

Early reports key to stolen textbook recovery

By Rita Dell
 ■ The Oracle
 U. of Southern Florida

Students and outsiders commonly steal textbooks, most often from the library and the residence halls, and attempt to sell them back to the Textbook Center on campus or the Book Center for U. of Southern Florida, said Lt. Bob Staehle of the University Police.

Staehle said the content of the books doesn't matter very much to the thieves.

"If it's in good shape and is a USF-required textbook that can be resold, they will take it," he said.

Two 18-year-old female students were apprehended when they tried to sell stolen textbooks to the Textbook Center last Febuary, according to UP records.

The books, which were valued at \$141, were reported stolen from a study table at the library.

In this case, the owner immediately reported the theft to the UP, who routinely informs both book cen-

ters about stolen textbooks, Staehle said.

He said the two suspects also were in possession of two other textbooks that had not been reported stolen.

The suspects told officers they had found the five books abandoned in front of Cooper Hall and had tried unsuccessfully to find the owner, Staehle said.

"Textbook theft really picks up at the end of each semester with the book buy-back," Staehle said.

Doug Gatanis, who is the text manager for the Book Center for USF, said, "We have at least 30 people at the beginning of a semester reporting their books stolen."

Gatanis said book thefts are reported to the center most often during the first and last two weeks of class.

Gatanis said when he is informed of a theft by the UP or by a student, he tries to get a description of the book and of any distinguishable marks. He said he then puts the information into a computer.

If someone tries to sell back a stolen textbook, the computer will match it and alert the employees,

Gatanis said.

"We then report it to the police," he said.

Gatanis said he looks for people who bring in books often or who don't look like students.

However, unless the books are reported stolen there is not much that can be done, he said.

"Even if we think the books are stolen, we can't refuse to buy them back," Gatanis said.

Jeff Mack, the general manager of all USF bookstores, said the Textbook Center also uses a computer system to identify stolen books.

Mack said his biggest problem is getting people to let the center know about stolen books so he can put the information on the computer.

Staehle said students could protect their books by picking out the same page in each book and writing in their names or social security numbers in small print.

The thief probably wouldn't take time to look for something like that, he said.

NASA uses schools to design space habitats

By Janette Poole
 ■ Kansas State Collegian
 Kansas State U.

Kansas State U. has been selected by NASA to formulate designs for human habitats in outer space.

The project will examine the control of closed environmental systems used in space travel and living said Allen Cogley, department head of mechanical engineering at Kansas State U.

Cogley said the mechanical and chemical engineering departments were chosen to administer the project at his university, including an advanced design team of about 30 students per year.

The KSU proposal, "Automation of

Closed Environments in Space for Human Comfort and Safety," provides \$25,000 per year for the salary of a graduate assistant, permanent equipment, communication networks, travel expenses and supplies, Cogley said. The graduate assistant acts as the liaison between the university and NASA.

