

'This is the best day I've ever had. I can, I will, I'm going to help 30 people a day live a richer, fuller more meaningful life because I stopped by and showed them my books.'

— Southwestern Co. sales manual

left halfway through the summer, she says. "She brought nine of us out and didn't even have the guts to stay." Bending and other students from the University were based near Houston, Texas.

Students are expected to remit at least 60 percent of their take each week and save only enough to live on. At the end of the summer when students return to Nashville to check out, the company buys back any undelivered books and settles with the students for their 40 percent share of the summer's take. Students who leave early often end up owing Southwestern money as did Carey, McBarron and Collins.

Despite problems, the company does very well making \$30,000,000 a year while letting college students do all of the sales work. The company has little if any overhead on the sales side of the business. Students pay for everything from the hotel where groups meet for the Sunday meeting to the phone calls they are required to make to their student managers each day. Students are even expected to find lodging in private homes in their sales area for the summer.

Some of the students interviewed said they were somewhat surprised to discover all the expenses they were expected to cover. Others like Squire said it was clear before he left that he was going to be running his own business and he would be expected to pay his own way. "It all tax deductible anyway," he says. Bending says the company never really lied but emphasized the positive aspects of the program too heavily and glossed over problems students invariably ran into. "They didn't just gloss over them, they buried them flat out," Carey says of the negative aspects the company covered.

Students were expected to pay the postage for shipping books from Tennessee to the sales area where during the thirteenth week students deliver all

the books they sold during the year. During this time students also collect any money not paid when transactions were closed. The company buys back any books not sold but students are responsible for lost checks, bad checks, damaged books.

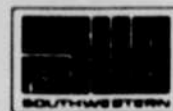
Although a large number of students from the University had problems last year some students do make money. Lots of money. Schyer's best summer netted him a check for between \$14,000 and \$15,000, he says. But even the best salesman will admit that summers like that only come after several summers of knocking on doors. Schyer made that in his seventh year in the field.

The biggest complaint University students had with the company is not that they were ever lied to but that they weren't told certain things that may have helped them make a more informed decision about whether to sell for the company or not. Sins of omission, in short.

The list of sellers used to compute the average take for the summer, for example, contains the gross income before expenses, which according to students who sold last year can run as high as \$1,500 for the summer. Those amounts are listed simply as "Profit." No indication of whether these are gross or net profit figures appears on the sheet. Prospective sellers are also given a list of former salesmen and their parents to call. The names of Collins, McBarron, Carey and others from the University who had problems last summer do not appear on that list.

Students interviewed said they would have either not worked for the company or could have been better prepared when they did go if they had only been told certain things about the program; namely, more about expenses, living arrangements and a more accurate portrayal of what they could expect to earn. □

THE SOUTHWESTERN COMPANY



SURETY BOND

WHEREAS, _____ and _____ desire to act as peddlers in the City of _____, State of _____; and

WHEREAS, The Southwestern Company of Nashville, Tennessee may benefit from _____'s and _____'s actions as peddlers; and

WHEREAS, the City requires certain guarantees before it will allow _____ and _____ to act as peddlers within its limits;

NOW, THEREFORE, The Southwestern Company agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the City from and against all unlawful acts undertaken by _____ and _____ in connection with sale of books and merchandise published by The Southwestern Company in an amount not to exceed a total of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00).

This Agreement shall remain in effect until the end of the calendar year in which it is executed.

SIGNED, this _____ day of _____, 19____.

(Dealer)

(Dealer)

(Dealer)

THE SOUTHWESTERN COMPANY

ATTEST:

Ralph W. Mosley
Chairman

By *Jerry Haffel*
President

The surety bond protected consumers in case one of Southwestern's "peddlers" collected money but didn't deliver books. Some of the towns required students to have the bonds before they would issue a permit to sell door-to-door.

STUDENTS

EARN
\$90
AND
MORE
A MONTH



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Week of May 11-15, 1987
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1. **Thirty-five Plus Diet Women** by Jean Spod
2. **Small Sacrifices** by Ann Rule
3. **New American Diet** by Sonja Connor
4. **Superimmunity** by Paul Pearsall
5. **This 'n That** by Bette Davis
6. **Beverly: An Autobiography** by Beverly Sills
7. **Momilies & More Momilies** by Michele Slung
8. **Communion** by Whitley Strieber
9. **Jolly Postman** by Janet Ahlberg
10. **Feel Fear, Do It Anyway** by Susan Jeffers

FICTION

1. **Fine Things** by Danielle Steel
2. **Heiress** by Janet Dailey
3. **Haunted Mesa** by Louis L'Amour
4. **Bolt** by Dick Francis
5. **Red Storm Rising** by Tom Clancy
6. **Texasville** by Larry McMurtry
7. **Seattle Green** by Jane Adams
8. **Ladies of Missaloughi** by Colleen McCullough
9. **Of Love & Shadows** by Isabel Allende
10. **Thanatos Syndrome** by Walker Percy