

## opinion/editorial

# Officials commended for fire safety precautions

A building fire can begin simply and quietly. Soon, however, it can explode into a raging inferno, destroying property and perhaps killing those unable to flee the burning building.

The fear of a fire sweeping through a college dormitory haunts university officials and housing department directors and employees because there is no foolproof way of ensuring against such a tragedy.

But there are preventive measures to be taken and it is important that the university in general, and the UNL housing department in particular, be lauded for their unrelenting efforts to make campus residence halls as safe as possible through increased awareness and by continually improving building conditions.

This praise is especially warranted this week after the containment of a fire Sunday at Selleck

Quadrangle and the successful evacuation of many of the building's residents.

According to Doug Zatechka, UNL housing director, the university is doing more to ensure the safety of its residents through preventive steps than is required by existing fire and building codes. Again, NU officials should be commended for those efforts as they represent a much-appreciated desire to keep the best interests of university students as a prime objective.

Cooperation by Selleck employees and residents also was cited as one of the major reasons a potentially serious situation was averted earlier this week and that, too, is commendable.

Unfortunately, in the past fire alarms have been set off by mischievous individuals who obviously prefer juvenile antics instead of respecting the safety of other people. As a result, dorm-

itory residents sometimes have been reluctant to leave a building when an alarm sounds.

Now, if someone is caught pulling a fire alarm for no reason, that individual's housing contract will be canceled within 24 hours. This policy has resulted in a reduction at UNL from 46 false alarms in residence halls two years ago, to seven such incidents last year. UNL's Residence Hall Association also is helping to curb this problem by offering rewards for information about false alarms. These efforts also should be applauded.

But the fact a fire was handled well at a residence hall deserves more than praise and a heavy sigh of relief. It also should be a reminder that such an incident can occur anytime and any place.

A fire alarm is a warning a warning that always should be regarded as a signal of danger and responded to accordingly.

## Scarlet B hangs on, not love

Boston—"If you want to know what I think, I think the guy deserved to die!"

The woman says this with a blistering vengeance. She is standing at the sink, briskly chopping the six walnut halves for her Scarsdale diet lunch.

"Listen to this," she says, turning back the pages of the paperback to the acknowledgments. She reads down the list: "Suzanne . . . Phyllis . . . Terry . . . Elizabeth . . . Janet . . . Barbara . . . Elaine . . . Francis . . . June . . . Sharon . . . Ruth . . . There are 35 women's names! The creep should have worn a scarlet B for bastard."

The woman puts the last scoop of cottage cheese on the platter and brings it to the table saying, "I don't know if she did it on purpose or not, but I hope she gets acquitted."

This is what the story of Jean Harris and Hy Tarnower has done. Turned us into voyeurs and partisans of this most compelling case of the "wronged woman."

The papers had been full of more details. There was the engagement ring that led to no wedding. There was the trip to Paris clouded by the letter from another woman. There was the night SHE stayed in, writing diet recipes while he went out partying.

The murder trial resonates with jealousy, rejection, pain, insensitivity. With her 14 years and his other women. Her pride and his other women. Her self-esteem and his other women. It

strikes too many familiar chords to simply play in the background.

So Jean Harris has become a kind of upper-crust blues heroine. Everywoman whose man done her wrong. Everywoman who ever found the inscription on the cuff links, the letters in the drawer, the clothes in the closet. Everywoman responded by saying only, "I wish—the same old wish—there were more ways I could do things for you."

## goodman

It was this woman who was attracted to and wooed by the urbane man with his roses, his wine cellar, his dinners, his trips . . . and his little black book.

I don't know whether she came to this relationship with her own low crop of self-esteem or whether he eventually cut her down to size. He sounds like a bait-and-switch artist of great experience—a man able to hook women on charm and promises of stardom and then transfer them back into his chorus line. We've all seen men like that.

But I still don't see this as some classic heroic tragedy. I see it as the sorry common soap opera of the woman who hung on too long for too little.

