

Arson suspected in Smith fire; youth apprehended

By Mary Jo Pitzl

Campus Police have apprehended a 17-year-old male on suspicion of arson in connection with a fire at Smith Residence Hall early Saturday morning.

Capt. Kenneth Markel said the youth was found on campus and taken into custody several hours after flames broke out in the fourth floor lounge around 1 a.m. Further action is pending a preliminary hearing from the county attorney's office, Markel said. The youth is being held in jail, he said.

According to Harper-Schramm-Smith complex program director Celina Sima, the suspect is a member of the High School Equivalency Program (HEP). HEP students are housed at Smith and Harper halls, Sima said.

There were no injuries from the fire, Sima said. She added that only the fourth floor lounge suffered fire damage and it will need to be repaired before further use.

Lincoln Fire Department reports indicate that the fire was started in a chair in the lounge. The fire was contained in the lounge, although smoke spread to other rooms on the floor and caused damage to personal belongings, according to district fire chief C.J. Cablic.

Residents evacuate

The fire was reported at 1:06 a.m. The approximate 500 Smith residents were evacuated to the courtyard, many seeking refuge from the chilly night at Harper and Schramm halls.

Sima praised the smooth evacuation process, saying the residents were "extremely cooperative." Fourth

floor residents were allowed to return to their rooms at 2:45 a.m. Occupants of the other nine floors returned around 3 a.m., Sima said.

"We've pretty much done as much as we can," Sima said of fire safety procedures at the residence hall. "The fact that no one was hurt and all were evacuated safely is proof of that."

Sue Anderson, who lives in room 408, said she was sleeping when the fire alarm sounded.

"I heard the girl down the hall hollering about it, but it still didn't dawn on me," said Anderson, a sophomore computer science major from Omaha. "But when I walked out in the hall and it was filled with smoke, it was pretty scary."

"One thing that I thought of when I walked out of the room was to shut the door," she said. Thanks to a throw rug that got jammed under the door, the damage to her room was not severe, Anderson said.

A thin layer of soot covering everything in the room was the only damage, Anderson said.

But others were not so lucky as Anderson.

Damage to jeans, towels

Jackie Baker, of room 411, estimated that damages to her room total about \$125. She said many of her jeans and towels were covered with so much soot that they could not be used again. Her parent's homeowners insurance should cover all her losses, Baker a sophomore pre-med major from Omaha, said.

Baker said the smoke from the lounge fire reached her room through vents leading from the lounge into the hall.

Soot and smoke covered everything exposed in the room.

"Our walls went first," Baker said, pointing to the cement block walls recently scrubbed clean. "Our window was completely black; it took me 20 minutes to clean it."

Fourth floor residents still were cleaning Sunday afternoon.

Jeanne Konen and Sue Janda, of room 412, were sorting their clothes into piles covering the floor of their corner room.

"It was a nice birthday present," said Janda a junior pre-med major from Wilber. Janda turned 20 Saturday.

As an extra birthday present, Janda took entrance tests for Pharmacy College the morning after the fire. Although she only had two hours of sleep, Janda said, she thinks she did all right on the exam which lasted four hours.

Several of the fourth floor residents said they lived at Smith last year when a tenth floor room went up in flames.

"Last spring it was a lot different because it was six stories higher," Anderson said. "It was frustrating to hear people joking about it," she said, adding that fourth floor has had its share of curious and annoying sight-seers.



Photo by Ted Kirk

Even the fans got a few handfuls of feathers as the Huskers clipped the KU Jayhawks' wings Saturday in a record-smashing performance. For photos and the story, see pages 8-9.

African says foreign students taken advantage of by dealer

A native West African UNL student says that a Lincoln car dealer is taking advantage of university students, particularly foreign students.

Jerry Afuh, a graduate student in Agricultural Economics, contacted the *Daily Nebraskan*, saying he purchased a used car last July from Misle Imports but the contract differed from the oral agreement.

On the advice of Misle's loan officer, Afuh said he signed the contract in order to take the car, on condition the contract would be revised the following week.

Afuh said he signed the documents and put \$1,200 down on the car, but was never able to have the contract amended. After considerable controversy, he said he returned the car, which was not damaged, but never recovered his down payment. He is now conferring with an attorney, he said.

Abram Misle, part owner of Misle's, differed with Afuh's account of the story. Misle said that Afuh bought the car but returned it 30 days later saying he had financial problems and could no longer afford the payments.

Misle offered to buy the car back and

Afuh agreed, Misle said. Afuh paid the balance of the loan's interest with his Bank Americard, accepted a check for \$1,200 less than he paid for it, which he subsequently endorsed for deposit.

Misle said he later offered Afuh other cars or to sell the first car back, but Afuh refused.

"All he wanted was the \$1,200 back," Misle said. "I wouldn't give it to him because he wasn't entitled."

Afuh said he knew of other foreign students with similar problems with Misle's but refused to provide the *Daily Nebraskan* with the students' names or telephone numbers.

Misle denied having any particular problem with university or foreign students. "We sell more cars than anybody in Lincoln. We sell cars to students, professors, everybody."

Peter Levitov, coordinator of the International Educational Service, which offers counseling to foreign students, refused to comment since all information he receives is confidential.

Regents fully support college preparation task force

By Mary Jo Pitzl

Recent controversy over whether Nebraska students are adequately prepared for college has spawned a task force to study college preparation in the state. The task force was approved by the NU Board of Regents at its monthly meeting Friday.

The regents gave unanimous approval to NU President Ronald Roskens' task force idea. According to Roskens' proposal, the task force "should concentrate on the question of insuring that students are adequately prepared, particularly in mathematics and English, for admission to Nebraska colleges and universities."

The task force will be initiated through his office, Roskens said, estimating that a committee should be appointed within two weeks.

"We're trying to make it very clear that this is not a regental committee," he said, explaining that the task force is not limited to NU, but includes all facets of Nebraska education.

Roskens' proposal recommended the task force be composed of school superintendents, principals, school board members, secondary teachers and college and university faculty.

Representatives from professional education associations, the state Department of Education, Nebraska students and the public, will be on the task force. Roskens estimated the task force be headed by a member of the public and an NU representative serve as vice chairman.

Roskens listed several questions the task force on college preparation should examine. These include:

-How can the university cooperate with Nebraska parents, teachers and school administrators to improve the preparation of students for college admission?

-What steps should be taken within the university to strengthen all programs affecting teacher preparation?

-Should the university institute its own special admissions tests, including tests in spoken and written English composition?

-Should the university restrict admission based on demonstrated proficiency, including SAT and ACT scores, high school grades and rank in high school graduating class?

Roskens' proposal arose in part from the regents recent concern over NU freshmen entering college with educational deficiencies.

Lincoln Regent Ed Schwartzkopf said that before the task force could begin work, it must identify the problem

it will study.

"Nowhere do we make an effort to find out what's really going on in the high schools," Schwartzkopf said.

The board decided to include that question in the task force's duties.

See related story p. 10

inside monday

- Work, work; Study, study: New financial aids program would pay students to work and learn p. 2
- Hearts buried at Wounded Knee: Five years later however, the memories live on p. 3
- Looking for new VISTAs on the great plains: UNL grad talks about the federal anti-poverty program p. 6



Photo by Mike Dahlheim

NU President Ronald Roskens