

turn resell to their students. The idea is to avoid any kind of store overhead costs. This idea works in theory, and has worked for the odd class, but unfortunately, professors are only human and any move toward this concept would probably result in chaos. Somehow, I can't see profs taking orders and making change. To explode the myth, it's unlikely that books would consistently be ordered and available on time throughout the university as a whole. Since books are a million-dollar business at UNB, its best left to the professionals who specialize. That was the intent in setting up the store originally.

From 1951 until August 1979, Mrs. Marjorie Logue served as manageress of the bookstore. A

## The bookstore saga (Continued from pg. 5)

graduate of UNB, she holds a Masters degree in biology. Looking back on her involvement here, Mrs. Logue said she "thoroughly enjoyed the 28 years I was involved with the bookstore. I've made a lot of good friends and have enjoyed the contact with the students." She looks forward to a well-deserved retirement.

Taking over is Mr. Doug McConnell, who was formerly manager for employee benefits in the university personnel office. Mr. McConnell also brings his previous experience in the banking industry to his new task. He heads a staff of 15 full-time people, as well as several part-time student

staffers who work mainly during summer and fall.

What these people do seems simple enough: they order books for professors and upon arrival they place the books on the shelves. In a little more detail the process works like this:

In late winter or spring textbook orders for fall term are placed by professors with the bookstore. Titles have to be ordered at least five to six months in advance. The store then contacts publishers for an "in stock - out of stock" confirmation. Assuming the publisher can supply, the books arrive over the summer months at the back door

of the store. They fill the storage space downstairs and floor shelves upstairs. Stock is priced and held in storage until the start of fall term, because throughout this time summer school texts stay on the shelves. Storage continues to be a problem; but the staffers have managed to find ways to live with it. They have to coordinate book buybacks in spring and summer with storage of incoming orders for fall, as well as finding the space required for summer school needs.

The store encounters many "snafus" in the process going from ordering to selling. In recent years an many as one of four faculty members place their book orders after July 1, placing a great burden on store staff as they frantically attempt to satisfy book needs in a mere two months.

Another problem experienced concerns, mixups between what are required texts and what are reference texts. Sometimes only a few copies of the required text (used daily) are ordered by a professor while at the same time many copies of the reference text (used only occasionally) are ordered. The result of this misunderstanding? Angry students and faculty members, black and white, they are unable to repurchase course books.

In recent years approximately 10 per cent of all book sales were returned to the publisher because of course changes and over-orders. This is costly because the bookstore pays all shipping costs in and out. Staff time is taken up de-pricing and packing books. Since borrowed money is used to finance inventory, interest charges must be paid while this stock is still on hand.

Upcoming changes will include the introduction of Master Charge privileges at the cash register as a convenience to students. There is no definite date for implementation as yet; look for it in the near future.

In the next couple of years, checking policy may change somewhat in relation to counter cheques. As the banks go to computerization, they are encouraging the store to forego the blank UNB counter cheques which are familiar to returning students. Note that regular chequing privileges are NOT expected to change.

Lineups are a frustration this time of year, of course; a real headache for students as well as staff as huge crowds buy the year's texts in the space of a couple of weeks. As manager McConnell says "In our business, Christmas comes three months early, only there's no Santa Claus!" The bookstore adds extra help of course, but there doesn't seem to be any real solution to the lineups. One way to ameliorate the situation is to shift buying time: arriving either early or late in the day when the crowds have thinned.

The truth of the matter, then, is that the bookstore makes no exorbitant profits off students. To get an outside look at how the "industry" views our operation here, I recently talked with a sales representative of a major publishing firm. The impression I got from this objective observer was that by and large, our UNB bookstore is run quite well; in fact it rates high in relation to other bookstores across the country.

What the store does do quite well is assist students and faculty by making books, i.e. "the tools of our trade", available in the most efficient manner possible.

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That the bookstore actually loses money on textbooks in that it requires an average profit markup per item on 23 per cent break even; but the store sells texts at only a 20 per cent markup. This loss is made up by sales of other, more profitable items, like records, stationary, gifts, etcetera.

In 1963, when the bookstore opened in its present location, it served 5,100 students by providing 855 titles for 445 courses. Recently, to serve 8,500 students (including UNBSJ) more than 4,000 titles were ordered for 1,100 courses. This increase has meant a shortage of storage space and large sums of money tied up in inventory for months.

Any profit or loss accumulated by the bookstore is absorbed by the University Fund. So as you can see, it's a very tightly-run, break-even operation with textbooks sold at the lowest possible cost.

If the bookstore had more orders in hand from faculty by year's end in April, they would be able to buy back more books from students. Unfortunately until they have text requirements down in black and white, they are unable to repurchase course books.

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