

Local bookstores suggest buying, selling textbooks early for best deals

By Monique Threadgill
Of The Battalion Staff

Because the average student at Texas A&M usually spends anywhere from \$150 to \$300 on used books for one semester, he may be encouraged to make the most of his money and spend his spare time reading instead of going to Northgate.

Most students prefer to buy used books instead of new books, and as ironic as it may sound, the bookstores actually want students to purchase used books.

Bookstores make more money from the sale of used books because they are able to mark up the price of used books more than they can new books.

Book publishers set the prices of new books, whereas the prices of used books are fairly flexible, depending on condition of the books and the number that stores have in stock.

A&M sends requisitions to the faculty to discover which books will be used and how many copies will be needed for the upcoming semester. Bookstores receive copies of the list then buy back and order books based on the list.

Most stores buy books back all

through the semester, but Dennis Rother, owner of Rother's Book Stores, said the last two weeks of the semester are the best weeks to re-sell books, because stores haven't yet placed their orders to publishing companies for new books.

Employees of other stores agree. "The earlier you sell it, the better deal you'll get for it," Jason Baadsgaard, a Loupot's Bookstore employee, said.

The stores estimate the number of books they will sell and then buy back as many as they need. If they don't buy enough used books, they are forced to order new ones from the publishing companies.

After the quota is filled, most stores offer a substantially smaller amount of money, or none at all, to buy the book back. To get the most money back, it is important to sell the books as soon as possible.

Those who sell their books at the right time usually get back about 50 percent of the price they paid for it in the beginning.

"In effect, (students) are renting the book for half a year," Dr. Don Powell, director of Business Services at A&M, said.

Bookstore owners and managers all seem to agree that the prices of books are standard around town, no

matter which store they are purchased from.

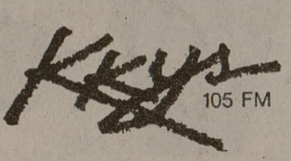
The prices of the books are based on suggested retail prices set by the publisher, which most stores follow. Phyllis Loupot, manager of Loupot's Bookstore on Jersey Street, said stores try to stick to standard book prices and "avoid price wars."

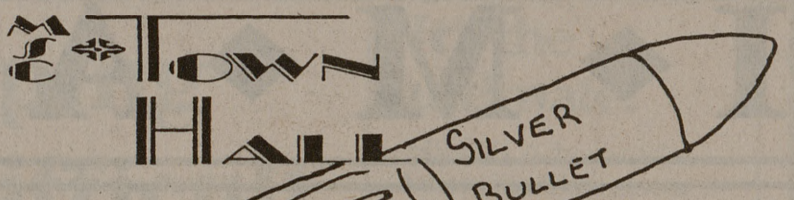
Almost all stores allow students to reserve their books ahead of time with just a small deposit. Return policies are basically the same. All stores require a receipt for the books and set deadlines ranging from one to two weeks, depending on the store, to return books.

Stores use different gimmicks to attract book buyers. University Bookstore manager Philip Beard said his store is giving away about \$6000 in prizes and is working on an RC Cola-R.C. Slocum promotion with proceeds going to the Aggie Club.

Rother's offers coupons in the People Book and spinning the "wheel of fortune" to get special discounts. Loupot's offers students Lou Bucks, which give students special rates when re-selling used books, and Lou's News, which offers coupons for discounts on T-shirts.


Texas Aggie Bookstore lets students draw for bonus cash to receive extra money for re-selling books.





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ISA tries to ease shock of transition for 1900 foreign students at A&M

By Timothy J. Hammons
Of The Battalion Staff

Attending a major university is a hard transition for anyone. But for the 1900 foreign students who attend Texas A&M, the problems can be double.

These students come from 116 different countries around the world, many with nothing more than a suitcase full of clothing.

Director of International Student Services Tina Watkins tries to ease the shock that many foreign students experience when first arriving at A&M.

"The first thing we do is find someone that can speak their language," Watkins said. "I call someone from International Students Association to help them. Then we set them up in a dorm."

She said this takes care of communication problems and finding a place to live. There are other problems to overcome, and ISA has several programs to help.