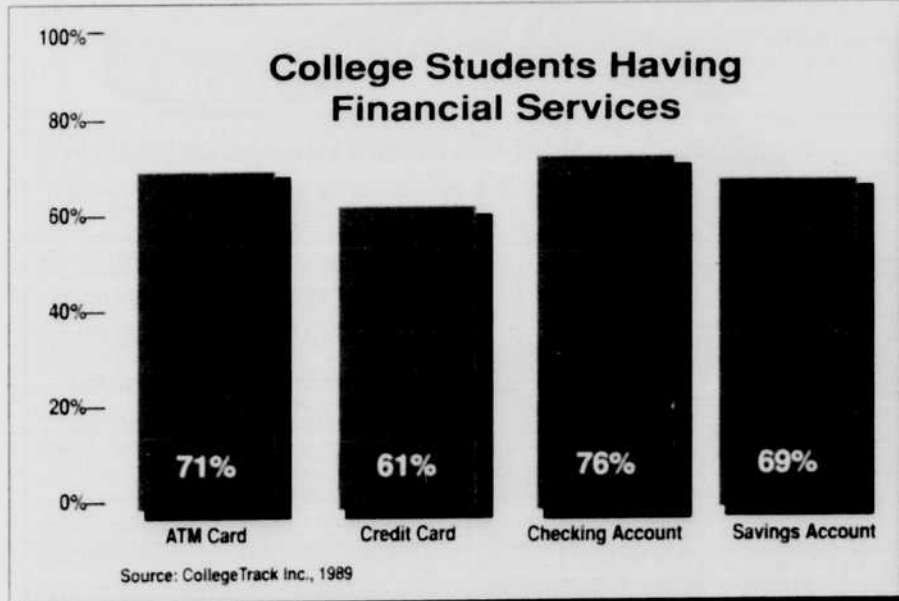
At least 20 percent of the team members, who will be able to obtain credit from their departments for their work, will be from departments other than engineering, Cogley said. Applicants should be second-semester juniors or first-semester seniors because of the time commitment and the level of work involved. The project is an excellent opportunity for future employment with

NASA, Cogley said.

"It's a good opportunity for students and faculty to get their foot in the door," he suggested.

KSU has previously participated in NASA projects. The mechanical engineering department design team won the national competition in 1983-84 for its work in the specialized design of a space glove.

Cogley, who wrote the proposal for the university, said the program was announced in January. He said the project is interdisciplinary, with students and faculty from departments of mechanical, chemical and electrical engineering, biology, computer science, human ecology, and veterinary medicine/physiology.



Rent

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their names on the billings. It often becomes a verbal agreement, Whitmer said.

He said roommates should sign an agreement indicating their responsibilities.

"You are a fool if you don't sign a roommate agreement with someone that you don't know well," Whitmer said.

The only legal process designed to recover money from an ex-roommate is to take him to small claims court to recover money up to \$1,000 or less, he said.

To file in small claims court, the plaintiff must pay the bills, because he can't sue until they are paid, Whitmer said.

The person filing must do so in the county where the defendant lives and

the defendant is allowed to set the hearing date, he said. If the defendant does not appear in court, the injured party wins.

Even with a favorable ruling from the judge, the ex-roommate may not pay. If the payment is not made within 15 days after the judgment, the injured roommate may be able to garnishee his ex-roommate's wages if he earns more than \$400 a month.

"The biggest problem is collecting the money from the ex-roommate and going to the trouble to get it," Whitmer said, adding that small claims court is the only way to recover money.

Kristy Newlon, junior, was left with bills at the end of last year.

"I got lucky though, in getting my money back. I just called my old roommate's parents and told them the situation and they reimbursed me," she said.

Snakes

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Ty's credentials.

Besides snake speeches at elementary schools, Ty provided the Burmese python eggs for an ABC-TV special titled "The World of Snakes." He also did illustrations for *Venomous Snakes of Latin America*, written by biology Assistant Professor Johnathon Campbell.

"He's the best illustrator I've ever seen," Campbell said. "He has a great eye for detail."

Ty and Troy should know what snakes look like, as huge snake skins drape the hallway into Ty's room. Inside the room are more than 30 cages filled with albino speckled kings, gray-banded king snakes, corn snakes and, of course, Burmese python eggs.

The brothers had trouble finding financial backing for their business until their older brother Earl took stock in detergent, literally.

"He and five other guys bought stock in some detergents that jumped from the buying price of 74 cents a share to \$75 a share. He made about \$125,000 in two weeks," Troy said.

With this financial backing the business began. Troy said everyone involved with the business put in up to 20 hour days, 160 hours a week, which cut into their schoolwork.

An positive attitude has helped, too. As John said, "Any goal is achievable, if you so desire."

Troy said he had no plans to start the business, but rather, just fell into it.

"I never really knew what I wanted to do. I fell into it. As a result of this, I never lost out on anything, except this girl from Ohio," he said.



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