

# Bills come same time—no matter what

by CATHY SAATHOFF  
Battalion Reporter

It's the fifteenth of the month; your bank account is empty. Your electric bill is due in ten days, and your paycheck doesn't arrive until the first.

And there's nothing you can do to avoid paying a late charge, except plan ahead for next month.

"I know of no utility company anywhere that will change its billing schedule for an individual," Dennis Lilley, office manager for Bryan Utilities, said.

He said Bryan is divided into sections, and each section's meters are read at the same time each month, so it is important for the customer to realize the bill will come at the same time each month and plan ahead for it.

Lilley said everyone gets bills for electricity, phone service and rent staggered throughout the month, and careful planning should prevent having to pay late charges.

A computer handles the billing in Bryan, and College Station is testing a computerized system as well.

Diana Sheddan, senior accounts clerk for College Station utilities, said, "The billing is the same every month for everybody, and if we

change it, it would cause problems here in the office."

Sheddan said College Station is divided into four sections, and like Bryan, each is billed at the same time each month, although sometimes the cycle is thrown off when bad weather keeps meter readers from their job.

General Telephone Electric bills its customers according to telephone exchange number. Bills are mailed every six days, on odd-numbered days.

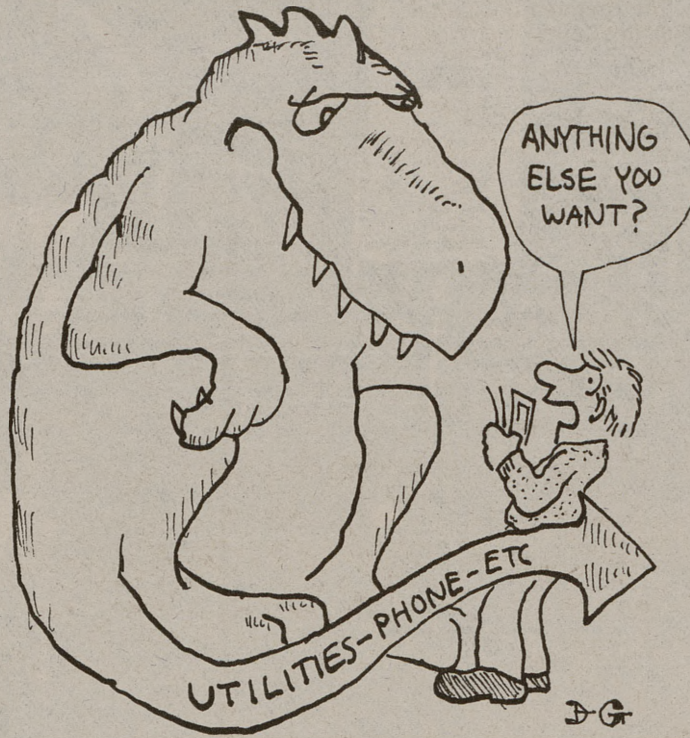
GTE gives its customers 15 days to pay up, then sends a late notice. If the bill is still unpaid, the service will be temporarily disconnected until payment is made. A \$20 fee is charged for reconnection.

"We do not charge a late fee," Gaye Manning, GTE Service office supervisor, said.

Bryan city ordinance allows five days for payment, but Lilley said in practice the time allowed is usually 10 days. After that time, a five percent penalty is charged, never to exceed \$60.

For example, Lilley said, the charge for a \$50 bill would be \$2.50.

Sheddan said College Station charges a 10 percent penalty on late bills, with a \$3 minimum. A week after the due date a delinquent notice is sent, with a discon-



nection date on it. The customer is given one more chance the day after D-Day, when the door of the residence is tagged. If the bill isn't paid, the customer is literally left in the cold.

Lilley said customer-ordered disconnections pile up in the office around May, and customers should contact the utility company well in advance of moving out to avoid long telephone waits.

College Station requires customers to come in and sign a work order for disconnection.

However, deposits made before service is started are not returned at the time of disconnection, because of the computerized billing system.

Bryan's deposit is computed using one-eighth of the annual consumption for each individual residence, or about 1.5 month's bill.

"We do not have a standard deposit," Lilley said. They average \$50 to \$80, and never exceeds \$120, he said.

Lilley said it isn't unfair to determine a deposit based on the previous resident's consumption. He said the new customer rarely uses a lot less energy than the previous one, and in most cases consumption is fairly close.

College Station charges its customers a standard deposit of \$60.

