

Editorial: Why are our book\$ \$o expen\$ive?

by Lora Woodrum
Clarion Asst. Editor

So, you are finally settled. You got your final copy of your schedule, unpacked and decorated your room, and are anxiously awaiting classes to start. But wait!! Yes, it's that hand-dandy syllabus. You know, the one that tells you exactly what will be expected of you. Whoever would of thought that it would include spending half of your bank account on "required" texts?

The problem is not only the cost of the books, it is also that most books are required and yet they are never used. Another problem that I have noticed is that some students who cannot afford the books simply do not buy them, which may result in failing courses.

Just as the students need the books to learn, the teachers need them to teach. But perhaps the faculty could recognize what is really necessary and order only those books that are essential.

The college itself does not purchase the books. It is handled by ARA Services. They buy the books from the book companies which give them suggested retail prices. Then, when the students resell the books at the end of the semester, the company buying the used books from ARA suggests the resale price. In return ARA gets commission from the amount of books they purchase.

Of course, every business must make a profit, however, there is a difference between profiting and profiteering. There is still the question, why do we pay so much? Especially when the price of the book we buy at the bookstore is \$11 and on the inside cover the book sells for \$8 at a book store. Or why we buy a book for \$50 and in return only get \$15! Maybe this is because of the suggested retail and resale prices, but there must be some way to eliminate this problem.

Larger universities purchase the books themselves, rent them to students and at the end of the semester, if the books are in good condition, their money is given back in full.

Now, this sounds pretty fair to me. When I mentioned this to President Greer he stated that Brevard is too small of a college to be able to accommodate such a program. But after leaving his office I felt secure that steps will be taken to improve not only the cost of books, but other bookstore items as well. "We can improve the situation and will," said

Greer. The Administration is not avoiding the outcry of the students. It is just a complicated process that cannot be solved overnight.

President Greer also said that when the new book store opens in the new Student Union, more students will be attracted to its jazzy new look. This means that more students will be browsing and buying. Realizing this, he hopes that the ARA will agree to his wish, which is lower prices. If they do not, then it may be possible that the school will take over. He added that we should be able to see a change in the prices within at least six months.

The blame does not lie with any one source. It is just that a compromise between ARA and Brevard College needs to be struck.

In the meantime, we, the students have to settle with scraping our pockets for pennies until an advance occurs. That is, at least for another six months. If by then it is apparent no changes have occurred, well, let's just say the flame will be rekindled.

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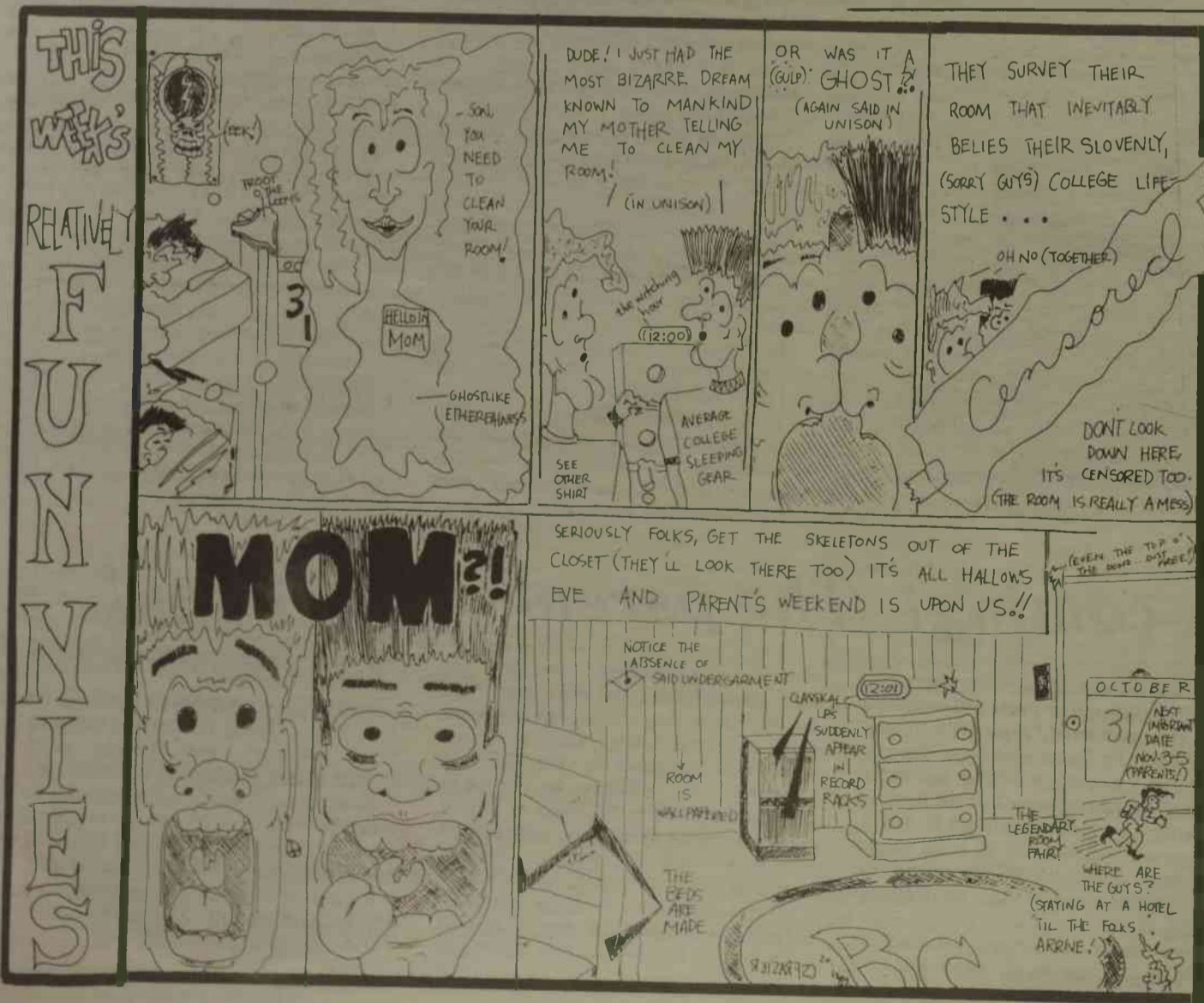
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Letters to the editor

Hello from Austria!

Dear Brevard College,
Hello from Austria! I hope that things are going well for all of the faculty and the students. All is going extremely well for the five of us.

We have had many interesting excursions and several beautiful hikes since we have been here. So, since it is my turn to tell everyone about what is going on in our lives, let me begin with our most recent excursion to Salzburg. Then, I will recount our adventure of hiking up Dachstein and getting caught in a snowstorm.

To begin with, in Austria, stores are not open on weekends. So, if one wants to shop, one has to shop in Salzburg, we had to plan to go during the week. Altogether, it was a very nice day. We prowled in the stores, ate at McDonalds, (that made all of us very happy), and spent too much money.

Finally, this past weekend we had a real adventure. We hiked up a very large mountain that is called Dachstein. It was very pleasant hike up but, on the second day a blizzard struck the mountain and we were forced to hike all the way down a different side of the mountain. The hike down was very difficult and extremely slippery because of the snow and rain. Altogether, we hiked 22 miles.

Well, that is the news from Austria. I hope that all is well and will continue to be so. See you in the spring.

Auf Wiedersehen
Catherine Engstrom