

### Leif finally has his day

United Press International  
WASHINGTON — Every school child knows that in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue to discover America.  
Actually, many historians contend the new world was discovered almost 500 years earlier by a Norseman named Leif Ericsson.  
Americans observe Columbus' feat on the second Monday in October. This year, thanks to President Carter and a 1964 congressional resolution, Americans can honor both explorers on the same day.  
Carter designated next Monday as Leif Ericsson Day in recognition of his discovery of North America and the Scandinavian characteristics of "imagination, courage and perseverance."  
Since that's the same day as Columbus day it's a federal holiday.  
"Stories of brave men battling fearful odds fire our imaginations," Carter said. "We honor such men long after the memories of their adventures have been dimmed by time."

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## Short on words

### Local bookstores lacking some textbooks

By KAREN ROGERS  
Battalion Staff

It's only two days before your semester. The textbooks still haven't arrived at any of the five bookstores serving Texas A&M University students. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to try to pass the test without having read the material.

Shortage of some textbooks occurs every semester, says Howard DeHart, manager of the Texas A&M Book Store in the Memorial Student Center.

DeHart explained there are several factors that influence the bookstore's decision on how many books to buy.

To determine how many books to buy for this fall, for example, the bookstore asks academic departments for an estimate of the number of students to be enrolled in a certain class.

Bookstore employees then compare this estimate with the registrar's twelfth day roll from the previous fall semester.

Next they check to see how many books they ordered for the class during that period and compare that to how many books they actually sold.

DeHart says several factors are taken into consideration: the number of books that weren't sold,

the age of the book, possible edition changes and that four other stores, University, Texas Aggie, Loupot's and the Book Mart, are ordering these same books.

"We order what we think we can sell at this store," DeHart says. "If for some reason we run out of books, we call the department to find out what happened. We reorder books immediately, but there can be a 10-day to 6-week wait before they arrive."

DeHart says that each of the 77 departments on campus will have a shortage of at least one textbook.

The shortage can be caused by the publisher, the store manager said. He estimates the bookstore deals with about 300 companies.

Two of the more common problems with these companies are that they may drop the book because they are not making enough money on it or that they miscalculate the numbers they need to print and end up with a shortage themselves.

At the same time the bookstores in College Station-Bryan are ordering textbooks, DeHart says, all other bookstores in the country are ordering, too.

The bookstore's profit margin also influences the number of books the store decides to buy.

"It costs 23 percent to run a bookstore," DeHart says. "The publishers give a 20 percent markup on

the books, so we're already talking about a 3 percent loss."

The bookstores must pay a 5-6 percent freight charge on the books when they are shipped. They must also pay this charge if they choose to return the books that are not sold.

"There's no way you can make money on a new book," he says. "If it weren't for used books, we'd be in the red every time."

A 33 percent markup over cost on used books enables the store to make more money because they buy the books for less than they cost new, DeHart says.

As for students who are stuck with old books, a wholesale company will buy some of them back for a nominal price.

The bookstore loses about \$60,000 a year in net profits on books that can't be returned.

"We can't afford to be overstocked. We are merchants and we know what good business practices are," he says.

Mistakes in ordering on the part of the bookstore can also cause delays in the arrival of books.

"We make mistakes," DeHart says. "We may not have double-checked the name of a publishing company and ordered the book from the wrong company."

Professors are asked to fill out requisition orders for the next semester about three weeks into the prior

semester. For example, orders for next spring's books are now being processed by the bookstore.

If professors do not turn in the orders within the two-week deadline, they could cause a delay in ordering, DeHart says.

He added that only about 50 percent meet the deadline.

Some professors wait until a few weeks or days before classes begin to turn them in, he said.

These estimates by the professors are needed so the bookstore can know which and how many books it can buy back from students, he said.

The bookstore has been collecting data for the last three years on the number of books sold, ordered, returned and within the next couple of years will begin using computers "to pinpoint much closer the number of books we will need to order so we don't run out or have any left," DeHart says.

Martha Camp, manager of University Book Store, says her store has "thousands of books sitting on the shelves because we ordered well over."

She explains her store also determines the number of books to order based on past records and the number the campus bookstore will order.

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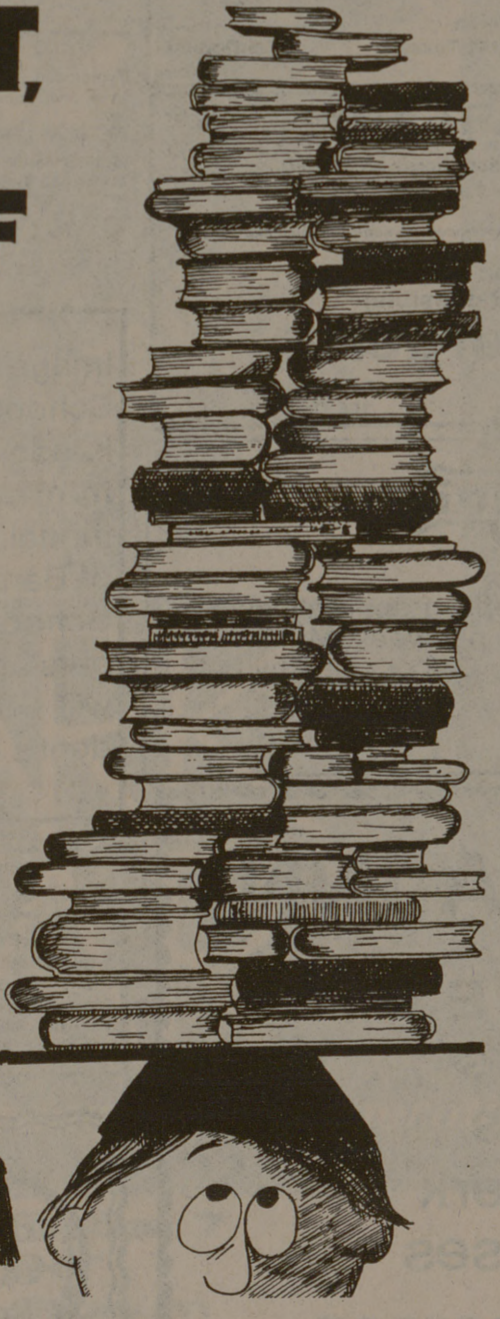
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