



The Consumer Alert

by John L. Hill
Attorney General

AUSTIN—With the approach of the swimming and sunning season, many persons trying on last year's bathing suits are unhappy about their physical condition.

Health spas and companies selling weight reduction aids are quick to capitalize on the desire to get back into shape for summer. Advertisements are appearing in many publications for special devices or products or exercise programs that will help you "shed inches and pounds in time for your vacation."

But our Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division lawyers caution persons who suddenly decide to "do something" about their condition to be careful.

Always consult your physician before embarking on an exercise program or new diet. Both your physician and your common sense will likely tell you that you should increase your activity slowly and gradually. This is especially true if you are dieting along with an exercise program.

But our attorneys also caution consumers to be careful if they intend to sign up with a health spa for an exercise program, or if they plan to try some of the advertised diet aids.

The main thing to remember, say our attorneys, is that no exercise or diet is going to work without some effort on your part. Many persons hope to find some "secret formula" that will kill their appetites and allow them to lose weight without hunger pangs. Or they search for a health spa that promises to trim off inches and tighten muscles "with absolutely no effort by you."

Consumers who look for such miracles could fall for the false, misleading, or deceptive

sales practices used by some businesses. For example, our Consumer Protection attorneys recently obtained a permanent court injunction against a weight reduction firm. The six-week program the firm was recommending to consumers involved daily injections of human chorionic gonadotropin, a hormone derived from the urine of pregnant women.

Persons who signed up for the program also were put on a 500 calorie per day diet, a very strict diet that if followed would cause most persons to lose weight without injections of any kind. Under the court order, the firm must stop representing that the hormone injections can reduce weight or that they prevent hunger pangs or other discomfort while on the diet.

Consumers should also check carefully before signing up for "special summer rates" being offered at some health spas. Sometimes the low price is just bait to get you to the spa, where you will be urged to sign a higher-priced long-term contract. In some cases, the "special rate" is the same as the usual rate.

Keep these things in mind when considering a health spa contract: You should find out exactly what you will get, how much it will cost, and how long the program will last. Check facilities and equipment, and find out if they are available for use at all times. Talk with others who have signed contracts there. Be sure not to sign a contract with a firm that hasn't opened yet. If possible, enroll for a trial period to see if you like the program and personnel. And find out in advance if you can cancel if you move, become ill, or just change your mind.

Board votes to raise campus living fees

The TAMU Board of Directors has authorized increases for the room, board and laundry fees for the fall semester.

President Jack Williams told the Board that the increases were "necessary to meet inflation and the mandatory raises that we have to give the personnel in the dormitory operation." He explained that the major cost increases would be in utilities, since it was anticipated that the cost of heat would rise 85 percent and the cost of electricity would go up 76 percent. Hot water for heating was expected to be 37 percent higher, and the cost of chilled water for air-conditioning would increase by 65 percent. Totalled, the projected utility increase per dormitory student was over 50 percent.

Labor costs had also contributed to the necessary fee increases. The passage of a mandatory pay raise by the state legislature February 1 of this year caused a \$325,000 hike in the payroll of the Food Services Department alone. The laundry service also experienced increased costs, as the pay raises amounted to an additional \$30,000 for the fiscal year 1974-1975, and would increase next year's budget by at least \$50,000.

Howard Vestal, assistant vice-president for business affairs, said, "These increases will carry us through next semester, but we may have to raise fees again next year."

The approved increases are as follows:

| Dormitories (with present rates in parentheses) | |
|--|----------|
| Leggett, Hotard, Milner (\$117.00) | \$135.00 |
| Hart, Law, Puryear, Walton (\$137.00) | \$155.00 |
| Dorms 1-12, Crocker, Davis-Gary, Moore, Moses (\$220.00) | \$235.00 |
| Fowler, Keathley, Melms, Schumacher, Hughes (\$235.00) | \$250.00 |
| Krueger, Dunn, Aston, Mosher (\$350.00) | \$375.00 |

| Board (with present rates in parentheses) | |
|---|----------|
| five-day (\$358.00) | \$347.00 |
| seven-day (\$358.00) | \$388.00 |

| Laundry (with present rates in parentheses) | |
|---|---------|
| men (\$30) | \$35.00 |
| women (\$20) | \$25.00 |

| Married Student Apartments (with present rates in parentheses) | |
|--|----------|
| Southside (3 bedroom) — (\$100.00) | \$114.00 |
| Southside (furnished) — (\$70.00) | \$80.00 |
| Old College View (2 Bdrm. Fur.) — (\$63.00) | \$72.00 |
| Old College View (1 Bdrm. Unfur.) — (\$52.00) | \$60.00 |
| Hensel (\$85.00) | \$97.00 |
| College View (Brick) — (125.00) | \$143.00 |
| College Avenue (1 Bdrm. Fur.) — (\$125.00) | \$143.00 |
| College Avenue (2 Bdrm. Fur.) — (\$135.00) | \$154.00 |

Hassle free program starting in fall

If you live off-campus (as do over two-thirds of the students at TAMU), it will no longer be necessary for you to scramble and scrape to get the information that seems to be readily available to the students on-campus. The "Hassle Free" program has been designed with exactly you in mind.

Under the direction of the Office of Student Affairs, the "Hassle Free" Program will be composed of a corps of trained volunteers located throughout the major apartment complexes who will be available to assist students and answer questions about the university.

The Student Affairs personnel will assemble weekly packages of information for these student volunteers to post in the apartments. These "reps" will be available for information about intramurals, TAMU traditions, University publications, campus facilities, and campus activities. They will also have maps of the campus and community and lists of often called telephone numbers.

Although the program is not scheduled to begin until the fall semester, volunteers have already been found for the following apartments: Briarwood, Scandia, Tanglewood, Country Place, Barcelona, Casa del Sol, Plantation Oaks, Willow Oaks, Southwest Village, Casa Blanca, French Quarter, Old Col-

lege Main, and Southgate. It is also being discussed to have Area Reps for residential areas in the community with high student populations, but as of yet no plans have been formalized.

Karen Switzer, Assistant Director of Student Affairs, said, "Very often parents are really uptight when they find out that their son or

daughter will be living off-campus. We hope that, when they find out that there will be someone living in the area to whom the student can turn, they will feel much better."

Switzer stated, however, that the main purpose of the program is to improve the communication problem that exists for the off-campus student.

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Councils talk services, rate questions postponed

The city councils of Bryan and College Station met in joint session Wed., May 28 to discuss issues of importance to both cities.

Among matters that were discussed were, civil defense, health services and the role of the two cities and the county in funding them. Proposed utility and telephone rate increases were not discussed.

College Station Mayor O. M. Holt noted that the utility and telephone rate issues would not be brought up at the meeting due to the semi-social nature of the meeting and the lack of pertinent records on the two matters. It was agreed however that both of these matters should be referred to special committees for further consideration.

On the issue of civil defense and

health services, Bryan Mayor Lloyd Joyce said that Bryan had been bearing most of the burden of funding in the past.

"It's time that the county did more in the way of providing these services to Bryan and College Station," Joyce said. "The reason that county taxes are so low is that they don't provide enough services to the two cities. However, most of the services are used in Bryan and College Station."

In further discussion of the funding issue, both councils agreed that alternative methods of funding should be investigated. One alternative presented was to base taxation for the services on a user basis rather than the current basis of population.

The Battalion

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