

Local

# Overdue book notices sent because of computer mistake

By JED T. YOUNG  
Campus Reporter

So you got an overdue book notice from the library and you don't have a book that's overdue? Well, you are one of the many Texas A&M University students and faculty members who are victims of computer complications.

During the first few weeks of January, the computer used by the circulation division of the Sterling C. Evans Library was out of service. This shutdown was due to a new data base being installed at the Data Processing Center for the circulation division's use.

Emma Perry, head of the circulation division, said the installation was supposed to be completed before the end of the Christmas break, but it was not finished until after the first week of the spring semester.

During this time, since books checked out and returned were recorded by hand, the computer had no record of these exchanges. This caused complications, Perry said.

The computer listed some returned books as overdue since there was no record, she said. Consequently, many students and faculty members received unmerited overdue notices.

Perry said the circulation staff, which is mainly in charge of check-out and return of materials, depends on the computer system to keep track of all book exchanges.

When someone checks out a book, the staff member uses the book data card to enable the computer to keep track of the book.

When the book is returned, the data card is presented in another read station where the computer records the return.

Each day the computer prints out a list of unreturned books, Perry said. Seven days after the due date, if the book has not been returned, the borrower is sent an overdue notice.

In seven more days, if the book still hasn't been returned, it is listed on what Perry called the "extremely overdue list," which includes the ID number of the borrower.

If his ID number is on this list, a borrower's library privileges are suspended and he can not check out any more until the one that is overdue is returned.

If someone had returned a book since the computer has been working, Perry said it would probably be recorded, since it only takes a day at the most to process a book get it back on the shelf.

Perry said she did not know which students or how many of them received unwarranted notices, but since their names may be included on the extremely overdue list, they should get in touch with the circulation division as soon as possible.

Perry said the library will do all it can to help remedy the situation.

The only situation in which someone will be fined is if the overdue book is on hold, which means someone else wants to check it out.

Perry suggests that in the future, the borrower should get a receipt, dated and initialed, from the circulation desk when he returns his books, to avoid any complications in case of other computer problems.

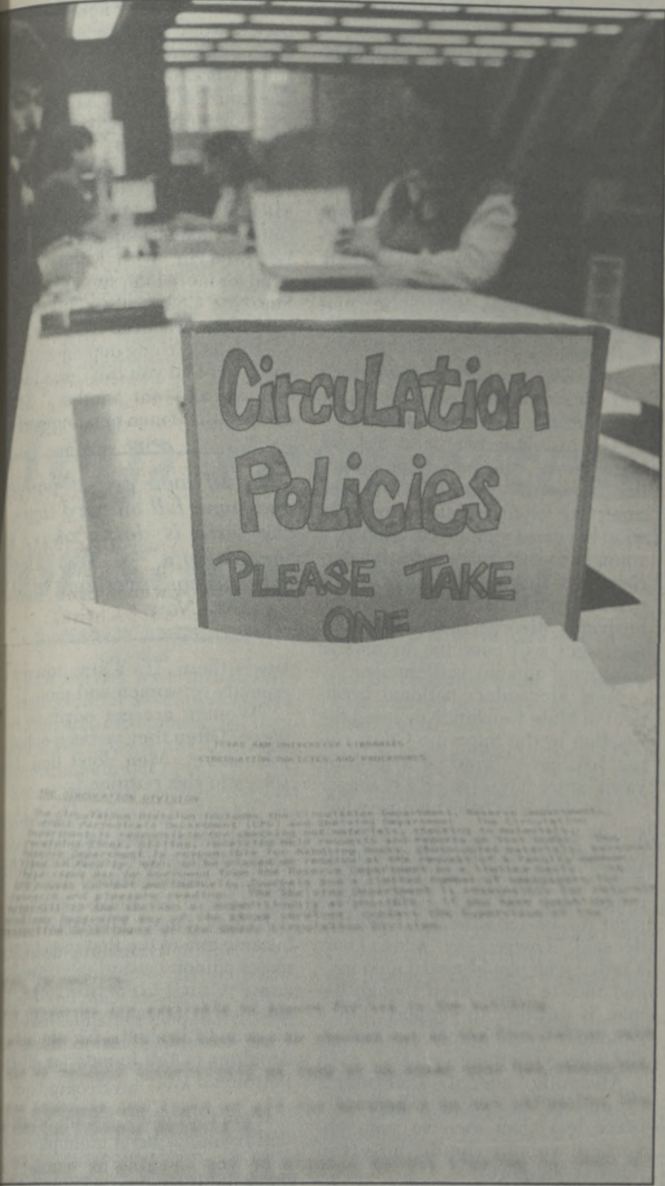


Photo by Brian Blalock.

Copies of the Texas A&M University Libraries Circulation Policies and Procedures are available at the circulation desk of the library.

## Library master plan urged

By JERRY MAZE  
Campus Reporter

The library should form a master plan to govern additions to the library, Dr. J.M. Prescott told the Library Council meeting Wednesday.

"I recommend laying a five-year guideline for acquisitions and development of the library collection, to be updated each year," said Prescott, vice president for academic affairs at Texas A&M.

The council is currently drawing up a master plan.

Visiting the meeting to make recommendations on acquisitions, Prescott encouraged the library to purchase material that will improve the quality, not just the quantity of the existing collection.

The acquisition policy will apply to

the collection in general. No specific areas of interest were named.

"I do not think it makes a great deal of sense to make collections in academic disciplines where we do not have offerings," Prescott said.

Instead of increasing the number of subject areas covered in the library, Prescott suggested strengthening the use of inter-library loans, or sharing of material between libraries.

The council continued discussing ways to protect the collection from theft.

Dr. Irene Hoadley, director of libraries, said at least 10,000 books are declared lost from the library each year.

Hoadley said the books are valued at around \$16 each, for a \$160,000

minimum total each year.

The council discussed ways to impress upon students the seriousness of taking articles from the library.

Dr. Ron Darby, council chairman, said, "Students do not seem to understand that taking a book from the library comes under the same laws as lifting a drafting set from the exchange store."

One method proposed by the council to deter theft was to seal off the library after closing so no one can get in or out, because people have been left in the library after hours.

Other methods are to persistently prosecute anyone caught, and increase publicity of those prosecuted.

However, the council did not agree on a new security policy for the library.

## Almanac

United Press International  
Today is Thursday, March 6, the 66th day of 1980 with 300 to follow.  
The moon is moving toward its last quarter.  
The morning stars are Saturn and Mercury.  
The evening stars are Venus, Mars and Jupiter.  
Those born on this date are under the sign of Pisces.  
British poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, wife of poet Robert Browning, was born March 6, 1806.  
On this date in history:  
In 1836, Mexican forces captured The Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, killing the last of 187 Americans who had held out for 13 days.  
In 1857, the United States Supreme Court handed down its landmark ruling that Negro slave Dred Scott could not sue for his freedom in a federal court.

## Library hours during break

Library hours for spring break will be:  
Friday: 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday: 1-5 p.m.  
Monday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Tuesday-Saturday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Sunday: resume regular schedule.

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