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Cause of toilet explosion undetermined

By Ward W. Triplett III

Jay Petersen had just stepped out of his seventh floor Harper Residence Hall room Sunday night when a loud, echoing sound caused him to pause.

"I thought somebody had tossed some trash cans full of bottles down the trash chute," said Petersen, a sophomore from Ogallala. "Those type of things happen a lot, so I didn't think anything of it and just kept on going."

The sound was an explosion that destroyed a toilet in the floor bathroom. State Fire Marshall Jim Winters said laboratory tests would be needed to determine the cause of the explosion.

Winters said the incident involved explosives a little larger than normal size firecrackers that could be submerged in water and still go off.

The explosion occurred about 7:45 p.m. and most of the residents were on the floor at the time. One of them, freshman Mike Janssen, said he saw someone after the explosion whom he'd never seen on the floor previously.

"I was in my room when I heard this big noise," Janssen said. "I walked into the bathroom and saw all the pieces on the floor. I went up to the S.A.'s door (student assistant) and this guy was already knocking on it. He told me he was going to the bathroom when it happened."

Janssen said he didn't see the person anymore. He and others described him as being "white as a sheet" while he was there.

Another resident, sophomore Scott Yonker, said he was in his room directly across from the bathroom en-

trance when he heard someone "tearing out of the bathroom."

"I first thought that a bunch of guys were running around as usual. Right after than I heard a door slam, and then something blew," Yonker said.

Winters said the explosion was extremely dangerous. "If someone had been walking by it (the explosion), they would have very easily been seriously hurt," Winters said.

Pieces were scattered in all directions from the stall. Some of the smaller chunks flew more than 15 feet away.

Winters said UNL police investigator D. Petersen interviewed most of the floor residents for additional evidence Sunday night.

After an emergency floor meeting, Winters said the students were cooperative, and his office would need their help to stop any similar future actions.

"This is the third time I've been out here in a week, and it's getting a little ridiculous," Winters said. "These guys are the ones that have to live here, and they know more of what's going on than we do. We're going to have to have their help in stopping whoever's doing this."

Winters and Petersen said they could not yet determine if the type of explosive that started fires in a Harper trash chute last weekend was used in the Sunday explosion.

Petersen said it was the most extensive damage to university property that he had seen in his three years with the UNL police.

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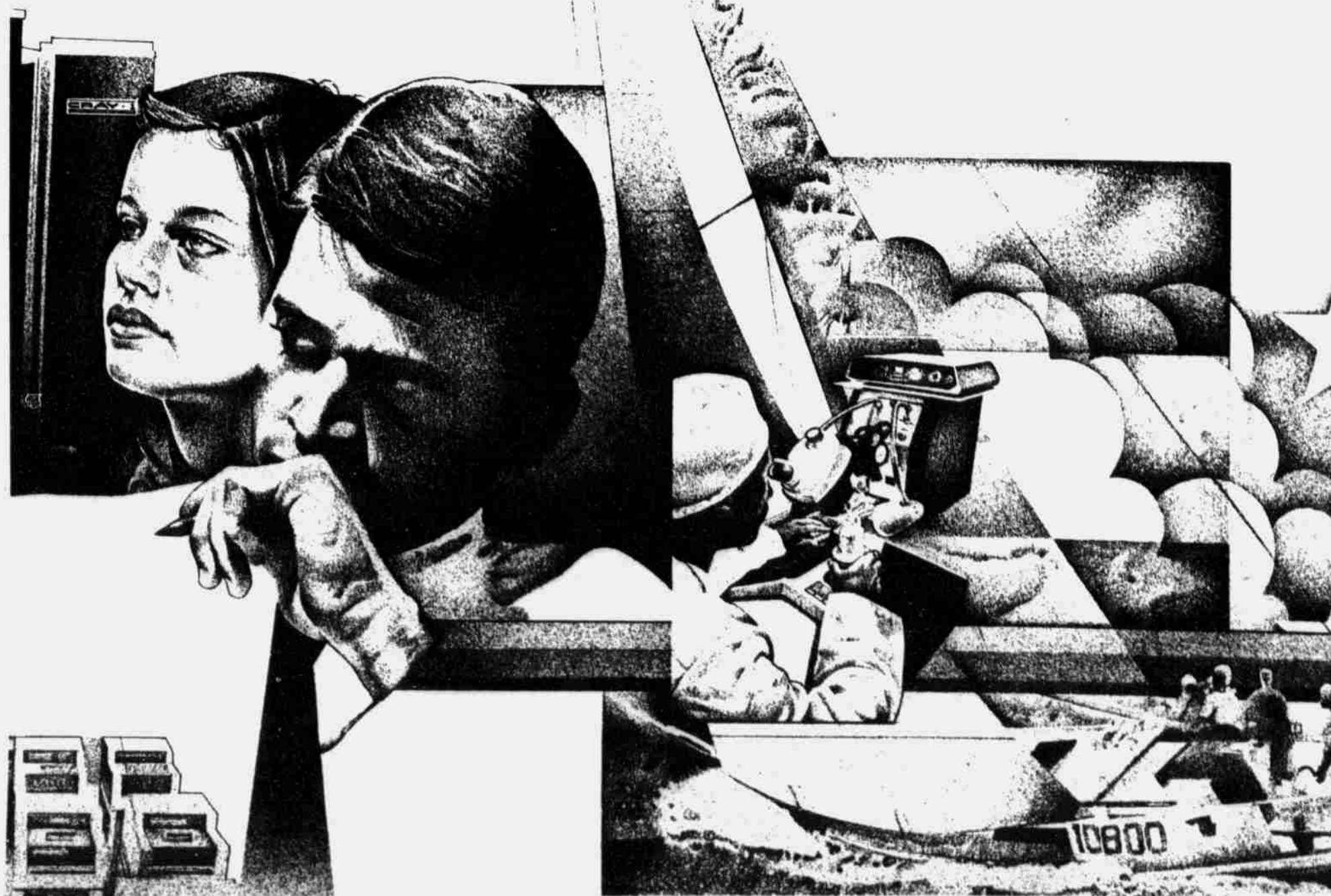
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Budget cuts don't affect work study

UNL's Work Study program has not been affected by Reagan administration budget cuts, said Doug Severs, assistant director of scholarships and financial aids. Severs is also in charge of work study. "Work study has not been cut and I don't think it will, because it is a popular program," Severs said.

Work study is a federally sponsored program that employs students with financial need so they can go to school. Severs said students apply for the program like any other financial aid.

Severs said about \$1.1 million was allocated for the work study program this academic year and summer sessions. The federal government supplied about \$800,000 and UNL appropriated the remaining money.

"Between 800 and 1,200, maybe even more, students are involved in the program," Severs said. The students work as many hours a week as they can, depending on their schedule. Wages range from \$3.35 to \$5 per hour, depending on the type of job, and what skills the student has, Severs said.

The work study program tries to place the students in jobs that interest them and use their skills, Severs said. About 900 to 1,000 students work on campus, and about 20 students work off campus, Severs said.

He said the number of participants in the work student program is greater than it was five years ago, but the number has remained steady over the last two years.

"We have had many students go on to full-time jobs by participating in the program," Severs said. "Getting job experience was not the main purpose of the program but it is an asset to the financial aid gained. If any student would like to discuss the prospect of going on to a full time job by participating in the program, we would be glad to talk to them."