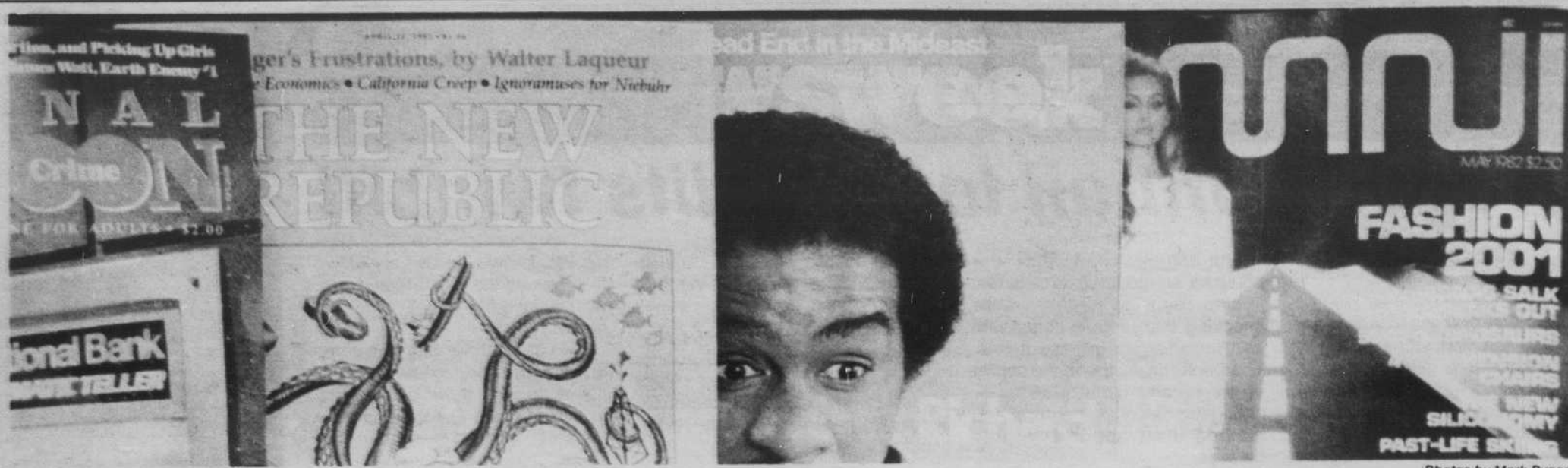




Photos by Mark Pynes

A foot in the door *Dorm residents say they feel taken by a fast-talking magazine huckster*

By Kevan Houser
Of the Emerald

Three dormitory residents wish they had been a little more careful after a magazine solicitor got a foot in the door and a chance to peddle subscriptions.

Terri Knoxe and Rena Dornsife, both business majors, and Buffy Denney, a journalism major, say they feel taken by a "smooth-talking" young man they know only as "Ron." The salesman, claiming to represent Summit Clearing House, visited the three women in their rooms in Carson Hall, and sold each of the three women a \$21 subscription to magazines they say they didn't really want.

The residents describe the salesman as a handsome fast-talker who made them feel bad about asking questions. They also say he won them over by telling them he only needed a few more sales to win a trip to Europe, which he wanted to take his mother on.

"I used to do some selling myself," explains one of the residents, "so I really wanted to help him. I know what it's like to be so close to a sales goal." He was a little pushy, but seemed honest, she says.

But according to University regulations, the salesman shouldn't have been peddling the publications in the dorm. A

city license and permission from the University are required to solicit on campus, but the University never grants permission for door-to-door sales in the dorms, says Greg Harris, student manager of the Walton complex.

More than 1,000 "independent contractors" sell for Summit Clearing House, says Peter Wiegandt, owner of the Houston-based firm "Ron" claimed to represent.

Because they hire independent contractors, Wiegandt doesn't have "100 percent control" over the solicitors, he explains. However, the firm's salespeople can be traced by the numbers on the receipts they give to customers.

Wiegandt agrees that the salesman at the University may be using overzealous sales tactics. If there are complaints about a particular salesperson, consumers should send those complaints, along with photocopies of the receipts to Wiegandt.

"I would like to know about any problems," Wiegandt says, adding that his firm "can't do anything about a situation it doesn't know about."

