

PSU bookstore hopes to end complimentary book sales

By LISA GRIECO
Collegian Staff Writer

Officials at the Penn State Bookstore on Campus are taking steps to combat the "unethical" practice of reselling complimentary copies of books — a problem rapidly gaining momentum nationwide.

As part of the yearly marketing process, publishers flood instructors with free copies of new textbooks. Often instructors, who may not have requested the books, resell the copies to bookstores and wholesalers for a profit. Each time a complimentary copy is resold, the publisher and author make no money from the transaction, said Elizabeth Wilson, the bookstore's merchandise supervisor.

Publishers mark complimentary copies in a variety of ways, such as drilling holes in the covers or removing several chapters.

"It's the ethical thing to not deal in complimentary copies," Wilson said. "It's a practice that should be stopped."

Bright yellow signs posted throughout the campus bookstore have informed students since the beginning of this semester that management is cracking down on instructors who attempt to resell complimentary books.

Customers who purchase textbooks suffer when instructors and wholesalers deal in complimentary books, Wilson said. Publishers have to charge more for regular copies of books to make up for lost revenues.

But Norm Brown, manager of the Student Book Store, 330 E. College Ave., does not agree that students suffer when complimentary books are sold.

He said the store has no policy against selling such copies, which show up in shipments of used texts from wholesalers around the country. It is cheaper for a student to purchase used texts because they usually cost 25 percent less than new copies, he said.

"We're out to find used books because that's what the students want," Brown said. However, he estimated that complimentary copies equal less than 2 percent of the store's used book inventory.

Similarly, Steve Long, general manager of the University

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— ELIZABETH WILSON,
merchandise supervisor, the Penn State
Bookstore on Campus

Book Center, 206 E. College Ave., said UBC will buy complimentary copies from individuals as long as they do not have prominent markings.

"We really have not taken that strong of a stance," Long said. However, because of bad publicity about the practice, UBC will not resell complimentary books in State College in most cases, he added. Long said such books are sold to wholesalers of used books.

Long disagrees that the activity causes higher book prices, which publishers blame on bookstores and instructors who deal in complimentary book trade.

"This is total nonsense that this has anything to do with the price of books. (Publishers) really don't want to clean up the problem or they would," he said.

Wilson said the campus bookstore has had the policy of not selling complimentary books for several years, but an increase in the activity, coupled with a change in management, prompted store officials to take a tougher stand.

The actions of the campus bookstore followed recommendations from several organizations, including the National Association of College Stores and the Textbook Authors Association.

"The feeling in the industry is that this is an abused privilege," Wilson said.

Officials at the Penn State Bookstore on Campus ask students who notice any complimentary copies to turn them in to the service desk. They said it is impossible for the store's employees to catch every copy without student assistance.

Some customers have already found complimentary copies on the shelves this semester and turned them in, Wilson said.

The campus bookstore also has informed its wholesalers they will not accept any complimentary copies.

New outdoor lights brighten walkways around University

By KRISTIN WINTERMANTEL
Collegian Staff Writer

If the University's campus seems a lot brighter at night than it did in May, it's because of new high-pressure sodium lamps installed in outdoor lights around campus.

The University's Office of Physical Plant has been working on a campus lighting conversion project since February, said J. Carroll Dean, manager of electrical and electronics services for the physical plant.

The project involves converting outdoor lights on campus from mercury vapor lamps to high-pressure sodium lamps that are 50 percent more efficient, Dean said. The purpose of the conversion is to increase lighting on campus, he said, and the project was begun at the request of the Department of University Safety.

The high-pressure sodium lamps give off a brighter, pale yellow light, while the old lights emitted a duller bluish-white light, Dean said. The new lamps use the same wattage as the old mercury vapor lamps, while giving off more light. The lamps were chosen, he said, in order to "get more light out of the existing system."

All work is scheduled to be completed in October, when University safety and the physical plant will conduct a survey to evaluate the changes made and determine whether any other improvements are necessary, Dean said. The survey will comprise the final phase of the project.

When finished, the project will cost

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for environmental health
and safety.

close to \$150,000, Dean said. There are now about 1,175 street walkway lights on campus. It costs about \$60,000 a year to operate them and \$12,000 to \$15,000 annually in maintenance, he said.

The majority of the lights on campus are remotely controlled, Dean said. They are connected to circuits fed from 50 campus buildings, which receive signals from a computer in the Physical Plant Building.

Officials from the physical plant and University safety conduct a survey of campus lighting twice a year, Dean said. They walk parts of the campus at night for about three hours and evaluate lighting in those areas.

There are different criteria used to determine whether an area is well-lit.

Physical plant officials base the decision on whether a person can see any tripping hazards, such as a fallen tree limb or an empty can in the walkway. University safety officials use the criteria of whether a person can identify the face of a passerby, and also whether he or she feels comfortable in the area, said David Stormer, assistant vice president for environmental health and safety.

