

## Fiscal office changes check policy

By Dolores Hajovsky

The days of cashing checks for more than \$25 are numbered. Beginning August 17, fiscal department cashiers will no longer cash personal or payroll checks.

The check cashing service will be discontinued because there is not enough space to cash checks and disburse financial aid, said Robert Smith, assistant vice president for fiscal affairs and controller.

The first responsibility of the fiscal department is to meet the needs of the students receiving financial aid and making fee payments, Smith said.

The fiscal department disburses millions in aid, loans, scholarships and fee payments a year, Smith said. There isn't enough room to help students when people are cashing personal and payroll checks, Smith said.

The Coke Building was constructed in 1952 when Texas A&M had only 6,000 students. Now enrollment is six times that number and the fiscal department can't absorb the increase, Smith said.

"Nobody likes to discuss their financial needs in public," Smith said. "When students are elbow to elbow with all the other people cashing checks there isn't any privacy."

The financial offices, now in the basement of the building, will be moved upstairs with the cashiers, Smith said. This change will enable the students to receive their financial aid with less confusion since all the offices will be together, he said.

Two on-campus options remain for students when they need money. The desk at the Memorial Student Center will continue to cash personal checks up to \$25, and there are two automatic teller machines outside the MSC. The machines operate 24 hours a day allowing withdrawals up to \$300 at a time, for those with MPact or Pulse cards.

"Currently 50 percent of the students have automatic teller cards," Smith said. "They process about 20,000 transactions a month at the machines. The check cashing trend will soon be gone and someday there will only be the automatic teller machines."

Smith said the machines are for all students with cards, not just those with accounts at local banks. He is hoping to soon get more machines placed at other main points on the campus, such as the Commons and Northgate.



Photo by Ruth Wedergren  
Reginald Flowers counts a batch of Economic textbooks at the MSC Bookstore before they are added to the stacks.

## Yellow indicates fresh fruit

United Press International

COLUMBUS, Ohio — If failure in the squeeze-thump-sniff school of picking fresh produce has sent you scurrying for refuge to the canned fruit section of your supermarket, home economist Tere Linehan has a few tips.

Linehan is the spokeswoman for the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association.

In helping consumers with the more nutritious fresh produce option, Linehan stands by one literally golden rule — a tinge of creamy yellow as a hallmark of ripeness in almost all fresh fruit.

"An amber or creamy yellow color is a sign of sugar, so peaches and apricots should all have a yellowish or creamy background, while ripe nectarines have a yellow-orange color," Linehan said.

Everyone knows a good ripe banana is yellow, but did you realize amber colored grapes are generally sweeter than the more eye-appealing bright green variety? And do you know to look for a creamy or yellowish-white rind on honeydew, and a raised, ivory-toned "netting" on cantaloupe?

Forget about thumping melons — it'll get you nothing but dirty looks from produce personnel. Watermelon should be firm and smooth with a creamy or yellowish underside. Ideally, pick a cut watermelon so you can see the tell-tale white seeds and fibers of a less-than-fully-ripe fruit.

The rule even applies for exotic fruits such as mangos and papayas. Ripe mangos are green with yellowish-to-red areas; ripe papayas are at least half green.

## Book store prices equal

By LINDA SANTINOCETO  
Reporter

The student book stores in College Station have their own policies and advertising techniques, but when it comes down to it their textbook prices are about the same.

Loupot's, Rother's, Texas Aggie, Texas A&M University (in the Memorial Student Center) and University book stores set their prices according to the publisher's list catalog, so their prices are competitive.

Sheri Parchure of Loupot's in Northgate said some stores occasionally have lower prices because they don't check the current catalog, but that's unusual. Students select their own books from open stacks in the Texas Aggie and Texas A&M book stores, but in others clerks fill the order by checking the courses on customers' schedules.

Rosalyn Mauk, assistant textbook manager at the Texas A&M Book Store, said because the University requires the store to stock every book professors need, there's no way clerks could distribute the books.

It would take too much time, she said. The books are arranged in alphabetical order along rows. In addition, a folder with the class listings and books required for each class is placed on top of each row.

"The rows are clearly marked and there are employees to help students find their books," Mauk said.

At Loupot's, Rother's and University book stores students give their schedules to employees, who find their books.

Dennis Rother, owner of Rother's Book Store, said it is easier for the employees to get the books because they are familiar with the classes and books.

"The staff selects the best used books and won't force students to buy optional books," he said.