Two complaints about an independent contractor result in that person being terminated, Wiegandt says, adding that Summit sends out a lot of "legitimate

refunds."

The firm is a member "in good standing" with the Houston Better Business Bureau and "we want to stay that way," he says.

"Ron's" sales approach — a composite description of the experiences of the Carson residents — goes something like this:

A good-looking young man with sandy-blond hair comes to the door. He asks if any "big guys — football players" have come by to sell magazines. He kisses the hand of the resident, invites himself in, and begins his well-rehearsed routine:

"I'm glad I got here first, he says. I'm from University of Pennsylvania, and I'm competing with a bunch of guys who are staying at the Hilton. We've been all around the country selling magazine subscriptions for an athletic organization, and I just need eight more girls to buy, then I'll have enough points to win a trip to Europe. The guys in the group only sell to girls, he explains.

"I've had a pretty good evening, the salesman says. I sold a lot of subscriptions to other girls on campus who remember me from last year.

He shows a list of about 40 — mostly obscure — magazines. Each has a point

value after it. But, he explains, I only get 10 points for each sale, since I won last year.

What you can do to help me, he says, is buy a magazine, and if you don't like it, you can cancel later and get all your money back. But I'll still have the points I need. What do you say?

Two of the Carson residents paid for Road and Track magazine, the other a new women's magazine. They thought they would be helping him, and assumed they could just cancel later and get their money back.

They didn't become really suspicious until after he had gone, but by then it was too late — they were left with ambiguous receipts and serious doubts.

The salesman's signature is unreadable on the receipts, two of which he pre-dated by up to two days. On one receipt, the name of the magazine ordered does not appear.

On the backs of the receipts he scribbled a message for the residents to show to his competitors, should they appear — "Too late suckers!"

Two of the residents paid by check, which they later stopped payment on. The third paid by cash. "I kind of doubt I'll get my magazines," she says. And if they don't — "I've learned a \$21 lesson."

Scrounging at Reed: a lesson in economics

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Some students at Oregon's most expensive college are scrounging for food, and a recent survey indicates that most students approve of the practice.

"Basically it just involves taking food that's left over for people who are on board — have paid for their food," says Greta Muelder of Chicago, a two-year veteran scrounger at Reed College.

The practice is so prevalent at Reed that last fall a survey was taken by some of the school's 1,100 students to investigate campus opinion about it, says Paula Rooney, vice president of student services.

"I think we're concerned as an administration about what people's impressions of Reed College are going to be," she says. "My concern would be that people outside might say scrounging plays into bizarre behavior."

The results of the survey indicate that scrounging is not considered bizarre within the ivy-covered institution. The school is scheduled to charge \$9,720 for a student living on campus in 1982-83, including \$7,070 for tuition

and \$2,650 for room and board.

Only 68 students said they found the practice "offensive," 143 said it was "a nice tradition," and 288 said it was "a good use of leftovers."

"In times like these, where there's so much waste going on, it seems like a good idea to consume food that would be thrown away," Muelder says.

"I wait by the slop place where people come to bus their trays. I ask them if they would mind if I take their leftover food. Then I take their food if they don't mind, and I eat it. It's very organized. All the people who are scrounging line up; it's not chaotic at all.

"I feel good about it," she says. "I don't feel embarrassed. It seems like a very normal, natural thing to do. Nobody would do it just for show."

Rooney says the survey involved Reed faculty, staff and students. She said hundreds of students estimated that there were 50 or less scroungers on campus.

But of those responding, 169 said they had tried it and 115 said they did it for a "source of food." Seventy-eight

said they scrounged for "convenience" and 34 students said they were just being "social." There were 232 who said they never scrounged.

One scrounger says the reason for scrounging is purely economic.

"If some people are too proud, that's their problem, but I'm not that proud," says Benn Lewis, a 20-year-old theater major. "Nobody would do it without the economic concern."

But Matthew Bergman of Seattle, Reed's student body vice president, disagrees.

"It seems just to be a social pattern," he says. "It's sort of neat that students are willing to do this to get an education, (but) I don't see it as being a very big deal. There are so many other things going on here — academics — that people don't pay much attention to it."

Patience also is necessary, says Viktor Weygandt, a 22-year-old literature and history major from Albany, Ore. "I find if I wait long enough, I can get almost a balanced meal."

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