

HALF PRICE BOOKS RECORDS
MAGAZINES



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mentment book store," Bobey says. "We'll sell anything as long as it's not illegal."

Half Price stays away from hard pornography for this reason, he says. The store does carry, however, Victorian erotica and American "adult" publications. On a Sunday afternoon this month there were as many people sequestered in the adult magazine corner as there were in the rest of the store.

Some of the store's less popular sections make great browsing if not great buying.

Next to the religion room there are two walls of spiritual alternatives. Witchcraft, the occult, mysticism, alchemy and demonology share a top shelf over the sections on supernatural and psychic phenomena.

In the reference section one can pick up a copy of the "Second Barnhardt Dictionary of American Usage," which defines "Mexican Brown" as "a

type of dark-colored heroin produced in Mexico."

A wide assortment of year-books, whether they are old Agielands or the ever-popular University of Maryland 1978 Munich Campus Year Book, are also available.

Off-beat catalogues are also available. With the "Unusual-By-Mail Catalogue," morbid gardeners can order black tulips or that special gift for the woman with everything: a neckless from the court of the dowager empress of China.

In a large section known as "The Room" to employees, the Sexology shelf yields a copy of "What a Drag," pictures of movie stars in drag, and "Am I a Good Lover?" a new direction in palm-reading.

Some of these titles may be good for more than a laugh. Cathryn Clement, who used to run an out-of-print book search business, says she found two first edition Andre Nortons here worth about \$200.

Fritz Lanham, an editor at the Bryan/College Station Eagle, attributes some of the store's popularity to its large and varied inventory.

"You can get some very good bargains in scholarly and academic books," he says.

Marianne Wong, a Texas A&M student studying entymology, says she also comes for the low prices.

"It's what I like best about it," she says.

Half Price is one of over 20 stores in the four-state chain. New books come from the main store in Dallas. Employees of the chain include buyers whose job it is to buy books for all the stores. Buyers may go as far off as New York or England to make their purchases, Bobey says. All the stores are not exactly alike because the company likes individual stores to improvise, using simple materials for their signs and decor, he says.

"Each store is independent, for the most part," he says. "Most things are up to the discretion of the manager."

Bobey, who has worked in four of the stores, says sales are much the same from one part of the state to another. Science fiction, historical romance and adult magazines sell well. Religion doesn't.

"People like to look through it, but they don't like to buy it," he says. "And we might sell a few more science books (than other stores in the chain)."

Some people think there are differences more significant than the decor between the Bryan Half Price and its big-city brothers. One unidentified customer spending the afternoon in the store says he shops at Half Price because "It's the only one in town," but he's seen better.

"B. Dalton closed up and Video King took their place," he says. "This is not a book town."