

False fire alarms decrease

Peer pressure from Abel residents after an increased staff effort to alert them to the dangers of false fire alarms may have helped reduce false alarms in the last two weeks.

Before the staff went to the students, pranksters turned in 10 false alarms in a little over two weeks. Ron Bollheimer, Abel residence director (RD) said only two or three had been reported in the last two weeks.

Student safety was directly jeopardized by the alarms when students began stuffing the bells with paper and shaving cream to cut the noise. When an alarm was sounded students stayed in their rooms and could have been trapped there during a real fire, Bollheimer said.

Letters sent

Abel RD's sent out letters to each resident explaining the costs and dangers of false alarms, and student assistants alerted students to the problems at floor meetings, he said.

Lincoln Fire Chief Dallas Johnson said the students have pledged their cooperation in solving the rash of alarms which are punishable by \$100 and/or 30 days in jail, but that he has received no information on the pranksters' identities.

The UNL housing office is shopping for inexpensive alarm covers that would make it

necessary for a student to break glass and make noise to pull an alarm. Joe Zannini, assistant director of housing for maintenance operation, said the glass covers were used to reduce the number of false alarms at the University of Wisconsin.

Cage the bells

The housing office may also place cages over the bells so students can't tamper with them, he said.

The false alarms not only slow student response to real alarms, Johnson said, but also deprive others of fire-fighting time and equipment, cause traffic problems and cost money.

Johnson said less than 1 per cent of Lincoln fire alarms are false, but that nine-tenths of that number are at UNL residence halls. Each complex has some every year, but Abel seems to have a rash of them, he said.

Since January 1, 14 men in two fire engines, one ladder truck and a deputy chief's car responded to each of the 18 fire alarms at UNL residence halls. Seventeen of them were false and one was a legitimate smoke scare, a spokesman for the fire department records office said. Thirteen of those runs were to Abel, he said.



Photo by Kevin Higley
Lincoln Fire Chief Dallas Johnson

Tourney may move next year

The Nebraska high school basketball tournament probably will be held in the new sports complex next spring. According to Captain Kenneth Markle of campus security, that arrangement will be "much easier and much safer for everyone."

"The parking lot will be much better and there will be no hassle about fans taking away parking space from students," Markle said.

He said because of the fairgrounds' location, security next year will be a joint effort by campus security, the Lancaster County sheriff and Lincoln police.

"It'll be more convenient for everybody, more comfortable for the fans. Things will work a lot smoother," Markle said.

"Inside security will be practically the same," he said. "We'll have the same number of officers inside, and fewer parking officers outside."

Markle said the bleachers in the Coliseum have been used almost since its construction.

"The bleachers weren't the sturdiest," he said. Markle said he often feared the bleachers might collapse under the strain of a crowd.

Markle said problems with

this year's basketball tournament "could have been worse."

The major difficulty during the tournament arose when Creighton Prep fans built a human pyramid at half time of the class A finals. Markle said

they had permission to build the pyramid but an Omaha Central fan ran out and knocked it down.

"There were very few fights," Markle said. "There weren't more than four fights reported in the three days."

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