

# Student publishes 'Best Buys'

Book lists bargain shopping spots

By KAREN HELLER  
Reporter

Elmer Diaz can save you money. Diaz, a senior industrial distribution major, has published "The Very Best Buys in Bryan/College Station," a book which lists products and services ranging from "d'flea" for your dog to legal services for you.

Diaz says the idea for the book came to him — indirectly — through his love for pizza. "I really love pizza and stuff like that... I had a coupon for one place... but I realized that there was cheaper stuff elsewhere," he says.

Diaz says he and his friends started looking around and checking prices by making phone calls and visits to different stores.

"Prices skyrocket from one place to another," Diaz says. The result of Diaz's research is a book which compares the everyday prices of various items and services such as food, car repair and clothing.

He printed the book because he realized the information could help other people, he says. He, his wife and some friends decided to publish their findings. "Best Buys" sells for \$2.95.

Diaz started bringing the book to campus about two weeks ago, and people seemed to like it. He belongs to several organizations and has presented his book at the meetings.

"Reaction has been good," Diaz says. "Not only does my book have prices, but it saves you a lot of gas and driving."

Some of the prices listed in the book have helped Diaz himself. While Diaz was trying to find the most inexpensive way to publish his book, he learned about printing prices in Bryan-College Station.

"I learned as I went along," Diaz says. Diaz, who will graduate in May, says his brother and a friend will continue to sell the book after he graduates. "Best Buys" will be printed three times a year, if there is sufficient demand, he says.

# Warped

by Scott McCullar



# Student starts out as 'hubcap king'

## Aggie creates businesses

By LEIGH FORREST  
Reporter

When John Robison was in the fourth grade, he was known as the "hubcap king."

Now, as a senior at Texas A&M and president of the Society for Entrepreneurship and New Ventures, Robison's business cards still introduce him as "His Majesty."

While looking for snakes, the "hubcap king" found old hubcaps in a ditch next to a well-traveled Houston road. He became so fascinated with the hubcaps, he started collecting them in his garage.

A neighbor suggested he sell the hubcaps, so Robison started going to the local grocery store to sell his wares. He would watch for cars to drive up with missing hubcaps, then he would make his move.

"When they (the owners of the cars) came back out of the store, I would say, 'I found these hubcaps in a ditch and I have one that would match yours,'" Robison says. "I could sell it to you for \$10 when it would cost about \$50 at a dealership. I would just act like a kid."

His acting paid off. Robison sold about eight to 10 hubcaps a day during the summer. As sales increased and business expanded, the profits also grew. But, Robison didn't care much about the money.

"I'd just come home and give it to my mom and she would put it away," he says. "I never knew what she did with it."

That money continues to collect interest in a money market account Robison's mother started during his hubcap sales.

After his initial success as the "hubcap king," Robison says he didn't have time to go the grocery store to sell the hubcaps. So he relied on word-of-mouth to advertise his business. And it worked well.

"I'd ask people where they heard about me," he says. "One lady says, 'I was calling directory assistance to find a hubcap place and the operator told me she bought one from you.'"

This early success with business inspired his later business ventures. Last fall, for example, a friend came to Robison with the idea to sell Hornbusters sweatshirts at A&M. Robison masterminded the successful marketing plan and sales.

Robison also owns his own company — Rayburn Consolidated Interests, RCI, formed by Robison and four friends, provides self-help programs for small businesses.

RCI already has a seminar tentatively scheduled for September at the Houstonian Hotel.

The seminar includes presentations by the Arthur Andersen accounting firm; Carl Stevens, a well-known business consultant; and SMI, a small personal services company. Topics will include starting a business, setting goals and selling yourself and your ideas.

But even with these business-oriented activities, Robison says his true love is real estate.

"Whatever business I'm in, I'll always put my money in real estate," he says.

And he's successful at it, too. Robison received his real estate license as a senior in high school. Since then he has bought and sold foreclosed houses in Houston, when he has the time.

John Robison: President of ENVE. His own company. Real estate.

