

Opinion

Gucci checkbooks and serious banks

A Chicago bank has hired a creature named Gucci to design arty new checks and checkbooks.



Mike Royko

Gucci, who is famous for designing women's shoes and purses, has created checks with swans, daisies, mist-shrouded trees, rippling water, a sunrise and even a seagull against a lavender background. Gucci is not the hairy-chested type.

The bank thinks this will attract new customers. Maybe it will, but I won't be one of them.

Banks should be serious. My attitude toward them is the same as that of Mrs. Grobnik, who was Slats Grobnik's mother. "A good bank," she always said, "should look like a jail, except the bank's walls should be thicker."

Whenever she made a deposit — and she never made withdrawals — Mrs. Grobnik would walk around the lobby to see if they had hired any new guards. If she found one, she would ask him: "Are you a good shot?"

"They always said yes, so she'd ask: 'How many people have you shot?'"

If they hadn't shot anybody, she would go to the chief cashier and ask why they were hiring inexperienced people.

Sometimes she would purposely include a half-dollar in her deposit. If the cashier didn't bite it, she would triumphantly report him to the vice president.

Once in a while, she would set the alarm clock for 1 a.m. Then she'd get up and walk to the bank and rap on the door. When the night guard peered out, she'd say: "Remember, no sleeping."

After using the same bank for 24 years, she abruptly closed her account and put her money somewhere else. The reason was that a cashier had grown a mustache.

"The next thing," she said, "is he will take my money and run away to Las Vegas."

I'm sure that Mrs. Grobnik would not have felt comfortable with Gucci's checkbooks. In fact, she never in her life used a checkbook. She thought that anybody who would put their money in a bank, then immediately spend a nickel writing a check to get some of it out, should be put away by his relatives for his own good.

Mrs. Grobnik finally stopped dealing with banks entirely when she found out that they loaned money. She had always thought they just stored it away. It was her opinion that anybody who borrowed money did so because they didn't have enough of their own, which means they were bums. And she didn't want to trust her money to an institution that would loan it out to bums.

I'm not quite as conservative as Mrs. Grobnik about such matters, but the business of the Gucci checks would make me nervous.

For one thing, his name isn't just plain Gucci. No Italian mother is going to send a boy into the world with no more of a handle than "Gucci." Would an Italian priest baptize a baby as plain "Gucci?"

Yet, when I called the bank and asked them what Gucci's full name was, they said they didn't know.

Maybe being just Gucci is enough for the fashion circles in New York, but a bank ought to get a guy's full name before they do any kind of business with him. If they hire somebody who goes around saying, "I am Gucci," they might decide to lend money to people who walk in and say, "I am Smith — give me a thou."

I am not opposed to adding a little art to checks. But it should be something serious. When a person writes a check he shouldn't think about daisies, seagulls, rippling waters, sunrises, trees and other pleasant things. He is spending money, and he should think dark thoughts.

If there are going to be daisies on the check, they should be surrounding a gravestone with his name on it. If there are going to be rippling waters, a hand should be sticking out of the water. If there is a tree, it should have a noosed rope attached to a limb.

I'd like to see checkbooks with pictures of a turnip, with a drop or two of blood oozing out of it.

Many men would like checks for their wives that would bear a drawing of a widow in black, sitting at a lawyer's desk, with the lawyer saying: "Well, you can always sell the furniture."

Or maybe a bleak, rickety old building with a sign over the door that says: "Married."

Married men could use personalized checks with a snappy slogan across the top. Maybe something like: "Bartender: Please don't cash this. Signed, His children."

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Black Americans are as close as they're gonna get to the ideal of equality



Enter an action code — NOW

You know it will happen sometime. If at first you don't succeed, try, try again, right? So you cross your fingers and keep trying. And trying. And trying.



Tracy Staton

Seven, eight, nine times... still you can't give up. Minutes are ticking away. The suspense has tied your stomach into a square knot. The tip of your right index finger is numb, your left hand is cramped, and your bottom lip is almost bitten through. But it's impossible to stop. You can't do it. You long to hear the electronic musical sound of a voice saying the magic words:

Welcome to the Texas A&M University System. Enter an action code — NOW.

You know it's a fantasy of Utopian proportions. But the lust of a student desperate for classes has claimed you. At night you dream about picking up the phone, dialing it, and reaching the registration system on the FIRST TRY. You attempt to remain calm, fearing your friends will laugh when you confess your fantasies. Then they catch the dial-a-class disease (scientifically termed subphonal educatological cursic syndrome).

One of your more outgoing chums has an add/drop party — BYOCP (bring your own cordless phone). The thought of an orgy of students all dialing 260-3213 at once overwhelms you. You choose to spend a quiet evening at home, just you, your Snoopy telephone, and a registration booklet. The hostess calls you the next day and admits that the party was "uncontrollably wild."

"But someone got through!" she exclaims triumphantly. "Too bad all the classes were full. We were all excited anyway, though."

Panic grips your throat. You can barely finish the conversation. It had never crossed your mind that the ultimate object of your quest — adding

twelve hours to your meager course load of a one-hour P.E. class — might be beyond your reach once you began your electronic conversation with Mr. Computer. You thought he held the keys to the universe, or at least in class rosters.

You leave your dorm in a daze. You ask everyone you meet if they are enrolled in more than three hours. Four out of five students surveyed recommended excusing Mr. Computer for withholding class hours from needy scholars.

You don't believe it. Someone is playing a cruel joke on you for skipping the phone fest. So you go back to your room and resume dialing.

