

# Stealing signs Consequences of 'pranks' no fun

By DIANE BLAKE  
Battalion Staff

Vicki White, 18-year-old environmental design major, doesn't look like your average jailbird. Yet at 2 a.m. March 23, College Station police came to her apartment, arrested her, and threw her in the clink at \$200 bond.

Her crime? Theft of government property. White was arrested for having a stop sign in her living room.

"I was crying the whole time, especially when they told me to take off all my jewelry and barettes before they put me in jail," White said. The freshman from North Carolina said she was in the jail cell only about 15-20 minutes, until her friends could bring the money for bail.

"I was shocked that they could do that (jail someone for taking a stop sign)," she said. "We thought it was a prank, but now I realize it's dangerous if a stop sign is missing from an intersection."

"It really was a stupid thing to do." She said the police knew of the sign probably because it could be seen from the street. "We moved it for a party we had and didn't think about moving it back."

White was charged with a Class C misdemeanor, or theft of items valued at less than \$5. The maximum fine is \$200. She was lucky. According to George Boriskie, traffic engineer for the highway department, stop signs cost \$16, not including the labor required to put them up.

A Class B misdemeanor, for thefts of \$5 to \$20, carries a maximum \$500 fine and six months in jail.

"The officer really gave her a break charging her with a Class C misdemeanor," said Kenneth M. Robison, College Station municipal judge. "That means she gets a fine, not jail."

Robison said in the two years he's been on the bench, sign thefts have increased. "The first year I had only one or two, but I've had half a dozen or more in the last six months."

The judge said many people don't understand it's a crime to take a traffic sign.

"Stealing signs is not a prank," he said. "To take anything without permission is not good bull. It is theft."

"People don't realize the dangers involved in taking a stop sign. Just draw a mental picture of the blood and gore on the highway as a result of the theft."

Robison said he hears all kinds of

excuses for taking signs, from "we were out having a good time" to "the devil made me do it."

He said another serious consequence of the theft is a criminal record. "A conviction of moral turpitude can come back to haunt someone at a later date," he said. Moral turpitude is an act contrary to the accepted rule of right and duty between fellow men.

"How many employees would want to hire someone who's been convicted of theft?" he said.

The conviction could also be damaging if a person was charged with another crime later, the judge

said. If the accused already has a conviction, the district attorney could try for a higher charge the next time.

Robison said as a general rule he always gives the maximum fine to persons convicted of stealing signs. He doesn't get any second offenders, probably because the police refer them to the county courts with higher charges, he said. Municipal courts handle only Class C misdemeanors.

But when asked if she'd ever do it again, White said never.

"I swear I'll never take another sign."

## Women important to unions — film

By LEIGH McLEROY  
Battalion Reporter

Women have played a vital, and until recently, silent part in the history of Texas labor unions, but Melissa Hield is changing that with a film called "Talkin' Union."

The hour-long film was shown last night at Rudder Tower before an audience of about fifty people, in the last stop of a year-long tour of the state.

"Talkin' Union" chronicles the involvement of Texas women in labor unions from the 1930's to the 1950's. The film is an oral history taken from interviews with four women who were instrumental in that movement's development.

Hield, who is an assistant instructor in American Studies at the University of Texas, said the film is an attempt to show history from a different perspective. "Woman's story is different from history, and it needs to be told, especially here in Texas."

The film is the culmination of three years of work by Hield and several others, and was funded by grants from the National Endowment of Humanities and the Texas Commission on Humanities.

The first history of working women in Texas, "Talkin' Union"

explores two major labor movements: the 1935 garment workers strike in Dallas, and the 1938 pecan shellers strike in San Antonio.

Organizers of both of these strikes were interviewed. Hield said the interviewing process was "very difficult. It took us months and months to locate these people. We contacted 30 of them and some refused to discuss their involvement. We actually interviewed eight of them, and used four in the film."

The women in the film told of the bad working conditions they suffered, low pay and long hours. Some were jailed for their involvement in the strikes, and one woman was blacklisted, but each agreed that it had all been worth it.

"We learned a lot," one woman said. "We learned there's power in numbers. As an individual we can't help, but together we can change."

"Talkin' Union" may be seen again, even though Tuesday night was the last planned showing of the film. Hield said she and the producers hope to find a distributor for it soon and market it for educational use.

## Students to show own TV programs

By PEGGY McCULLEN  
Battalion Reporter

Today and tomorrow you may see your roommate or best friend live on television. KAMU has again opened studio B for Broadcast Day, an opportunity for its broadcast students to air their own television programs.

Broadcast Day is a collection of 15-minute programs ranging from slide shows to concerts. Each student was responsible for selecting and casting "talent" for his show, or collecting enough material on one subject (photographs, slides, or art work) to fill the allotted time.

Because the programs are live, the student directors had to keep a few things in mind when choosing talent.

"I had to look for somebody that I knew would show up," said Kurt Abraham. Abraham will direct an interview with a trainer for the varsity baseball team.

"I had to make sure that whoever I selected for my program would not

freeze up on camera, because they were not used to working with broadcast media," said Becky Matthews who will direct a program on science fiction films. Matthews will combine an interview with a flip-card presentation.

Chip Harper is directing a musical program featuring Lyle Lovett, a guitar player and singer who has been playing professionally for about three years.

"I chose Lyle because I've known him for a while, and I could depend on him. Besides — he's good!"

Mel Chastain, director of KAMU, said this is the 15th year students have been directing live shows as part of their course work.

"We used to air these shows on a closed-circuit television system before we even had a broadcasting station," said Chastain.

