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## False alarms cost Student gets 8-day sentence

By Donna Sisson  
Staff Reporter

At about 4 a.m., Dec. 6, 1984, residents of Selleck Quadrangle were awakened by the piercing clang of a fire alarm. They tumbled out of their beds and rushed outside.

The Lincoln Fire Department dispatched fire trucks in response to the alarm.

Like the boy who cried wolf, no fire burned. It wasn't even a fire drill, but a false alarm, pulled for some unknown reason.

Mark Kesick, a 19-year-old UNL student who allegedly pulled the alarm, later was convicted of false reporting, fined \$500 and sentenced to eight days in jail.

According to the report filed by UNL police, Kesick turned himself in and admitted he was responsible for the alarm. Kesick was arrested and charged with false reporting, a class one misdemeanor.

When reciting the events leading up to the incident, Kesick told police that he and two friends recently had

returned from drinking beer in Council Bluffs. As he began to descend the north stairwell of 7200 Selleck, Kesick saw the fire alarm on the wall. Kesick told police he pulled it and ran downstairs to his room and went to bed.

Like all cases involving UNL, Kesick's case was tried in Lancaster County Court.

Chip Lowe, the county's prosecuting attorney in the case, said Kesick's penalty was unusual because the judgment was harsh.

Sentences such as Kesick's are rare for other petty crimes, such as tire slashing, indecent exposure or having less than one ounce of marijuana, Lowe said. Assuming someone is caught with less than one ounce of marijuana, the fine is \$100.

But the maximum fine for class one misdemeanors, like Kesick's, is one year or less in prison, a \$1,000 fine or both. The minimum penalty is nothing, said UNL police Capt. Bill Manning.

Manning said that \$500 is the usual fine for pulling a fire alarm. In the past three or four years, police have "cracked down" on false fire alarms.

Since the crack-down, a \$500 fine is consistent, Manning said. Jail time depends on the individual case and judge, he said.

But Lowe still says the case is unusual. Besides the penalty, the judge wrote a four-page opinion, highly unusual in misdemeanor cases, Lowe said.

The penalty and opinion indicate at least one county judge's attitude toward false fire alarms.

In the opinion, County Judge Gale Pokorny offered several reasons for the penalty he issued.

"When, as here, hundreds of thou-

sands of dollars worth of emergency equipment and dozens of firemen and policemen are sent out on an expensive and totally needless venture because (of) the whimsical act of one person, the court has to examine that act in context and against its repercussions to arrive at the sanction society ought to impose," Pokorny wrote.

Pokorny said there are certain "headaches" that are part of living in a college town. "But at some point, the courts have to draw a line of sorts and announce that there is a point beyond which certain conduct will not be tolerated by the community," he wrote.

"Firemen and policemen have died in traffic collisions responding to calls for help, emergency equipment can be damaged or destroyed, emergency rescue equipment needlessly committed to a false alarm obviously isn't available were there a genuine tragedy in another location, thousands of dollars and hours of time are wasted. False fire alarms cannot be dismissed as a prank," Pokorny said.

In 1984, a total of 179 fire alarms sounded on campus. Of those, 102 were system malfunctions, 39 were actual fires, and 26 were accidentally tripped by somebody hitting a pull station, smoking a pipe or somehow creating too much smoke near a detector. Twelve were false fire alarms that were pulled by somebody in an act of criminal mischief.

Manning said the number of false fire alarms has decreased since the penalties have become stiffer. Now, the average number of false fire alarms each year is between 10 to 20, Manning said. Three or four years ago, about 100 false fire alarms might have occurred in the residence halls, he said.

