

Arts & Entertainment

Library guard: more than a 'pop cop'

By Lise Olsen
Senior Reporter

Mild-mannered Marvin Wilson, a former Wonder Bread route salesman, patrols Love Library continuously from 5 p.m. to 10:45 p.m., Sunday through Thursday.

Some students call him the "pop cop," but Wilson said his job involves more than enforcing the library rules of no food or drink.

Wilson, who has been the library security guard since March, said he prefers to think of himself as sort of an "officer of the peace and quiet."

"I'm just here to keep it quiet and see that people can study," he said.

Dressed in brown slacks and shirt displaying a shiny "Security Guard" badge, Wilson walks through all eight floors of the library's south stacks, then through the link to check the floors of Love North.

The north basement is the worst spot for pop, Wilson says, pointing to empty cans and discarded bags of popcorn.

When Wilson picks up pop, he dumps it out and saves the cans for his kids to cash in at the "Can Bank," he said. If the pop is unopened, he'll take it to the circulation desk for the patron to pick up when leaving.

The peak eating and drinking time is 10 p.m., Wilson said. During that hour he will collect an average of 12 pop cans.

The reason behind the no food or drink rule is simple, Wilson said. The library has a bug problem. Food, which leaves behind crumbs, and pop which leaves sugar, helps the cockroach population grow, he said.

The bugs eat glue out of the books which causes them to fall apart. Also, spilled food and pop can directly damage books, he said.

Wilson also gives empty cans to patrons who chew tobacco, he said.

"I'll ask him if he's spitting or swallowing. If he's spitting, I'll give him a can," he said.

Chewing, smoking and eating hard candy are allowed in the library.

Wilson also looks for abandoned backpacks. When he finds one he

leaves a card with a warning about theft.

Most thefts occur in the reference area and near elevators, Wilson said. Students should be especially careful during finals week because thieves are looking for books that they can easily exchange for cash, he said.

During his rounds, Wilson looks for "inappropriate library behavior," — everything from intimidation to lapsitting, he said. The library isn't the proper place for students to be sitting on laps, he said.

"It gives people the idea that this is a place to socialize," he said.

First floor north is the worst place for talking, he said. It is where everybody watches everybody else, he said.

Most of the time library "patrons," as Wilson calls them, cooperate with his requests to keep the noise down, but occasionally he'll have to split up large groups, he said.

Although Wilson said he knows many patrons by face and some by name, he doesn't stop to talk often.

"They're in here to study," he said. "They're not here for my B.S."

Wilson also will wake up sleepers from time to time, he said. Earlier this week he woke up a sleeper who was lying on the floor.

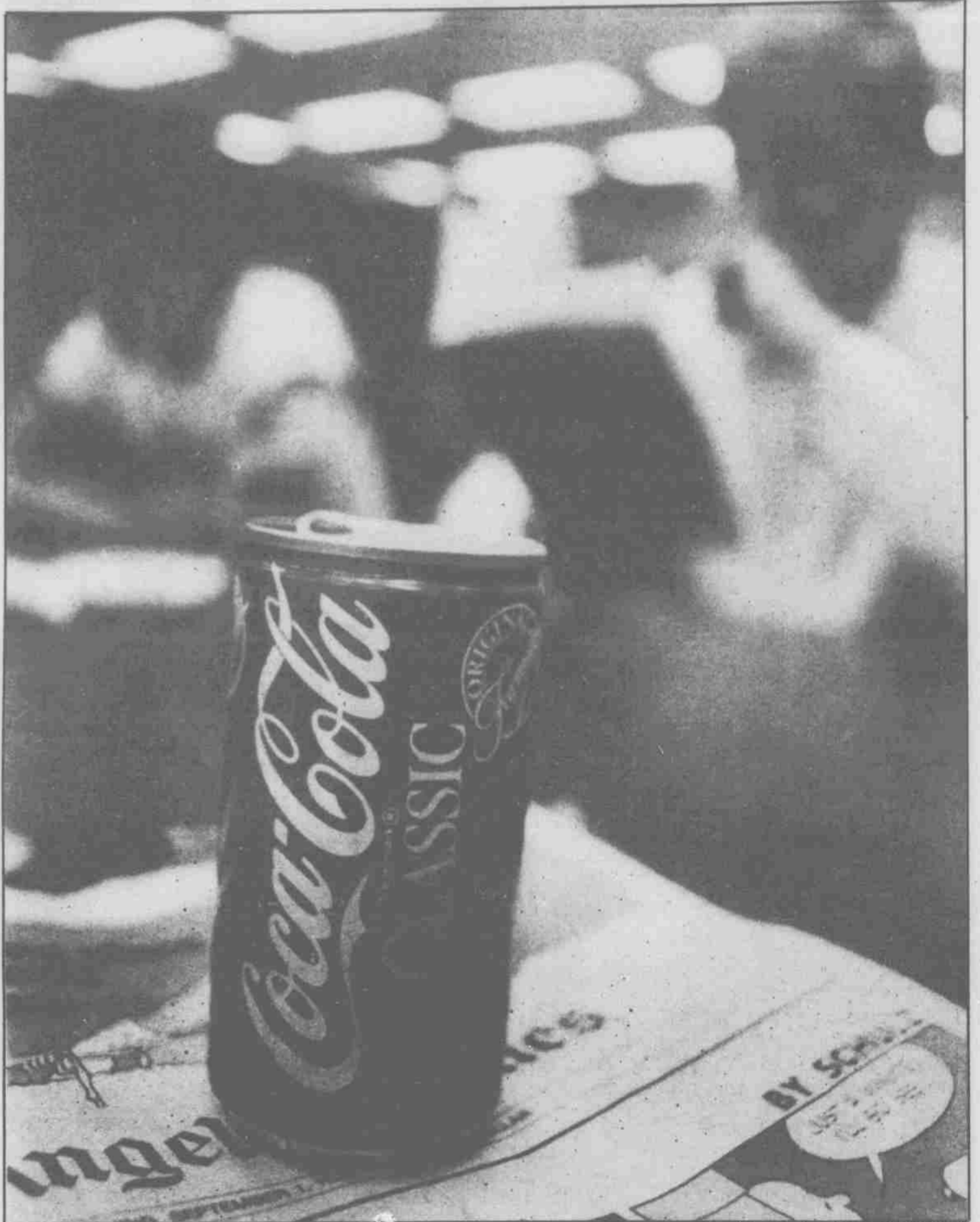
"I just went over to make sure he was all right."

