FOOD me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Such was the lesson learned by the Rider University community this past week.

Two cars, both 1989 Honda Accords, were stolen from a parking lot on the Lawrenceville campus. This mirrors another robbery that occurred last semester, in which two other cars of the same model were stolen. Thankfully, four juvenile suspects have been apprehended in the most recent thefts, ranging in age from 14-17, while attempting to break into another vehicle.

So, what does this mean for Rider University? It means that we’ve grown lax when it comes to protecting ourselves. Students, first of all, must remember to lock their doors when they park in the lots. This should go without saying, especially since residents typically will not be checking in on their vehicles for a while. By doing this, you protect yourself from thefts by making it harder for criminals. While they will probably find a way to gain entry if they have been eyeing your particular vehicle, as in this case at Rider, casual burglars will simply move on to the next car instead. While locking your doors may not prevent all robberies, doing so is the first wave of defense students have against these crimes.

Campus Security should also pay better attention to the cameras installed in the parking lots. At the start of the semester, the cameras were responsible for catching two criminals red-handed. One was trying to steal a car stereo and the other a construction sign. So, why can we catch someone stealing a sign but not a car?

The answer is not that more cameras are needed. The fact that one unit mounted on top of the Bart Luedeke Center can monitor all the way to the end of the O-Lot, as well as the construction area with clarity proves that Security has the ability to monitor the entire parking lot. What we need is for these cameras to be used effectively.

The robberies were not caught on tape because many cameras were fixed on the construction site. This is absolutely unacceptable. Security’s priority should be protecting student property, not the University’s. True, it is important to patrol the construction areas, but not at the expense of resident security. When students park in the University’s lots, they are putting their full trust in Security to do everything in their power to defend their property. Sadly, they seem to be more worried about the loss of a construction sign at this point.

Security could also be stricter with those entering the Lawrenceville campus through the South entrance. When two 1994 Saturns were stolen last year, Security cracked down on visitors, requiring them to present some form of picture ID as well as sign in with an officer. They also made it a point to thoroughly check each student’s Rider ID card before allowing them to enter the campus. Sure, this was an inconvenience, but it made the community as a whole feel a lot safer.

Today, Security at the South kiosk is almost a joke. Almost anyone with an ID card of some kind can pass for a Rider student these days. Many times the gate is even raised before the approaching car comes to a complete stop. This is easily fixable, since all Security needs to do is go back to the way they did things before. It may be inconvenient in the short term, but it does make a huge difference.

Rider has learned that history does repeat itself. Sadly, we have to figure this out the hard way, but hopefully these robberies will bring a bit of good to the community. After all, cars are more expensive to replace than construction tape.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion Editor.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“You’ve got a lot of choices. If getting out of bed in the morning is a chore and you’re not smiling on a regular basis, try another choice.” — Steven D. Woodhull

OPINION

Deja vu strikes with new car thefts

The Rider News

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Letters to the Editor: The Rider News welcomes letters on all subjects of interest to the Rider community. Letters must be typed and include the name, address, phone number and signature of the author of verification. Send to The Rider News via e-mail (ridernews@rider.edu), campus mail, or hand deliver to the Ridge House. All letters must be received by midnight on the Monday preceding publication. The Rider News reserves the right to edit all letters for space and clarity.

Friday, November 12, 2004