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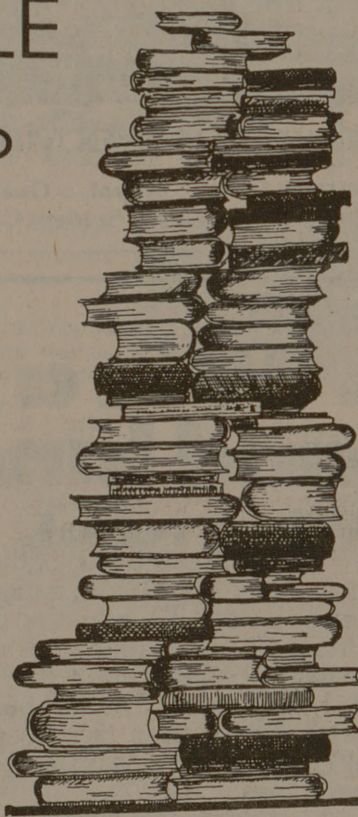
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Presidential aid has many duties

By KEVIN S. INDA
 Reporter

When Dr. Arthur H. Blair walks into his office in the morning, he has to be ready for anything.

Blair, assistant to the University president, is the man behind the scenes who makes life easier for President Frank E. Vandiver.

"My in-box is Dr. Vandiver's out-box," Blair said. "My job is to assist the president in whatever task that he may give."

Some of the tasks he performs for Vandiver are drafting letters, investigating problems and making recommendations, making phone calls and keeping the vice presidents informed.

"Basically, my job is to make sure the president and the vice presidents are never surprised," Blair said.

If Vandiver is going to ask the vice presidents to do something, Blair will let them know ahead of time, so they can respond more quickly.

Blair said he also attends the Texas A&M Board of Regents meetings with Vandiver. The Board will sometimes ask Vandiver for some type of information he doesn't have, and he will send Blair to try to locate it.

"My job is kind of like an utility infielder — whatever comes up I do," Blair said. "The interesting part about it is, I have absolutely no authority as an assistant to the president to tell anybody to do anything, but I've got all kinds of responsibility to make sure things run smoothly."

Blair said he can be perceived to be "the power behind the throne,"

but that isn't true at all.

"I work extremely hard to keep out my personal biases, but if Vandiver asks for my personal opinion then I'll tell him," Blair said.

Even though Blair's job takes much of his time and requires a great deal of responsibility, he said he finds it rewarding.

When Blair came to A&M on January 19, 1983, he brought with him a diversified educational and teaching background.

He received a bachelor of science from the United States Military Academy in 1950, a master of science in civil engineering from the California Institute of Technology in 1956, a master's degree in literature from the University of Pennsylvania in 1961, and a doctorate in English and American literature from the University of North Carolina in 1975.

Blair has taught English at the United States Military Academy, military history and policy at the European Division of the University of Maryland and served as an assistant to the dean of West Point.

Blair retired a colonel from the Army in 1977 after serving 27 years. He was head of the department of English at the Citadel from 1977-1979, commandant of cadets in 1980 and a professor from 1981-1982.

In addition to being an assistant to the president, Blair also teaches a course in the English Department here.

Around town

Science students must take exam

Any junior or senior in the College of Science who has not previously taken the **English Proficiency Examination** should plan to take the test Oct. 15 unless they have completed English 301 with a minimum grade of C. Students in the College of Science are required to pass either English 301 or the test in order to qualify as a degree candidate.

The English Proficiency Exam will be administered by the English department. Students in the biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics departments should register for the exam in 313 Biological Sciences Building prior to the exam.

Big Event job requests accepted now

Job requests are now being accepted from the Bryan-College Station community for projects for the **Big Event**. Student organizations wishing to volunteer for this four-hour service project are encouraged to pledge. Deadline for organization pledges is Nov. 1. Job requests will still be accepted after that date. Contact Mark Manina at 696-5930, or Maritza Pena at 764-0770.

Tutoring offered for freshmen courses

Phi Eta Sigma is offering a **free tutoring service for freshman level courses**. A tutoring card file is located on the 2nd floor of the Pavilion in the Phi Eta Sigma cubicle. The tutoring is free of charge.

