

Inspectors close haunted house

Greek fund-raiser shut down because of potential fire code violations

By CHAD LORENZ
Senior Reporter

A makeshift haunted house built in the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity was closed Monday by fire inspectors who cited several potential fire-code violations.

The house did not meet fire code requirements for mazes and haunted houses, said Lincoln Fire Prevention Chief Charlie Beachamp.

The house lacked the emergency lighting and an automatic sprinkler system required for such an operation, he said.

"It's hard to bring a building that is a residence into compliance as a place of assembly, or in this case, an amusement building," Beachamp said.

Phi Gamma Delta and Alpha Phi sorority were going to operate "Nightmare on R Street" to raise money for The Gathering Place, a Lincoln soup kitchen.

All greek houses on campus are required to have battery-powered

emergency lighting that turns on with the sounding of the fire alarm. Phi Gamma Delta was told during the fire inspections this month to install emergency lights, Beachamp said, which have not yet been installed.

Some of the interior decorations in the house were also listed as fire hazards, Beachamp said. Such decorations have to meet a certain flame spread requirement.

Materials such as sheets or burlap have to be coated with a special chemical treatment, Beachamp said. At Phi Gamma Delta, the walls of a maze were made of polyethylene plastic sheeting, which would burn and melt quickly if ignited. The melted plastic would burn whomever it touched and would release toxic fumes, he said.

Extension cords were used to light certain parts of the maze, which would violate two codes, Beachamp said.

The lights weren't bright enough to meet the lighting requirement, which is the equivalent of candlelight at floor level.

Under electrical codes, extension cords cannot be used for permanent lighting because the gauge of the wire isn't meant to have lights attached for long periods, Beachamp said.

"That could be the overload, and that could be the cause of the fire," he said.

In another room, mattresses and leaves on the floor created a dangerous situation, Beachamp said.

"You'd have something that would really burn," he said.

Jason Jacobi, a sophomore engineering major, was in charge of the haunted house for Phi Gamma Delta.

He said he checked with insurance companies and with the fraternity's national headquarters to see what precautions the house needed to take.

Jacobi said he was frustrated with the fire inspectors because the members had gone to so much trouble to put the haunted house together.

"These 60 guys put in a lot of time

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CHARLIE BEACHAMP
Lincoln Fire Prevention Chief

and a lot of effort," Jacobi said.

"It's such a good cause, and it's so much money."

Jacobi said the house had spent \$2,000 for props and decorations, but all of it was useless Tuesday night when the haunted house was scheduled to open.

"Kids are coming to the door and families are at the door," Jacobi said.

"We had the house all set up, and it was sweet. And they came and closed us down."

"I know they're doing their job, and I guess we should have (a sprinkler system) ... but sprinkler systems are expensive."

Beachamp said he and his investigators met with the fraternity members, and the members agreed to close the haunted house.

To make up for the loss, Phi Gamma Delta and Alpha Phi quickly put together a concert so they could donate something to The Gathering Place.

Three bands sympathetic to the greeks' cause rocked the Nebraska Union Wednesday night: Turtle Moon, Moment of Release and Rascal Basket.

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JASON JACOBI
organizer for the Phi Gamma Delta haunted house

Few details found in True case

By CHAD LORENZ
Senior Reporter

The Lancaster County Sheriff's office has found few details so far in a homicide investigation that began when an unidentified body was found in north Lincoln last month.



True

Investigators have been questioning Lincoln business owners, friends and family of Anne True, Sgt. Owen Yardley said. The 38-year-old woman's decomposed body was found Sept. 29 in a remote field near I-80.

Some people have called the sheriff's office with information, but most information has come from the investigation, Yardley said.

Lancaster County Sheriff Terry Wagner originally said the investigation focused on the areas in which True was last seen: around 27th to 48th streets, from Vine to Holdrege streets and near west O Street.

The investigation has since expanded to encompass all of Lincoln, Yardley said.

"There doesn't appear to be any one place she frequented," Yardley said.

He would not say if there were any suspects in the case.

Officers identified True's body on Oct. 16 by following up on a call from True's sister. Dental records confirmed that the body was True.

Law & Order

A look at crime on campus and in the community

ASSAULT

A 40-year-old woman who allegedly trashed her husband's apartment and attacked him with a hammer was arrested Tuesday.

Vernon Furby, 32, told police he was ending a relationship with his wife Carmen McCloud. He left a note on the door to their apartment on 3400 block of Starr Street Tuesday evening telling her not to enter, Lincoln Police Sgt. Ann Heermann said.

Furby told police McCloud kicked in the apartment door at 5:12 and started smashing things in the apartment, Heermann said. Two televisions and a videocassette recorder were destroyed.

Furby left the building and McCloud chased him wielding a hammer, Heermann said. The two ran around the building until Furby stopped and grabbed the hammer from her, Heermann said.

McCloud then allegedly grabbed Furby by the neck and strangled him, Heermann

said. He wrestled out of her grip and fled.

He later found her in the building's basement smashing full beer bottles onto the floor, Heermann said. She allegedly attacked him again, and was strangling him when police arrived, Heermann said.

Police arrested and took McCloud into custody for third-degree assault.

VANDALISM

Halloween vandalism has started early in northwest Lincoln.

Police found possible satanic graffiti spray painted in green on the inside of a partially-built house on the 800 block of Malcom Street, Heermann said.

On a wall inside the garage, "devil," "roach" and "666" were painted vertically. "Folk," "watch out" and "McDick" were printed horizontally. The vandals also painted an encircled six-pointed star, Heermann said. Police estimated \$200 damage.

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