

Crime on campus

by Laura Borawski
Collegian Staff

In lieu of the fact that this is my primary appearance as a columnist in our campus newspaper, I am excited to have the opportunity to present to you an important issue that affects all of us, even if it's in the long run.

Theft is a major crime. It has been viewed by many as a crime of varying degree, depending upon what is stolen.

But what the folks with sticky fingers need to realize is that no matter what they are stealing, they are committing an unlawful crime.

The reason why I have chosen to elaborate upon such an issue is because of its effect on me, and because of its effect on you. The effect is a negative one and very unnecessary.

It is something that should be brought to everyone's attention in order that justice may be enforced, and that ignorance may be disposed of properly. We do not and should not have to tolerate such behavior occurring right before our eyes. Having flushed that from my system, I will now proceed with my complaints and concerns.

I work in our bookstore several hours a week; whatever fits into my schedule of classes. There's a good possibility you've seen me around, either mousing up at the cash register or looking busy straightening books and offering

my helpful-Henry services.

As you all remember, the beginning of this spring semester was rather hectic, and more or less a big pain in the butt, as is every other one.

Some of us have to either run to mom and dad, grandma and grandpa, aunt and uncle, or some other God-sent source for cash or credit to pay for our books and other stuff for school. For the rest of us, the "independent" college students who have nothing more than lint in our pockets and debts out the wa-zoo, we must somehow come up with the cash ourselves.

Some students never even purchase required books and face the consequences due to lack of funds. Also, we all know that some texts end up having a pretty extensive shelf-life sitting on our desks collecting dust without ever being used.

Since it is obvious to all students that books are priced by some money-hungry S.O.B. simply "doing his/her job," we enter the bookstore dreading the walk to the mile-long register line where the guillotine, disguised as the "sub-total" button, awaits. We even consider ourselves lucky sometimes when we retrieve a "used" book from the shelves of hell. Even those books add up to a hefty sum.

What am I getting at? Allow me to explain. The bottom line is that the cost of books is astronomically high, and causes us

to become enraged with the entire system. (I know because I've heard it left and right, but I don't blame you.)

When students deem themselves capable of stealing without getting caught red-handed, then they follow through by converting words or thoughts into action, and rip off whatever it is that they're after.

I am ashamed to say that



numerous events have taken place right here in our Behrend Bookstore that involve theft.

Theft here has included stealing, (as in lifting things) as well as repricing books or other items at a cost that suits the culprit's fancy.

Whether a pen is taken, or maybe a sweatshirt, a few books, or a beer poster - the charge still stands as theft. Even if the case is one in which the ignorant person does change price-stickers

on something; hey, that's still a case considered theft.

How about the gall of some people who rip off other students in the restrooms? We've had students come to the store to tell us that within minutes their books that were in the restroom, either on a shelf or on the floor, have been stolen. It's so wonderful to live in an honest society...

These thieves, believing themselves to be sneaky and sly, are cheating not only their school's bookstore, but their fellow students and themselves as well. They've definitely cheated me and the rest of my fellow employees.

Our hours have been cut in order to ameliorate the budget. Understandable. But if our campus had more honest-Abe's, and if we didn't lose so much money to their unlawful hands and bookbags and roomy winter coats, then maybe the hours offered to working students would be greater.

This is where I become confused. Why would anyone want to cheat their friends? Furthermore, why would they cheat themselves? All of the thieves reading this may have the answers to my questions, but I certainly don't. (And you know who you are, too. Doesn't this bother you?)

Each time something is stolen, or something unjustly repriced,

the money lost by the bookstore, and essentially the same S.O.B. just "doing his/her job" must be made up by none other than those who need the books, the clothes, the supplies, etc.- we the consumers; many of us, poor college students.

It just doesn't make any sense. Nice example of "truth, justice, and the American Way." It's almost embarrassing. I feel sorry for those compelled to steal, to be dishonest and foolish, to feel as if they've fooled everyone because of their ignorance of the law; the same law that protects us against what may unjustly harm us in society. The same law that is at our beckoning calls

to protect us - including all of you thieves who betray the law.

Just so you know, the bookstore's employees are not stupid; that even includes me. We've been blessed with eyes that can see, and that watch what's going on. If you think you're fooling me, guess again. What goes around comes around, and this stealing thing will catch up to you in the end. Trust me.

