal papers such as

- [View as Printable Version](#)
- [Comment on this Article](#)
- [E-mail to a Friend](#)

**Recent Articles from this Writer**

- [Threats to Wildlife Keep Berkeley High Crew Team at Lake Merritt - Sep 17, 2003](#)
- [Berkeley Residents Rally Against Recall, Proposition 54 - Sep 8, 2003](#)

**THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN**



**CLASSIFIEDS**

(510) 548-8300 x 211  
classies@dailycal.org

**The Difference Between  
NIGHT & DAY**

**Extra**

- [Daily Cal Information](#)
- [Alumni Association](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [E-Mail Updates](#)
- [Staff Application](#)
- [Print Out the Paper](#)

**Front Page**



the Daily Cal.

After the ordinance passes, Berkeley will join San Francisco as one of the few cities in the state to specify the stealing of free newspapers as illegal.

"It's terrific that Berkeley, as a city with so many newspapers, is taking a step to recognize that free newspapers have a real cost to the organizations that produce them," said Eric Schewe, editor in chief of The Daily Californian.

Theft has been a consistent tactic used by individuals and groups to silence the campus paper in the past, Schewe said.

Nearly 5,000 papers were stolen and trashed last May by students protesting the Daily Cal's coverage of the arrest of a Cal football player.

The biggest act of newspaper theft occurred in November 1996 after the Daily Cal's senior editorial board endorsed Proposition 209. About 23,000 papers were stolen and thrown off the balcony of the Daily Cal office.

---

[News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Review](#) | [Sci-Tech](#)

(c) 2003 **THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN**  
Berkeley, California  
[dailycal@dailycal.org](mailto:dailycal@dailycal.org)