After a half-hour of strenuous button-pushing, you hear a ringing noise when you finish dialing the number. You almost drop the receiver. You fumble for your schedule book, shakily input your student I.D. number and make your first course request.

The class you have requested is full. No other sections of this class are available. Please enter your next request — NOW.

You enter your next selection. Mr. Computer smirks to chuckle spitefully as he repeats:

The class you have requested is full. No other sections of this class are available. Please enter your next request — NOW.

You awake from unconsciousness several minutes later, the gnawed and mutilated phone cord between your teeth.

"It's true!" you scream. "I'll never be able to get twelve hours! I might as well drop my P.E. class too! AUGGGHHHHHHH!!!!"

Then Devious Plan sticks his head out of a tiny niche in his brain. "Hey, I've got a better idea," he says.

"What?" you ask, your finger already poised to drop your class.

"Let's sneak into registration headquarters and strangle Mr. Computer. Everyone already thinks he should be executed, anyway. We'll be doing students a favor."

You raise your eyebrows. "Hmmm."

You supplier your phone stuff it surreptitiously into your shirt. During, furtively down of your dorm, you steal outside to look normal.

The closer you get to the Pavilion more excited you become. Caught wave of anticipation, you break run. Devious Plan gives you a while you jog.

"Isn't a university's purpose to mit knowledge to its students?" tells you. "Aren't you just like a sumer of any product, and the like a supplier, and professor a tributors? Wouldn't the unmer nothing without its students?"

"Didn't we learn in economics master that when demand is mther than supply, excess demand suppliers should increase produa accommodate demand?"

"So we'll just send a message class market that it's got to adp can't just sit back with our phone hands, letting students remain mercy of Mr. Computer. RIGHT?"

"RIGHT!" you shout as you up the steps to the Pavilion. You open the door; it's locked. You your fists on the glass, screa "DEATH TO MR. COMPUTER. STRANGLE MR. COMPUTER. THE NAME OF CLASS ATTEN CE!"

You throw a rock at the door, the glass, and somehow worm inside the building. You are wrr the University Police, still holdi cord menacingly in front of Mpuer.

Two days later, you are in a awaiting trial on charges of assa a deadly telephone cord. You can't visit you because they are trying to add or drop classes. Plan is vaguely silent. Desperat alone, you vow to transfer to a city with adequate numbers of tions.

Tracy Staton is a senior journalist, a staff writer and a columnist for The Battalion.

Mail Call

An ignored holiday

EDITOR:

It has long amazed me that even the finest institutions in our great nation have difficulty recognizing certain important events and the appropriate way of honoring those events. Occasionally, the event to be honored is a person's life. If this person were influential enough, a day is recognized as a national holiday.

Not too long ago a man of great influence received a national holiday in his name. This man spent his life working for the good of the people of this nation, not just one minority, as many people try to see his work. If his accomplishments were not of the caliber to be celebrated, would there be a national holiday in his name?

On January 18, 1988, classes began for the spring semester here at Texas A&M. I realize that the low number of minority students on this campus allowed the majority to overlook this important day. I was in shock at the actions of this honorable, tradition-filled university. Why do we not observe the day that honors a man that did so much for not only blacks but for all people that are oppressed?

I beg this university not to overlook the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. anymore. Denial of this and any other national holidays is a disgrace to this or any other institution that follows the same policy.

J. Frank Hernandez '91

Editor's note: In Wednesday's Battalion, a letter was credited to Perry A. Lister II. The name should have read Perry A. Liston II.

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

The Battalion

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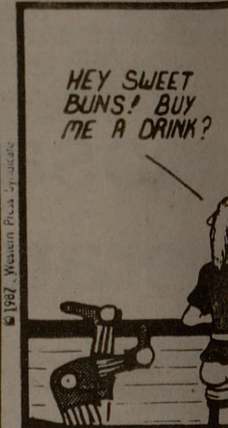
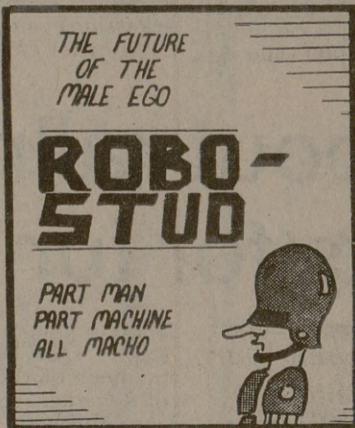
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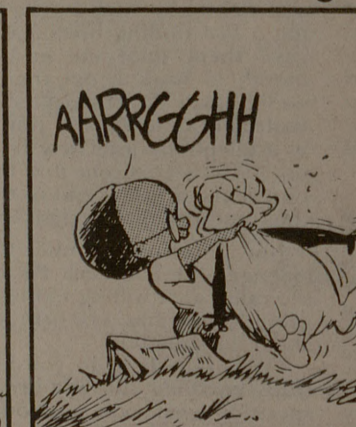
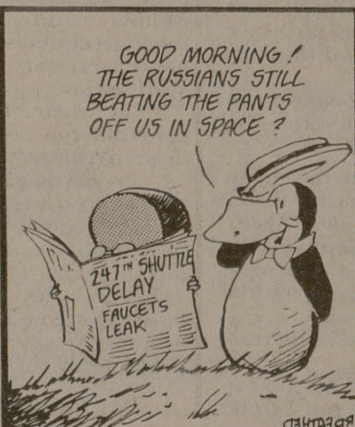
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