

Dorm guard Brink: 'It's kind of being a camp counselor'

Dave Brink starts his day just as most students are finishing theirs. From 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. five nights a week, the UNL graduate makes his rounds as a Women's Residence Hall security guard.

According to Dick Strait, Housing Office operations coordinator, all downtown dormitory complexes now have night security guards, most of whom are students.

The guard's primary responsibility is to provide security for both property and people in the residence halls, Strait said.

They're not there in an enforcement capacity, Strait pointed out, but primarily to prevent vandalism, theft and maybe handle an occasional fight, he said.

The security program is only a couple of months old, according to Strait. Although it's not a substitute, it replaces the dormitory night watchman patrol started about three years ago.

Unlike the watchmen, UNL security guards do no janitorial work, but concentrate on seeing that doors and windows are locked, and that only students come into the dormitory after it closes, Strait said.

Campus Security Chief Gail Gade said the program was revamped and stepped up following the two rape incidents on the UNL campus earlier this year.

He said the guards currently are receiving on-the-job training which acquaints them with their responsibilities in their respective building.

The guards are uniformed, but carry no weapons, according to Gade. Soon they will be equipped with flashlights, and possibly two-way radios by fall, he added.

Brink said his duties consist mostly of making rounds regularly and watching the residence hall's door.

Twice each night, Brink said he and campus Security Officer Ken Nelson check the women's floors.

"Some girls don't know we go onto their floor," Brink said. "On occasion, the situation's been a little embarrassing. Once we frightened them."

Neither Brink nor Strait see the security guard as a policeman. Strait said the guards don't enforce visitation regulations or check out other illicit floor activity, although if they have an opportunity to prevent a breach of rules, they should, Strait said.

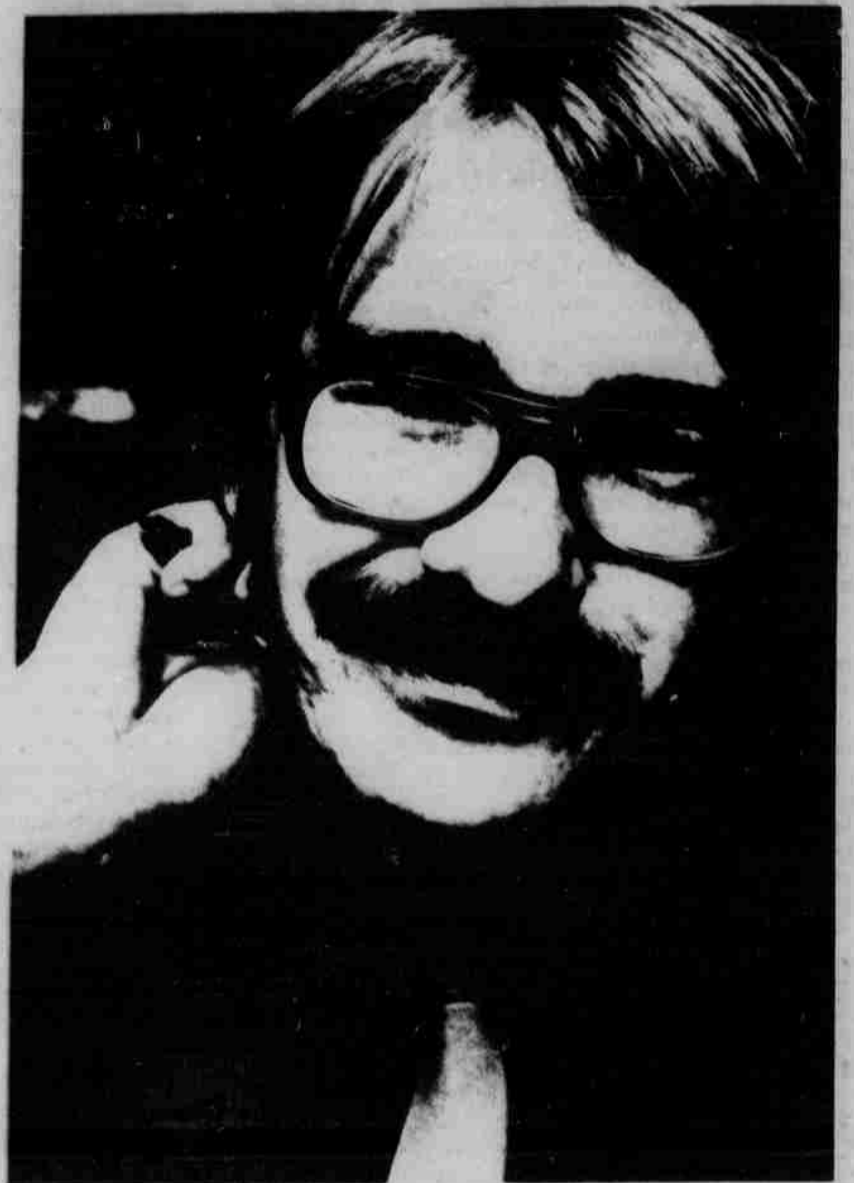
Two girl residents contacted responded positively to the new security program. Both said they thought the security guard program helps keep people who shouldn't be in the dormitory out of it.

Brink also said students' responses to him have been favorable.

"I've gotten a May basket and a badge from residents, and sometimes people bring me food from Valentino's and other things," the political science graduate and Vietnam veteran said.

He noted that he does a lot of talking while on duty.

"People stop to talk about school or their boyfriend. In a way, it's kind of being a camp counselor."



Photos by Gail Folda