That's quite a load for a college senior. Though his main interests for now are school, ENVE and RCI, Robison says he also finds time to participate in the accounting society and the Aggie Club.

In what spare time he has left, Ro-



John Robison

bison does impressions of Ronald Reagan, Johnny Carson and his professors. He also visits his grandparents in College Station.

"Like my mom says, I've got my hand in too many tills," he says. So how does Robison participate in all his activities and still manage to be successful at everything?

"I don't tend to listen when people tell me I can't do something," he says. "I'm a real positive person — almost to the point of being simple-minded. But if I get it set in my head that something's going to work, I don't listen to anyone else."

"People limit what they can do with themselves. They set artificial limits and tell themselves they can't do any more than that — and they won't. If you say you can't, you won't, and that's all there is to it."

But Wayne Roberts, his roommate, says he thinks Robison still might be limiting himself.

"One of his goals is to be a millionaire by the time he's 26," Roberts says. "That might be too lenient, because I think he can get his first million his first year out of school."

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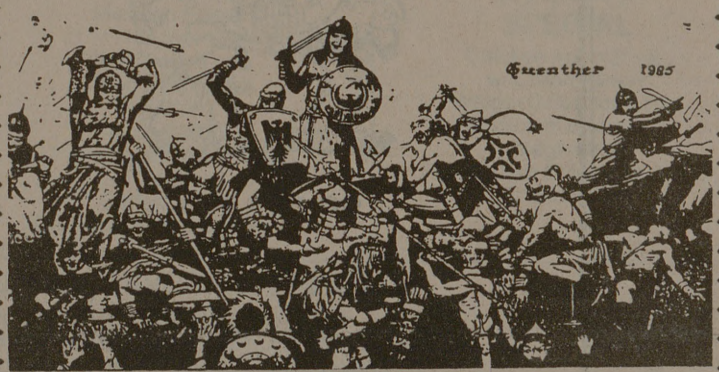
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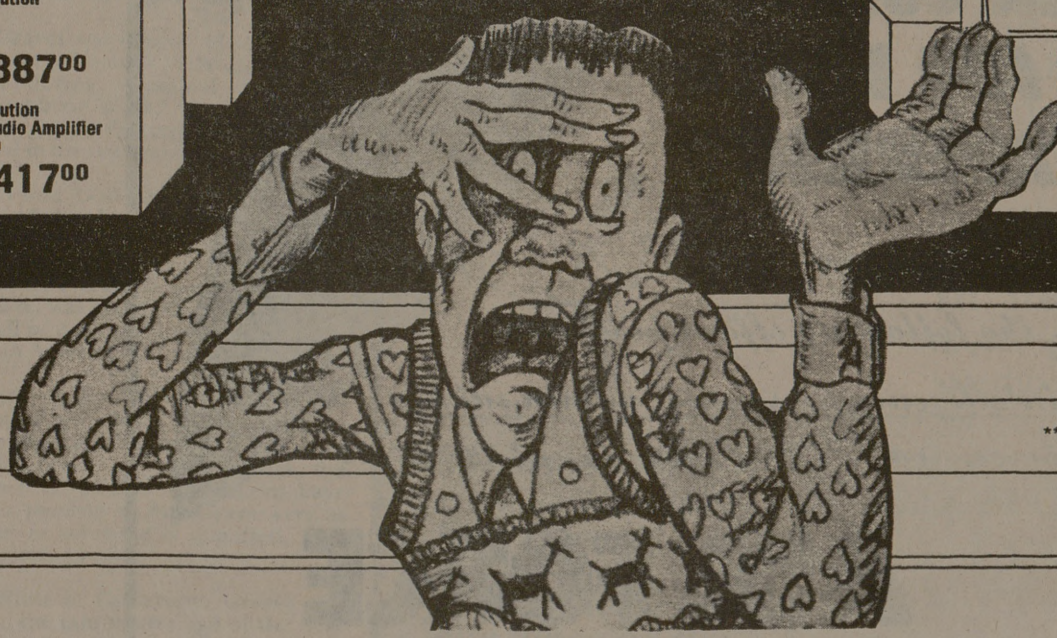
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