So, all of you guilty folks, my deepest sympathy, and thank you so much for your ignorance. It means so much. To everybody else, well, I guess that's just the way it goes. That is, until somebody, somewhere, does something about this problem. Personally, I wish there was an easy answer. How about you?

Killer radiation

by Dave Barry
Syndicated Columnist

Radiation is a doubled-edged sword: It can be our deadly enemy, as when it leaks out of a nuclear reactor and harms innocent people; yet it can also be our friend, as when it leaks out of a nuclear reactor and harms Donald Trump.

Another example: Dentists use radiation, in the form of X-rays, to determine which of our teeth are still real, so they can grind them into stumps and cover them with improved space-age materials costing thousands of dollars per ounce. Yet those very same "X-rays," if we are overexposed to them, can cause us to look like Willie Nelson. I base this statement on my own dentist, Stanley Krugman. He is a fine person and a skilled professional but he looks WAY too much like Willie Nelson for it to be a result of natural causes. When he works on my teeth, I'm always expecting him to burst into song:

"...darlin' won't you come back soon and spit mouthwash in my spitoon."

I recently received another example of bad radiation from alert reader Laurie Belin, who sent me a UPI article that should be of grave concern to all those individuals who use furniture.

The article, which I am not making up, begins:

"MOSCOW -- A Russian businessman who died recently of mysterious causes was apparently killed by his chair, which was found after his death to be highly radioactive, Russian newspapers reported Friday."

The article goes on to state: "Investigators discovered that the deadly office chair was the source of 1.5 million times more radioactivity than normal background levels. ... It was not known how the chair became radioactive, but there have been other incidents in Moscow where ordinary household items and even foods have been found to be radioactive."

Your reaction to this article, as a compassionate human being, is: "How can I get a chair like that for certain people in my office, particularly the cretin who will not stop humming Gary Puckett songs?"

No, seriously, your reaction is to be shocked, but also to be reassured by the belief that, while there might be radioactive chairs in Russia, there would never be any here.

I wish I shared your optimism. I wish I could tell you that when I contacted the American Chair Council, a spokesperson informed me that every chair sold in this country

is subjected to a rigorous radiation-testing process wherein an inspector sits in it for a certain period of time and notes, on a clipboard, whether or not he dies. But I'm afraid I cannot tell you this, and do you want to know why? Because there IS no "American Chair Council." And even if there was, I am way too lazy to contact it. This is a perfect example of the



lackadaisical, "who-cares" attitude that pervades our society, and makes us perfectly capable of producing radioactive chairs or food. (Take a close look at "Lucky Charms" cereal, and then try to tell me that it does not involve massive doses of atomic energy.)

So we have reason to be concerned. But we should not

panic. We should simply make whatever lifestyle adjustments are necessary to reflect the fact that every single object we come into contact with could kill us, and then we should put it out of our minds. Perhaps it will help if we remember that radiation also benefits mankind in ways that were never before possible. I am referring, as you may already have guessed, to microwave grape racing.

I found out about microwave grape racing from Greg Jacobs, a student at my alma mater, Haverford College (official motto: "No, Dammit, I Did NOT Say 'Harvard!'"). Basically, here's how it works: You put a thin film of sunflower oil on the floor of your microwave oven, and then you line some grapes up against one side, with the holes pointing at the wall. Then you turn the microwave on full power, which heats the grapes' interiors until steam goes shooting out the holes, thus turning the grapes into little organic rocket engines that scoot across the lubricated oven floor.

WARNING: THE PROCEDURE DESCRIBED IN THE PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH IS NOT APPROVED BY THE AMERICAN MICROWAVE COUNCIL (IF THERE IS

SUCH A THING) AND COULD BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE ALREADY ESTABLISHED THAT YOUR SPATULA COULD BE GIVING OFF MORE RADIATION THAN CHERNOBYL, SO WHAT DO YOU CARE?

My son, Rob, and I held some microwave grape races, after taking the standard precaution of making sure that my wife was not home. It was entertaining, although many of the grapes -- and I blame the Clinton administration -- lacked the Will To Win. Only a few grapes actually moved, and rarely in the right direction. The rest either spun in circles, or exploded right at the starting line. This was more fun to watch than, say, the Indianapolis 500, where you usually have to sit through many laps to see that kind of action.

Thus we see that radiation, if used wisely, can provide important benefits to humanity for many years to come. Although you, personally, might not see this come to pass, especially if you are touching this newspaper with your bare hands.