We've all seen them, the women who gradually settle for what a man gives

rather than what she wants. The woman whose self-image slowly splits into warring halves; headmistress of Madeira and scorned mistress of Scarsdale. Integrity Jean in her work life and Jealous Jean in her love life. We've seen what's left for the losers in this internal war of the ego, a final revealing request: "I wish immediately to be thrown away."

By 57, after 14 years, Jean Harris had learned too well how to swallow mouthfuls of humiliation in return for tidbits of attention. By 57, she had learned to misuse her pride to pretend she didn't mind. It's not all that unique.

Inevitably when anyone tamps down jealousy, anger, and pain, the pressure builds up. Cover 14 years of it with pills or pride, and sooner or later it will explode into some form of destruction.

So forgive me if I don't think Jean Harris is Everywoman Wronged. To me, she's Everywoman who didn't know when or how to go. She's Everywoman who ever stayed with a bastard "because I love him"—and called this romantic.

She is, finally, Everywoman who ever hung into a relationship by her fingernails while her self-esteem eroded like a crumbly windowsill on the 18th floor.

Eventually, like all of them, she fell into an abyss.

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# Vietnam veterans overshadowed by hostage hoopla

Some people think they have hit upon the greatest revelation of all time, but the fact that Vietnam veterans were treated like dirt when they returned to the United States is not a revelation. It is a shame that when the former hostages returned to the United States more Americans could not remember the time when others returned to freedom, that is if they were lucky enough to return alive.

The Vietnam veterans fought an illegal war, one that wasn't declared by Congress and yet they went to war because they were faithful to their nation. The sad part of the veterans' story is that many of the Americans who were killed in Vietnam weren't old enough to vote or drink, but they were old enough to be killed.

And many of the veterans went through more mental and physical anguish than the 52 former hostages. And there are veterans that come back to freedom with arms and legs missing, with serious mental problems and of course, with the gruesome memories of war.

The men who spent twice the amount of time that the former hostages did in Iran as prisoners of war, also should not be forgotten. And, of course, those who lost their lives and those who are still missing in action can never be forgotten.

Yes, the Vietnam veteran is cast aside every day. Perhaps the most irritating aspect of the former hostages' return is that some people insist on calling them heroes. Heroes for what? They weren't fighting a war. They didn't fight for freedom and they certainly didn't complete any feats worthy of a purple heart. The former hostages were in the right place at the wrong time. True, their captivity was sad and the whole nation prayed for their release, but they are not heroes.

When Paul Needham returned to Bellevue Sunday he suggested that a monument be built honoring the Vietnam veterans. Although the idea is a nice one, it's probably safe to say most of the Vietnam veterans don't want to be remembered only by a monument.

They probably want recognition for being there when Uncle Sam called. They fought an unpopular war, but they fought it and that's what they probably want to be remembered for.

Needham was correct Sunday when he said freedom is not always free. So it seems only appropriate we remember who the real heroes are and who paid the cost of keeping the United States free.

It's good to have Needham and Michael Moeller back in Nebraska, but it's also good to remember those who should have received red carpet treatment, and didn't.

## daily nebraskan

UPSP 144-080

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The Daily Nebraskan is published by the UNL Publications Board Monday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters, except during vacations.

Address: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 14th and R streets, Lincoln, Neb., 68588. Telephone: 472-2588.

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## richardson

The miserable memories that the veterans unfolded on the rest of the nation caused many Americans to push the thoughts of Vietnam out of their minds. The war was treated like a mistake that never occurred. Unfortunately, it did.

The thoughts of being spit on as they stepped off the airplanes, the thoughts of watching their friends being killed and worse, the nagging fear of losing their own lives came back to the Vietnam veterans as they watched the former hostages being paraded around and put on a pedestal by the United States. Many of the veterans found themselves feeling bitter about the treatment of the former hostages, and rightfully so. After fighting in a war that many of them did not want to fight in the veterans rarely, if at all, received one thank you from the United States' government or the people.

That's not to say that the former hostages don't deserve any of the attention they received, but it should be remembered that most of the Vietnam veterans were forced to be in Vietnam, while most of the former hostages chose to be in Iran.