Watkins said one of the best programs ISA has is the Loan Closet. The closet has pots and pans, sheets and towels that people have donated to help the students get settled. It is hard for students to bring items like that with them, she said. Some of the students are traveling for 36 hours to get here, and it is too difficult to carry those items, she said.

Another program offered is the Friendship Partners. Watkins said the idea is to pair up foreign students with Americans. Students fill out a card with their interests and hobbies and they match them up with foreign students. The advantage Americans have is choosing the country from which to form a partnership.

B-CS dealerships offer programs to help students finance new cars

By Ellen Hobbs
Of The Battalion Staff

When a college student starts thinking about buying a new car, his emotions may be anything between euphoria and fear: euphoria from the possibility of owning a new car and fear of pushy sales people and huge monthly payments.

To help dispel those fears, most dealerships and auto makers have created programs to make car buying easier for college students nearing graduation.

"The theory is that if they've worked hard to get through college, they deserve a break," Mary Shaw, a

sales representative for Jentsch Chevrolet in Bryan, said.

Though specifics about student purchasing programs at individual dealerships differ, they have the same general characteristics:

- Students must be close to graduation or have graduated recently. For example, Toyota's program allows students to finance cars on a first-time buyers plan from six months before to a year after graduation.

- Students must have earning potential. Some programs require that they have the promise of a job after graduation, but most ask only that they earn a degree. The higher the earning potential of the student, the larger the amount financed.

- Students can finance vehicles if they have no credit at all or no bad credit. If a student has bad credit, he probably won't be able to find a dealership that will let him finance a car.

Students who are not close to graduation may have a hard time finding a dealership that will let them finance a car on their own. Most dealerships require the buyer to be drawing a salary of \$1,000 a month or more. Most college students may, however, purchase a car with their parents as co-signers.

Students who buy new cars usually end up paying off their vehicles for 60 months. Many college students don't want to obligate themselves to making payments for that long while they are in school or soon after graduation.

Many dealerships have leasing programs that give customers who do not want to make a long-term investment an alternative to purchasing a vehicle.

Leasing allows the customers to get cars without worrying about the depreciation of their investment.

Most car dealerships that offer leasing offer it on a "closed-in" basis: Once you sign the lease, you are required to keep the car for a specified length of time.

Usually the person leasing the vehicle makes a down payment and pays a security deposit which is about the same size as the downpayment. Then the person leasing makes payments on the auto for two to four years. After the lease is up, the customer may purchase the car or return it to the dealership, who sells it as a used car.

Leasing programs receive mixed reviews from sales representatives. Shaw encourages customers to lease.

"When you buy a car, by the time you have equity in it it's so old, it's not to your advantage to sell it," Shaw said. "With a lease, you trade cars about every four years.

"Most Americans are saying it's a good time to lease cars."

Harlen Walker, however, a sales representative for Beal Ford Sales, Inc., in Bryan, said he sees no advantage in leasing.

"If a customer wants to lease, I send them to my sales manager because I just see no advantages to it," Walker said.

Walker said leasing is a bad idea because even though the customer makes payments for years, he ends up with nothing to show for it.

"If a customer wants to lease, I send them to my sales manager because I just see no advantages to it."

— Harlen Walker, sales representative

"It's just like renting," he said. Most salespeople suggest buying over leasing first.

Going to the dealerships and shopping for automobiles should be the fun part of buying a car, but some college students say the pressure put on buyers from the salespeople takes all the fun out of it.

Denise Hickey, a sophomore civil engineering major from Long Valley, N.J., said her experience shopping for cars was less than pleasant.

"I told the salesman right away that all I was doing was looking, but he put so much pressure on me that it made me want to just leave," she said.

Hickey said she actually was interested in buying one of the cars on the lot, but she wanted to have some time to think about it first.

"The guy kept telling me that I had to buy it right now or it was going to sell, or I wouldn't be able to get a good deal on it," she said.

She said that when she asked for an estimate of how much it would cost per month to finance the car, the salesman acted as though she had agreed to buy it.

"He got the sales manager, and he came out with all these forms and stuff that he was telling me to sign," she said. "I felt really uncomfortable with the whole thing."

The sales manager tried to pressure her into leaving a check for \$500 to hold the car, she said, and when she refused, he told her she could take the car home overnight to drive around and see how she liked it, with no strings attached.

"There had to be a trick to that," she said. "There is no way they were

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