Program on Lubbock Lake presented

The TAMU Anthropology Society is presenting a program featuring Dr. Vance Holliday speaking about the **Lubbock Lake Project** at 7 p.m. in 301 Bolton. Lubbock Lake contains an archaeological, paleontological and paleobotanical record in a well-stratified, well-dated context spanning the past 17,000 years. The lake contains archaic, ceramic, protohistoric, and historic period occupations, and thus is a rare storehouse of information about man's habitation of the High Plains region over a substantial period of time.

Now is time to order Christmas gifts to ensure arrival FTC rule also applies to mail-orders

By KARI FLUEGEL
 Staff Writer

Only 76 more days until Christmas. Time is running out.

While most shoppers have plenty of time to destroy their charge accounts at local department stores, mail-order shoppers are running out of time.

Mail order customers should place their order in September or October, Nancy Wilson, customer relations for Neiman Marcus, said. Ordering in November, when most people place their orders, is fairly risky, she said.

"The most important thing is to order early," Wilson said.

The Federal Trade Commission's mail-order rule — which applies only to orders placed through the mail, or shipped through the mail — requires companies to ship your order within the time they promise or within 30 days after they receive your order, said Nancy Granovsky, Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Service home economist.

Neiman-Marcus does a large Christmas mail-order business. In the past, mail-order items from Neimans have included a chocolate monopoly set, robots, a Texas-shaped swimming pool and this year, cow-shaped couches.

Because such items are usually imported and quota restrictions sometimes limit the supplies, customers

The Federal Trade Commission's mail-order rule — which applies only to orders placed through the mail, or shipped through the mail — requires companies to ship your order within the time the company promises or within 30 days after they receive your order.

should order early to avoid missing the original shipment. If the demand is more than the supply, a new shipment is ordered which delays shipment to the customer, Wilson said.

If the company is unable to deliver the shipment during the specified time, the FTC rule requires the company to notify the customer who then has the option of waiting for the purchase or cancelling the order for a full refund.

Many mail-order companies now offer toll-free numbers for easy ordering.

"Using the telephone may seem more convenient than ordering by mail, but it's also riskier, since phone orders are not covered by the Federal Trade Commission's mail-order rule," Granovsky said.

When ordering by phone, consumers are not covered by the time-limit rule. The consumer must assume the responsibility for merchandise not delivered or delivered late, Granovsky said.

Caution also should be exercised

when placing an order. Many mistakes are made by customers incorrectly or incompletely filling out the order form, Granovsky said.

Customers should keep a copy of the order form for documentation purposes in case a problem does arise, she said.

Consumers also should be careful to include all taxes, shipping and handling charges. If the company is headquartered in Texas, residents should include the state sales tax, Granovsky said.

Wilson said that Neimans will insure expensive items before shipping. She added that while the store is responsible for insurance when shipping the item to the customer, the customer is responsible for insurance when shipping the item back to the store in case of exchanges or returns.

If the merchandise is unsatisfactory, both the mail-in and phone-in customer can request a refund. Mail-in customers also can look to the post office for assistance if the company does not satisfy their complaints.

Granovsky said.

The best policy for consumers is to be careful whether they shop by phone or by mail, she said.

Before placing an order, consider the company. An established, well-known company is likely to be one that satisfies most of its customers, she said.

Granovsky also advises consumers to read the descriptions of the products carefully. Words such as "just about," "giant" or "miniature" have a legal definition. Instead look for descriptions that include specific measurements.

Refunds and return policies should be examined before purchasing merchandise.

The return policy should be stated somewhere on the order form. If it is not stated, the company may not have a return policy, Granovsky said.

The return policy should be specific, Granovsky said, the promise of an "absolute refund" means nothing. With an "absolute refund policy" the company could reply "absolutely no" or send a return of \$100, say "this is absolutely all you get."

If a problem arises with a mail order company, first try to resolve with the company, Granovsky said. If that doesn't work, write a complaint to the postal inspector if the postal service was involved in the transaction and then notify the Better Business Bureau.



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| | YEARBOOK ASSOC.* | PAVILION |
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| Freshmen & Sophomores | Sept. 10-Oct. 12 | Oct. 15-26 |
| Juniors, Seniors, Grads, Meds, & Vets | Oct. 15-Nov. 16 | Nov. 19-30 |

*1700 S. Kyle behind Culpepper Plaza