

# Thefts decline at A&M

by Mallous Kazemzadeh  
Battalion Reporter

The number of reported thefts at Texas A&M this semester have decreased, compared to figures from last year.

This decrease especially can be noticed in the Memorial Student Center bookstore. Bookstore manager Howard L. DeHart attributes a decline in stolen books to the newly installed security system.

"At one time, before the new security system, losses were up to \$1,000 a month," DeHart said. "It was a serious problem because of the multitude of books that were stolen."

Since the installment of the new system, however, the bookstore pilferage rate has been reduced by 75 percent or more, he said.

The security system consists of plain clothes security people who watch for shoplifters, a training program for employees to educate them in detecting possible shoplifters and an alarm which is activated when a book is taken from the store without being desensitized.

DeHart said a metallic strip is imbedded in all the books and is desensitized when the book is purchased. If the strip is not desensitized, an alarm is activated when the book is taken out of the store.

Although most thefts occur in the lower level bookstore in the MSC, the main floor facility is second in petty theft rate, he said.

Since most thefts on the main floor occur around the precision instruments and pen counters, preventive measures were taken to reduce this problem, DeHart said.

"Undercover security people were added to that area along with cameras around the store," he said. "We also put in elevated watch stations so our people can see store activity."

Another addition to security procedures includes a check-in window where students can check in their belongings. Packages and backpacks are no longer permitted into the bookstore.

"Rather than putting belongings on the floor or in shelves, students can check their belongings in at the window in a matter of minutes," he said.

Sometimes books are stolen from students and sold back to the bookstore for cash. Now when books are brought back for sale, student I.D. numbers



staff photo by Irene Mees

Kassem Al-Zubeidi, a senior civil engineering major from Palestine, checks his books and calculator to

Deborah Jessup, a sophomore civil engineering major, at the package security booth at the MSC Bookstore.

are recorded so the students can be traced if necessary.

"Not only does the store have problems of people taking things from us, but the students have the problem of people taking from them — and that hurts," DeHart said.

He added that with all of the new security measures, the number of thefts have gone down considerably.

But the main objective is not to catch thieves, rather to try to curtail and prevent shoplifting, he said.

If a student is caught shoplifting, not only will he be embarrassed, but he also will either face criminal charges or suspension from school, DeHart said.

"We are doing a better job of implementing security systems in order to help students — shoplifters as well as non-shoplifters," he said.

Lloyd Smith, assistant director of food services said the number of stolen backpacks from Sbis Dining Hall also has decreased.

Although there is no apparent reason for this decline, only a few instances of stolen books and backpacks have been reported this semester, he said.

A few cases could have been avoided if students had taken precautions with their belongings, Smith said. In one instance, a student left his book unattended, and it was stolen. The student then went to the bookstore to purchase another book and bought his same book back within an hour.

In order to protect students, free lockers have been installed in Sbis, but not even 10 percent of the lockers are used, he said.

"Since books are of value, they're the first thing to be taken, yet students still pile up their belongings on the floor or on tables," Smith added.

Detective John Phillips of the

campus police also emphasized that students should be more careful with their things. He said although the number of stolen wallets reported from DeWare Field House has decreased, the thefts still could have been avoided.

Students playing racquetball often leave their wallets on window ledges while playing inside the room, he said. They return to find that their wallets have been stolen.

Not only have thefts from DeWare and the bookstore decreased, but overall theft of bicycles, typewriters and similar items also has decreased.

# Prefab home zoning called discriminatory

by Michelle Powe  
Battalion Reporter

Many Texans who cannot afford to buy a home constructed at the homesite are denied the option of buying a manufactured home due to discriminatory zoning ordinances, says the area president of the Texas Manufactured Housing Association.

Jo Ann Nunn, president of the Brazos Valley Chapter of the TMHA, said many cities have exclusionary zoning regulations which prohibit people from moving manufactured homes inside the city's jurisdiction.

Most cities, she said, still treat modern manufactured homes as if they are temporary shelters. Examples are trailer homes or motor homes because at one time the only manufactured homes available were trailer homes.

But buying a manufactured home and moving it to a residential area can be less expensive than buying a home built at the site, Nunn said.

Currently, manufactured homes are being constructed

that look as if they were built on site, but the discrimination by the cities still occurs, she said.

"It is discrimination against poor people," Nunn said. "Upper class people can afford to buy expensive, new houses."

College Station is zoned to prohibit any home that is not "stick-built" at the site, she said, and Bryan is considering changing zoning regulations so they will be the same as College Station regulations.

Nunn said Bryan has been unsuccessful in changing its zoning regulations because zoning

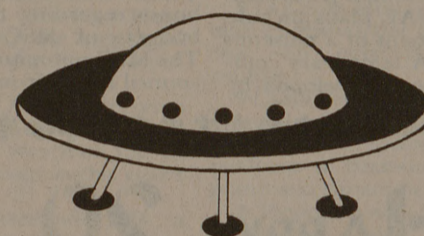
is such an emotional issue.

If the proposed zoning regulations pass, she said, and the city is able to tell people where they can live, "it will turn brother against brother."

The cities already have more than enough power, she said, and the regulations will give them more.

Attempts to prevent these zoning regulations may be perceived as attempts to restrict city power, but the need for affordable housing must be dealt with, Nunn said.

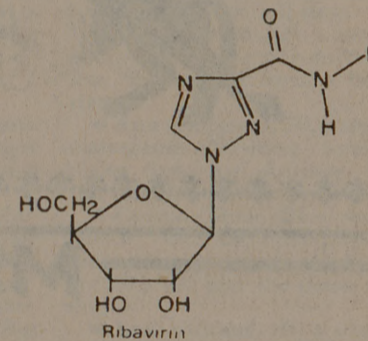
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