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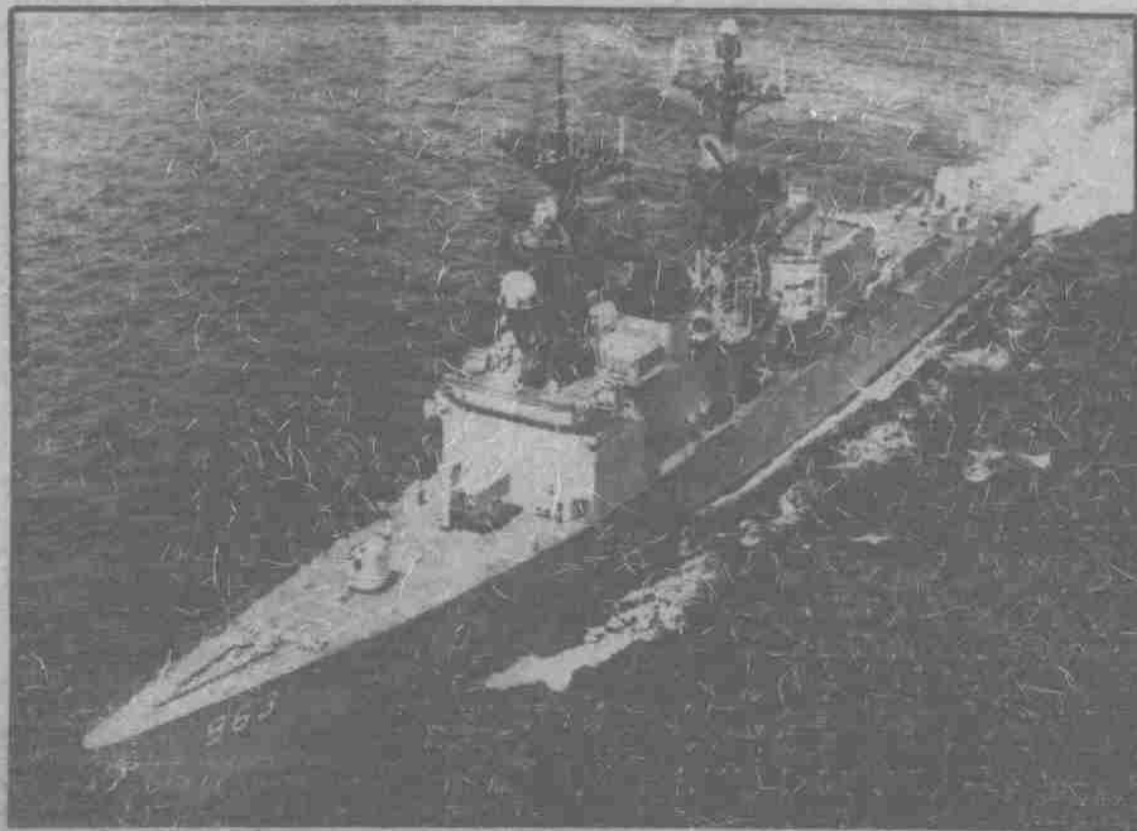
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## Health Center...

Continued from Page 1

During construction, normal health center services ran more smoothly than Wilkinson had expected, he said.

For the rest of the semester, the center will offer service at 90 percent of capacity while the new systems are implemented, and should operate at 100 percent before fall, he said.

Rooms in the old part of the health center will be used for office space and storage of medical records and files.

The addition includes four extra examination rooms, bringing the total to 21.

"This just gives us elbow room," Wilkinson said. The health center isn't expanding or adding services, but bringing current services to the level "where it's supposed to be," he said.

The health center also has a new phone system. Most phone numbers

have been re-assigned except for the appointment phone number and the numbers for Keystone Insurance and mental health appointments.

The new numbers will be printed in a Daily Nebraskan advertisement, he said.

Money for the expansion came from a bond replacement fund and an equipment reserve, Wilkinson said. Student fees will increase about \$1 so an extra medical custodian can be hired for the addition.

Moving the clinics to their new locations doesn't mean the building is officially open, Wilkinson said.

"We still have a lot to do," he said. "Students are going to have to be patient with us while we get all the bugs worked out."

The center's grand opening will be early next fall, he said.

## Campus group...

Continued from Page 1

Questions two and three vary according to the intended audience. Faculty will be asked: To what degree do you think current UNL graduates reflect these qualities? And, what do you believe the university could do to develop better these desirable qualities?

Students are being asked: To what degree do you think your experience at UNL will serve to develop these qualities? And, what do you believe the university could do to develop better these qualities in you?

Alumni are asked: To what degree do you think that these qualities at UNL have helped you to develop these qualities? And, what do you believe the university could do to develop better these qualities in future students?

And parents are asked: To what

degree do you think that the experience of the UNL student(s) in your family will help them develop these qualities? And what do you believe the university could do to develop these qualities in the UNL student(s) in your family?

The commission is seeking written response from existing groups such as the UNL Faculty Senate, ASUN student government, the UNL Alumni Association and various college committees.

In addition, it is asking each UNL college to use existing groups of faculty, students and alumni to discuss these issues. In April, the commission plans a series of further discussion meetings designed to cut across existing college and departmental lines.

"Although the committee believes firmly in the importance of personal and private discussion and in working through existing committees and structures, it also invites direct suggestion and comments from anyone interested in general education and a common learning experience at UNL," Meisels said.

Written comments should be directed to the Commission chair: Dean Meisels, College of Arts and Sciences, Oldfather Hall 1223, UNL, Lincoln, NE 68583-0312.

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