

State and Local

Point plan changes to deter pullouts

By M.K. Pfeifer
Reporter

The Aggie Point Account will undergo some drastic changes this fall to discourage students from pulling out of the program, said Lloyd H. Smith, assistant director for the Food Services Department.

"We have a certain group of students that have found that getting on point plan and then getting off of it, is a good way to get money from their parents," he said.

Smith said the changes made by food services and business services are meant to make students take the point plan more seriously.

Originally, students or faculty could start an account with food services for \$150. Students paid full price for food, instead of getting the discount that is offered with the board plans.

To put additional money into the account, the student had to add a minimum of \$50, and bonus points were given for larger deposits.

In the fall, however, it will cost \$250 to start an account and addi-

onal deposits must be for at least \$100. The large deposit discount has been eliminated.

Students must also put a deposit into the account to keep it active, otherwise the account will expire in two semesters and the money in the account will revert to food services.

If a student drops point plan, the

semester or do away with the point plan altogether.

Smith added that the problem seems to be prevalent in the entire meal plan program.

Smith said he assumes some students ask for money from their parents to get on point plan, then open an account and close it a few days

He said food services has about 8,000 active point plan accounts, but the average daily movement of cash through the accounts is only about \$1.60.

He explained that refunding money for meal plans is an accounting nightmare for the fiscal office and food services. The point plan has become a major accounting problem because they have a 35 percent return rate, he said.

"In one week at the beginning of the summer semester, we took in \$20,000 and refunded \$7,000," Smith said.

Also, he said, the red tape that the department has to go through is a bureaucratic triumph.

"They have to process, we have to process..." he said. "Then, we reconcile both of our books to make sure (the student) got the check and the account was taken out of our books."

"We didn't want (the changes)," Smith said. "It's penalizing everyone else because they're playing games with it."

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— Lloyd H. Smith, food services assistant director.

money is refunded with a \$50 fee deducted to pay for the charges food services incur by having the fiscal office process the refund check.

If these changes don't work, Smith said, the administration will raise the fee to withdraw from point plan, make a provision that a student cannot withdraw until the end of the

later without making a transaction. "As an example, the Fiscal Department tracked down a girl who every semester for five years, got on board plan only to drop it without ever using it," he said.

Food services has had the same point plan account opened and closed as many as three times in one semester, Smith said.

Cyclists to hold anti-nuclear rally at Rudder

Texas bicyclists will travel to the Texas A&M campus today and will hold a rally at 1 p.m. at Rudder Fountain to protest nuclear arms buildup.

In addition, members of Brazos Valley Peace Action will attend the rally to discuss connections with nuclear weapons buildup at A&M and Bryan-College Station.

The cyclists are participating in the "Pantex Pilgrimage" in which they ride from Houston to the Pantex Nuclear Weapons Facility north of Amarillo. Pantex is the only final assembly point for nuclear weapons in the United States.

This is the third consecutive year the pilgrimage has been made to the Pantex plant. People are traveling by car and bike along various routes to converge on Pantex for a "Peace Witness" to be held on the site August 6.

Four killed in Beaumont house fire

BEAUMONT (AP) — A woman and three children died Monday in a house fire that the victims might have survived if smoke detectors had been installed in the residence, authorities said.

Killed were June Drodny, 26, of Beaumont; her 4-year-old daughter, April, and 8-year-old son, Michael; and her niece Cheryl Keith, 14, of nearby Buma, said Justice of the Peace Harold Engstrom.

The fire, which was reported just before 3 a.m., apparently started in

the living room and had been smoldering for a long time, Engstrom said.

The cause was not immediately determined.

The mother and her two children were found huddled in the hallway of the one-story frame house, apparently trying to escape the billowing smoke, Engstrom said.

The niece, who also apparently had tried to get out of the house, was found beside her bed, he said.

Fire officials said the victims

might have escaped had precautions been taken.

"Two mistakes they made: One, they didn't have a smoke detector and two, they hadn't had fire drills or had a second way out," said Jeff McNeel, a fire department spokesman.

Beaumont has had nine fire fatalities so far this year, compared to the annual average of about four to five, the spokesman said.

LTV renews health care; strike continues

EAST CHICAGO, Ind. (AP) — LTV Corp. announced Monday night it had arranged retiree-paid group medical insurance coverage for its pensioners, but a steelworkers union official, anticipating the move, dismissed it as company officials' attempt "to ease their conscience."

Jack Parton, director of District 31 of the United Steelworkers of America, predicted earlier Monday that the strike that has idled an LTV

plant for four days may spread if the corporation fails to restore its insurance benefits to retirees.

"I don't think we're talking weeks or months," he said.

LTV, which filed for protection from its creditors under Chapter 11 of the federal bankruptcy code, also operates major steel facilities in Cleveland and Hennepin, Ill. No work stoppages have been reported at either plant.

LTV, in an announcement read by spokeswoman Jolice Pojeta, said Monday night it had made arrangements with Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. and John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co. to offer retiree-paid group medical insurance coverage to the retirees.

The coverage will provide alternatives to the company-paid medical coverage, which LTV is prohibited

from continuing after filing July 17 in bankruptcy court.

The coverage provides benefits retroactive to July 17 for all retirees, surviving spouses and their dependants covered under prior plans. LTV said. Monthly costs for each covered retiree will be \$39 for individuals eligible for Medicare and \$132 for others, it added.

Parton anticipated the announcement and said before it was released

that LTV officials "are trying to ease their conscience."

"They (retirees) don't need LTV to arrange that," Parton said. "If they had money, they'd go out and get it themselves."

Parton's prediction that the strike would spread challenged a warning issued by LTV when the members of Local 1011 began refusing to cross demonstration lines set up by retirees at the Indiana Harbor Works.

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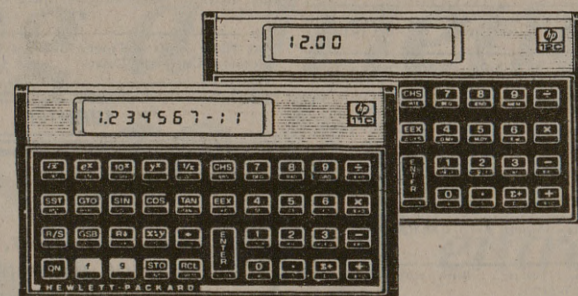
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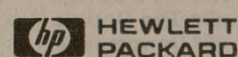
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