Despite rumors about rapists in the stacks, Wilson, who stands about 5 feet 7 inches, said he's never had trouble with violence. The only incident reported this year — a man who exposed himself — happened when he was off duty, he said.

In case of serious trouble, Wilson carries a two-way radio which he can use to contact the university operator and police. Some library areas also have special intercoms that can be used to call for help, Wilson said.

At 10:45 p.m., Wilson is stationed at the security desk to make sure no one steals any books at closing time. Two student guards sweep through the library just before closing. Anyone caught leaving with books is given a warning. If they're caught a second time, Wilson reports the "attempted thefts" to the police.

At 1:15 a.m., he goes home.



Paul Vonderlage/Daily Nebraskan

A group of students violate library rules by drinking pop.

A look at life

Meanings often lost in the search for aces

This all began when I looked into the bottom of my paper coffee cup and didn't have a whole card. It was one of those cups with four poker cards around the side and after you've drank the coffee you can see the fifth card at the bottom. There wasn't one. The coffee was bad, too.

I told her I might come back, but things had to be done first, and I couldn't guarantee I would know her name in June. She cried a bit, said goodbye and said she was sorry about the paper cup. I was, too.



Bill Allen

John Belushi is dead and one of the guys who busted Richard Nixon told us all about it, but he left out a bunch of love. Still, it's OK because people tend to do that if the story is more interesting without it.

I was just finishing that book when a young girl I call Moon knocked at the door and came in drunk. I started playing a Bruce Springsteen album from way back and she asked "who's that?" I told her it was the Boss and she said he sounded a lot like Bruce Springsteen. You have to put up with that a lot as you get older. It helps you understand your folks sometimes.

Moon called some of her friends and

I called some of her friends, too, and we started a party, just like that.

We drank cheap beer and wine and watched MTV. It was hooked up to the stereo. I have a big screen TV so when we danced it was like we were dancing with Mick Jagger and Tina Turner, and after we were all drunk they stepped from the screen and partied with us, and every new video brought a new star to the party.

We drank and danced 'til 3 a.m. Then we sat on the floor and laughed at old stories we'd invented a long time ago and retold many times since.

I opened a Diet Pepsi and Mick put a TV dinner in the oven. We had potato chips, Classic Coke, Hostess snacks, frozen pizzas, french fries and Cheetos. We looked at all the ingredients on all the packages and figured if we mixed them all just right we could make a nuclear bomb. But we decided not to since it was so late and we'd rather eat the stuff instead.

"We Are The World," came on MTV and we sat around eating snacks and singing along. It was a fine video — it was so emotional seeing all those stars singing together and smiling. We invited them in and soon it was crowded. It was a rock 'n' roll party. Even Prince showed up, and Madonna and Sean Penn sat in the corner, making out, while Dire Straits and Chuck Berry jammed by the patio door. We would have taken it outside, but it was too cold.

And I was thinking about a girl. So I started singing "Margaritaville" out loud, and everyone joined in. Next

we started singing Ricky Nelson's "Garden Party" but stopped because no one knew the words except for the refrain, and that gets boring when you sing it over and over again 10 times. The same thing happened to Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone."

I knew all the words, but I didn't let on because it's no fun singing alone in front of a crowd when your voice is as bad as mine. So I sat back and smiled a lot.

After awhile I got tired and turned off MTV and everyone left right away, as if the cops had suddenly come with tear gas and bayonets.

Moon sat on one side of the room on a broken couch, and I sat on the floor on the other side with my back against the wall.

She said all she really wanted out of life was a house, a car, a couple of kids and a Maytag washer that never breaks. She said she didn't need dreams and aspirations, or thinking that keeps you up all night when you have things to do the next day.

I just shrugged because sometimes Moon sounds like she really means those things and it gets kind of scary to hear it when the only things open are the convenience stores where they don't take credit cards. A frozen burrito steamed in a push-button microwave is a poor imitation of the American Dream.

She asked me what I wanted out of life and I laughed and took shots of Jack Daniels from my paper coffee cup. After each shot I looked in the bottom, hoping for a winning hand.



Phil Tsai/Daily Nebraskan

"But it's all right now/I learned please yourself." my lesson well./See you can't — Ricky Nelson, "Garden Party," 1972