"Everyone draws upon their own experience and background as to whether he feels comfortable (walking on campus at night). What feels comfortable to one may not to another. Everyone's socialization process is different," Stormer said.


University police officers and community services officers also check campus lighting during their patrols, said George Conklin, a biosafety officer with environmental health and safety in University safety.

Although lighting does not stop crime, Stormer stressed the importance of staying on well-lit pathways when walking at night.

"Lighting does not prevent crime. If it did, there would be no crime in the daytime. What it does do is affect how people feel, their perceptions, and their fears," Stormer said.

University safety distributes a "night map" of the campus that highlights walkways most traveled at night and those which have better lighting, Stormer said. The map was initiated by the Undergraduate Student Government in 1980 and was first printed by University safety at that time.

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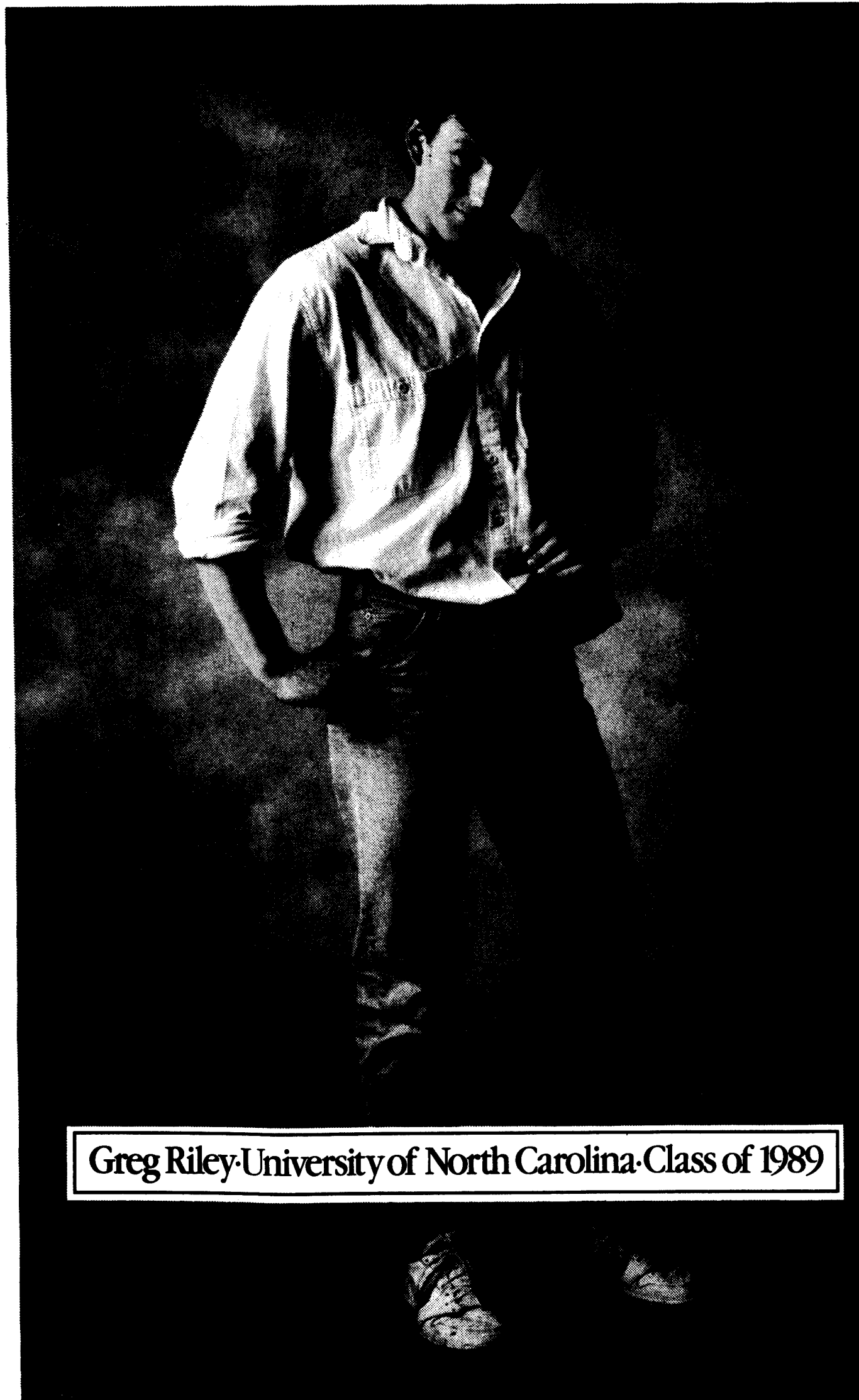


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