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Mortgage pays for books

Fon man, kisses create book-buying hell

"Welcome to English 215, Introduction to Women's Literature. For this course you will need to buy three books."

"Welcome to English 210, Literature of Agriculture. For this course you will need to buy six books."

"Welcome to Sociology 398, The Vietnam Experience. For this course you will need to buy this huge packet from Astro's Copy Center."

"Welcome to Theatre 410, Lighting Design. For this course you will need to buy this big, fat, hardbound textbook."

"Welcome to Political Science 108, Introduction to Political Ideas. For this course, you will need to buy more books than your dinky little minds can comprehend."

Welcome to book-buying hell. Never before have I had a semester in which I needed to buy more books.

After receiving all of my syllabi . . . syllabusses . . . syllabiesusses, whatever, I counted no fewer than 20 books that were required reading.

Knowing full well I was too poor for such a hefty investment, I immediately went crying to my mom.

"Mom," I simpered, "It's time for me to buy books again."

"Are you shopping at one of the campus bookstores?" she asked with dread in her voice.

"Yes, Mom, that's the only place they sell all the books I need," I said. "So I suppose this means . . ."

"Yes, Mom, another mortgage on the house."

We went to the bank to square away the papers for the ninth mortgage on my Mom's humble home, one for each semester I'd been at the university.

Then, with money in hand, I headed down to the bookstore to buy my own little library.

I slithered down the street in the reactor-core heat of the midday Nebraska sun. I approached the bookstore intent on getting in and out as soon as possible.

Before I could even get in the building, however, I was accosted at the door.

"Would you like a Fon card?" Huh! "Get your very own Fon card. We'll give you this crummy little frisbee if you'll only order a Fon card! Please!"

My path was blocked by a frothing employee of the Fon card telephone company.

"I'll order one of your cards," I said. "As soon as you morons learn how to spell phone."

"PLEASE! Don't you want to be like all of your friends! You must have one of these cards! They'll make your life so much easier."

"If you want to make my life



Jim Hanna

easier," I said, "you'll pull your tongue off of the pavement and get out of my way."

I then gave the Fon card representative a good head fake and ran past him into the bookstore.

The inside of the store was a madhouse. Students were running about buying books, supplies and cute little over-priced knick-knacks.

At the front of the store stood a man on a soapbox with a megaphone.

"Please believe me," he was saying. "We don't set the prices here. It's the publishers. I swear on a stack of bibles. We have absolutely nothing to do with the insane prices you are paying for your textbooks. If we could, we'd give them away because we love you students so much."

I quickly figured that this was a manager of the bookstore. Sweat was streaming down his face and his eyes bulged in the frenzy of his plea.

"I know many of you think that we price the books here but I must reiterate: The publishers set the prices, not your good friends here at the bookstore. In any event, don't despair. As you know, you can sell your books back to us at the end of the semester at the very pleasing rate of .003 cents on the dollar. Just think, money back at the end of the semester so that you can buy yummy candy treats and rock 'n' roll albums -- all courtesy of your dear friends at the bookstore. You can bet the villains at the publishing company won't do that for you. Please, please, you've got to believe me."

He then broke down and started to cry.

I decided I'd seen enough and headed off to buy my books. I strolled by the cash registers and toward the stairs going up.

Wham!

From nowhere, I was flattened by the rolling body block of an unseen employee. She quickly pounced on my chest, grabbed me by the collar and bellowed into my mortified face.

"Please, leave your backpack on one of the shelves we have conveniently provided at the front of the store!"

"Certainly, I'm sorry," I said, still shaken.

"By the way," she chirped with a big grin appearing on her face. "Would you like a coupon book and a sampling of these new Hershey Kisses

See HANNA on 13

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