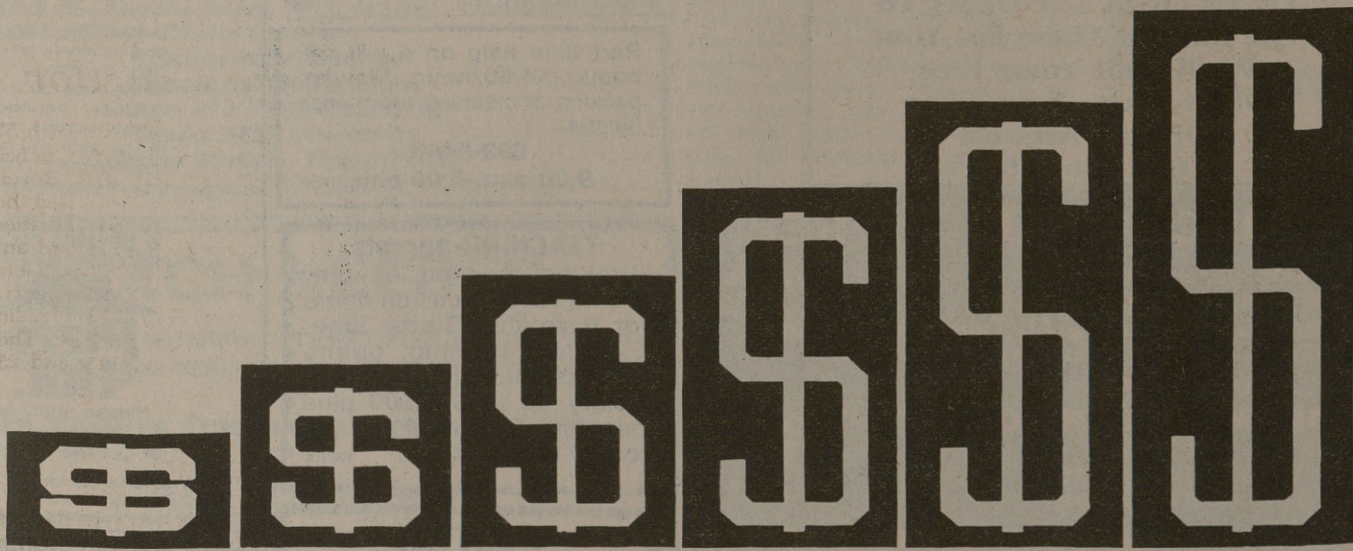
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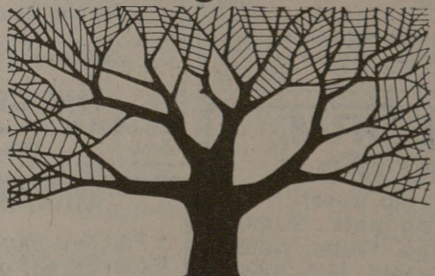


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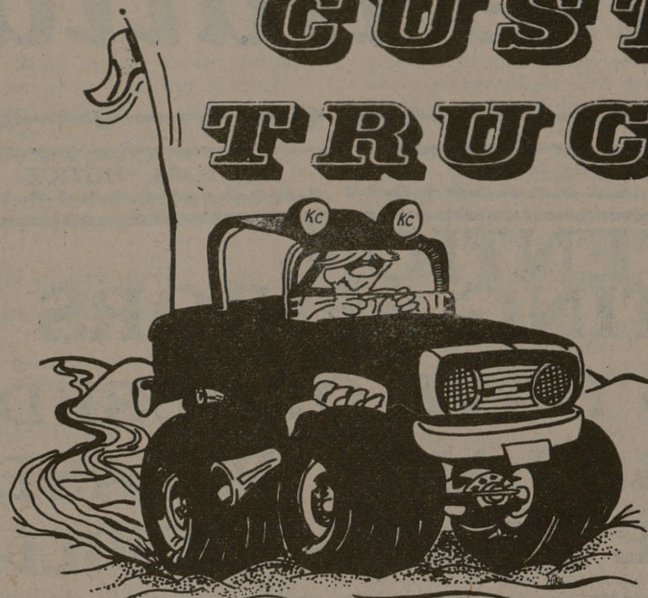
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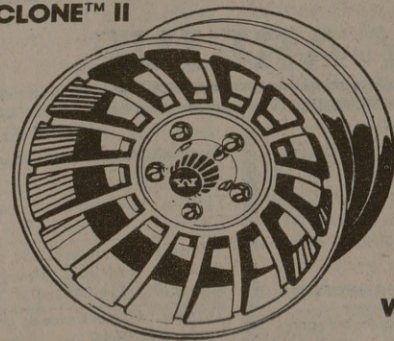
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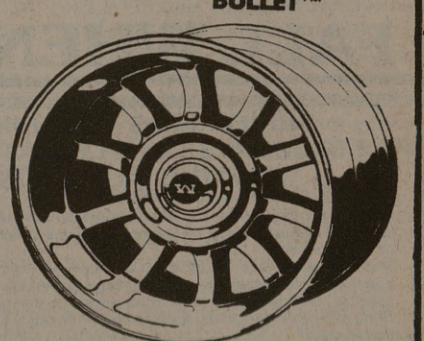
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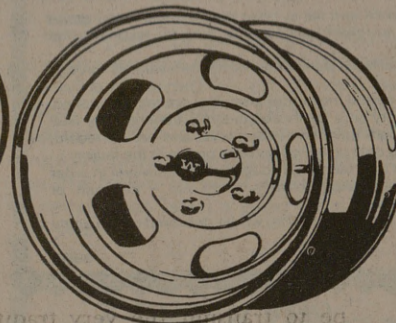
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