All the book stores allow students to return books for a full cash refund if they have their receipts. Loupot's, Texas A&M and Rother's book stores allow returns the first two weeks of school, but Texas Aggie and University book stores accept returns only during the first week of classes. If the students don't have their receipt, then 50 percent of the list price of the book is refunded.

All the book stores agree that students prefer used books over new. The average savings is about \$20.

"If students buy 10 used books and save \$2 on each, that is a total savings of \$20," said University Book Store owner Martha Camp.

The book stores buy used books from wholesalers, but there are never enough to go around, she said.

All of the stores, except the Texas A&M Book Store, will be open the Sunday before classes begin. In addition, the book stores will be open until 10 p.m. Aug. 27 and 28.

"We wouldn't close until the students are gone; it doesn't matter what time it is," Parchure said. The busiest time for the book stores is the first Monday and Tuesday afternoon of classes, she said.

When it comes to buying books back at the end of the semester, the book store has its own policy. If the book is being used again and is in fairly good condition, and if it isn't overstocked, students get 20 percent in cash of the list price of the book stores.

Loupot's and Rother's offer a cash price plus an additional 20 percent in trade. At Texas Aggie Book Store, students draw from a bonus an additional bonus of 5 percent, 20 percent in cash.

The University Book Store is the only store to buy back old editions of books.

"We'll buy the discontinued books for less than \$1, if students sell them with their good books," said Camp. This is strictly for advertising reasons, to get students to use University Book Store, she said.

Some book stores have sales the first week of classes to lure students into the store. Loupot's, Rother's, Texas Aggie and University book stores offer sales on such items as calculators, t-shirts and back packs.

A branch store of Rother's opening Aug. 15 in Woodberry Commerce Center on Harvey Road.

## Budget seminars help students control cash

By JAN WUTHRICH  
Reporter

When Ben Franklin said a penny saved is a penny earned, he must have had college students in mind.

Budget seminars, designed to help students save money, will be offered this fall by the Office of Student Financial Aid, says administrator Lynda Gilbert.

The seminars will be Sept. 11-13 and Oct. 23-25, and each will be open to about 35 students.

The financial aid office will begin each seminar by explaining how it distributes grants and loans.

When students receive a large sum of money at the beginning of a semester, they often have difficulty in making it last, Gilbert says. The best way to keep track of cash flow is

with a checking account, she said. Therefore the next step covered in the seminar is how to open and maintain a checking account.

The financial advisers at the seminar will offer additional hints on saving money and catching bargains, she says.

Students at the seminar will make a budget chart of proposed monthly income and expenses, Gilbert says. If expenses exceed income, then adjustments will need to be made. Student may be spending too much money on one item, such as clothing or utilities.

Sticking to a budget is hard for students because it requires self-discipline, she says.

Students interested in the seminar can contact the Office of Student Financial Aid at 845-3981.

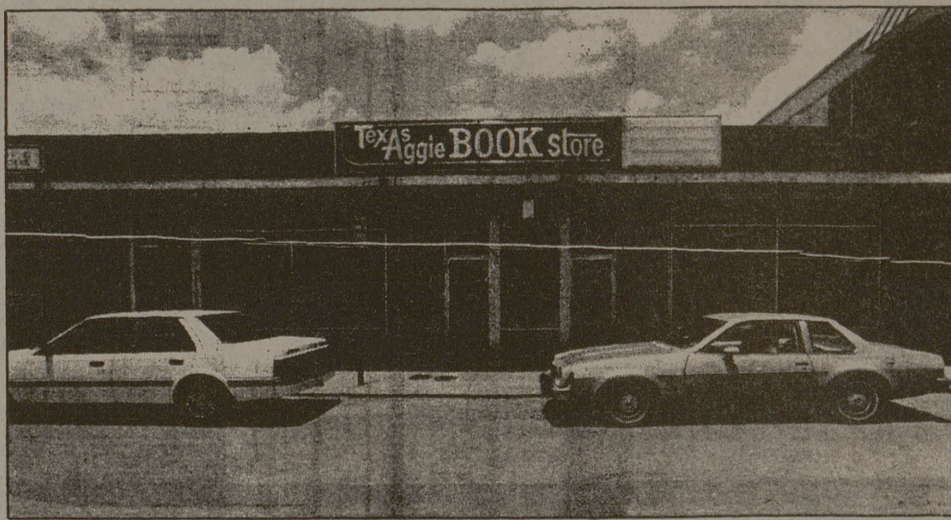
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