

Bras, burnt bills and pet pampering. What's your expense account doozy?

I'm starting the Expense Account Hall of Fame to honor those enterprising American workers who have managed to charge management for various goods and services in the ongoing search for quality of life.

What gave me this idea is a check for \$30 written to me by this newspaper to pay for a massage for my dog, Harry. In October, I took Harry to a dog masseuse in South Austin. Once I wrote about the dog massage, I passed along the \$30 expense for the massage to my boss. I don't know why, but there



John Kelso

was something downright special about getting a corporate check for \$30 and an invoice with the words "dog massage" printed on it. So I had the check and attached invoice blown up at Kinko's to about 1 foot by 1½ feet, then took it to the Hobby Lobby to have it framed, suitable for hanging.

I suspect management

would find me suitable for hanging if I tried to expense the \$50.34 charge for getting the check and invoice framed. I'll eat the cost of the frame. A key to successful expensing is knowing when to fold them. Although I knew a columnist who expensed a \$50 hooker in the name of research.

Do you know anybody who deserves to be in the Expense Account Hall of Fame? Do you know anybody — perhaps yourself — who has ever expensed, say, livestock, real estate or a car? Or \$600 in table

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Austin American-Statesman
P.O. BOX 878 • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767-0878

156068

DATE: 10-23-00

TIME: 10:23:00

AMOUNT: \$30.00

VOID IF NOT CASHED WITHIN 90 DAYS

FOR THE ORDER OF: JOHN KELSO

Robert Kelso

⑈ 156068⑈ 4081113794 07 504 105 ⑈

Austin American-Statesman VENDOR NBR: 05334 CHECK NBR: 156068

BOOKING DATE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	AMOUNT PAID
10/20/2000	DOG MASSAGE	361-699	30.00

Larry G. Hobbs/AA-S

Harry sure seemed happy after his massage in October. That short session of canine coddling cost the newspaper \$30 (it went on an expense account). Look, here's the proof.

Kelso: Let's hear it. What silly things have you conned your bosses into paying for?

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dances by hiding them under "tips"? If so, please contact me at the e-mail address or phone number at the bottom of this column and share your best expense-account stories. I'll take the person with the best story to lunch.

We'll expense the lunch.

Rule No. 1 in expense accounting: If you've got the guts, you can put anything on an expense account, even your underwear.

I know a gal who worked at a newspaper in Florida who turned in an expense account for her bra. While covering a story, she went to a party and was thrown in the swimming pool. It ruined her bra, so she charged for it. This was a woman who deserved to be

thrown in the swimming pool. So I'm surprised she didn't expense 103,239 bras during her career.

You know Pat Beach, our funny feature writer who did the story last Sunday in our Life & Arts section hammering Washington Post writer Hank Stuever for saying bad poop about Texas? Remember that photo in the paper of Beach lighting a cheap cigar with burning folding money? That was real money — five \$1 bills. So, naturally, Beach turned in an expense account for \$5, with the burned bills attached to the form. He also expensed the cheap cigar.

Rule No. 2 in expense accounting: Always get a receipt. A colleague was sent out undercover to investigate adult "tanning salons." During his research, my

friend discovered it cost \$40 to watch a woman dancing in lingerie.

So, to help the newspaper cut expenses, he clipped a \$10 tanning salon coupon out of the newspaper. He also attended a second tanning salon's "lunch time special," another \$10 off, to save the company money.

Then, when he turned in his expense account without receipts, management crabbed, though it eventually paid.

Rule No. 3: Never try to save the company money. They'll think it's a trick.

John Kelso's humor column appears on Sundays, Tuesdays and Fridays. He can be reached at 445-3606 or at jkkelso@statesman.com.