# May-December couples raise eyebrows

United Press International  
HOLLYWOOD — All the world loves a lover, except, apparently, when the lover is a woman substantially older than the man in her life.

Society in most civilized countries accepts with amused tolerance the coupling of a withered old goat and a fresh young girl. Whether romantic fling or marriage, the older man-younger woman mating is more or less the norm.

Nor is notice taken when a

woman is, say, a half-dozen years older than her mate. But let the age difference between a woman and her lover reach 15 or 20 years and note is taken, attention paid.

Society may not disapprove of these liaisons, but such pairings remain sufficiently scarce to raise eyebrows, more so here than in Europe or Asia.

American advertising, movies and TV, in their own ways, have created built-in obsolescence in

females just as in automobiles and refrigerators. It's as if the American male is expected to get a new model every few years.

Hollywood is a prime proponent of young women involved with mature males. The idealized female is young in her 20s, most often blond, slender, long-legged, full-bosomed and gorgeous.

She is also dispensable.

Raquel Welch for five years, to be replaced by Farrah Fawcett who gives way to Bo Derek who is made to understand her reign will be brief.

On the other hand, male symbols of sexual desirability are in their 40s and 50s — Clint Eastwood, Paul

Newman, Robert Redford and Burt Reynolds.

Their leading ladies inevitably are many years their junior.

It is, therefore, grist for the gossip mills when a prominent actress takes a younger lover as did Louise Fletcher, mid-40s, with Morgan Mason, early 20s, a couple of years ago. They have since gone separate ways.

Less publicized than the Fletcher-Mason live-in arrangement is the eight-year love affair between Rachel Roberts, 52, and Beverly Hills fashion consultant Darren Ramirez, who is in his 30s.

Roberts, who divorced actor Rex Harrison nine years ago, has been on both ends of the generation gap

in intimate relationships. Harrison was almost 20 years her senior. Ramirez is some 15 years her junior.

"I felt the disparity more in my marriage to Rex," she said during a stop in Hollywood. "There were 20 of the dangerous years between us.

"I was 31 and he was 51 when we married. I was no longer a girl, but I say 'dangerous' because a vital part of life exists for a woman between 30 and 50. I tended to lean on Rex a little too much.

"The 15-year difference in my relationship now makes me glad. It gives me something to work for. With luck, we grow older and wiser. I'm much more stable now. I can't put it into words, really.

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## Some still bashful

# More men going curly

United Press International  
WHEELING, W. Va. — Hairstylist Kathie Hoffman says five years ago she wouldn't have dreamed of giving a permanent to a man.

Now she says it's not only a routine part of her business, but one she enjoys.

"The men are more easy to please generally — except for the younger ones," said Hoffman, who works in a Triadelphia-area salon.

Perhaps the male customers are easier to work with in Hoffman's view, but not to Wayne King, who works at a St. Clairesville, Ohio, salon.

"Men are harder to please," said King. "They're more finicky."

One thing most hairstylists in the area do agree on is that men are now entering salons — once a woman's domain — in increasingly large numbers.

And some are a bit bashful.

The trend began five or six years ago, said Max Matteson, national styles director for the St. Louis-based National Hairdressers and

Cosmetologists Association, but it's just now becoming strong in smaller communities such as Wheeling and Grand Rapids, Mich., where Matteson is co-owner of several salons.

"A few years ago, men didn't even want to stick their noses in the door to pick up their wives or girl friends," Matteson said.

Now he said the women are asking salon operators if they'll accept male customers. Hair-cutting is the number one service for males, he said, with permanents second and manicuring third.

Matteson said men getting permanents account for about 15-20 percent of his business and estimated "that's pretty close to a national average."

He thinks men are turning to salons because "style trends have changed and the barbering industry hasn't kept up with clients' requests."

He said men are getting permanents mostly to control straight hair and to give body to thinning hair. Whatever the reasons, King,

whose Ohio salon is near a saloon, says some of his male customers need a few stiff drinks before they muster the courage to come in for a permanent.

"At first, they don't want anybody to see them in curlers," said Elaine Smith, who owns a salon in Wheeling.

"After the first perm they're at home. One man insists on coming in here early before anyone else is here."

Stylist Patty Raab said, "Some men want a perm, but they're too chicken to come and get one."

"Men want to be pretty the same as women," said Bill Wayne, a stylist at St. Clairesville.

Rick Heckathorn, a high school student, said his friends teased him after his first perm, but "they were just jealous," and he didn't let them bother him.

Hairstylists say the curly look is definitely in among men and women.