

THE DAILY SKIFF

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Blazes spark Clark's evening



Fort Worth firemen had to enter through this second floor Clark window in order to combat the fire.



At least \$5,000 damage was done to the dormitory. No estimate has been given on the damage done to the tenant's personal belongings.

Photos By Barry Morris

By Chuck Ault
and Barry Morris

A fire erupted in Clark Dormitory Tuesday evening forcing residents to evacuate the building. No one was injured in the blaze.

The fire was contained in room 257 in the southwest corner of the dormitory, but smoke damage was heavy to 2nd and 3rd floor stairwells.

Fire investigator W.R. Noah said the blaze was caused by a defective extension cord which was connected to a refrigerator.

Les Burks, a Fort Worth fireman said it only took 20 minutes for the fire to engulf the room. Noah said that the damage "will probably be at least \$5,000 to the building alone."

Everything in the room was damaged. The walls and ceiling were charred and varnish on two doors blistered. Clothes were burned and damaged by smoke.

Joe Enoch, business manager of the University, said the insurance company had not appraised the damage to the dorm.

"The damage did not look terribly extensive outside the room," Enoch said, "It was mostly smoke damage done to stairwells and corridors."

He felt the damage would be appraised quickly. The University's insurance only covers the building and equipment relating to the building. Students are responsible for any damage done to their personal property.

The fire was the first major blaze in a dormitory since May 5, 1973, when fire damaged Brachman Hall, resulting in a loss of \$40,000.

Three units of the Fort Worth Fire Department arrived about eight minutes after the fire was reported, according to Clark RA Dwight Nordstrom. Housing personnel Ed Bivin, Jack Arvin and Linda Hinson arrived shortly thereafter.

Firemen broke through a window to the room to extinguish the blaze, throwing a small trunk and a smoldering chair out the window. The damaged items were watered down.

Four firemen wearing oxygen masks entered the dorm, as heavy smoke filled the first floor hallway.

Tom Francis told the Skiff he found the fire in his room about 10 p.m. Upon returning from a restroom he noticed smoke coming from a second floor fire door. "I wasn't gone for more than three minutes," Francis said.

When he opened the door to his room smoke poured out and he spotted flames in a corner of the room. He tried to get the fire extinguisher outside his room, but was unable to.

"The box (containing the fire extinguisher) was locked," he said. "I tried to break the glass, but I couldn't get it out."

Clark fire extinguishers are housed in locked cabinets and can only be opened by breaking a glass panel, reaching in and flipping a latch that opens the door. Francis said he was never instructed on how to remove the extinguisher, and no instructions were found on the cabinet.

Francis located one on the first floor. Another student came by and bashed in the glass by hitting it with his shoe. The latch inside didn't work, so Francis bent the door

outward to open it.

Another Clark resident arrived with a second extinguisher moments later, and tried to help Francis.

"We had to get low because of the smoke," Francis said. "It was hard for us to operate when we were that low. I was coughing and choking by then so we left."

When Francis left, the fire was only smoldering, he said, then someone threw a rock through one of the windows, allowing more air in to whip the flames back up.

Francis said there was nothing that could have created a spark in his room because he doesn't smoke or have a hot plate.

Clark Hall Director Kersi Cooper said that a staff meeting was being held in the second floor lounge when "we heard noises and glass breaking. We thought some guys were fooling around."

"We announced over the PA system that there was a fire and the RAs went down the halls blowing whistles and getting everyone out," Cooper said.

"Everyone responded very well," Nordstrom said. "The smoke was so thick, visibility was only 20 feet from the hallway to the 2nd and 3rd floor fire doors."

Cooper said that the dorm doesn't have a direct alarm system, so the RAs are forced to blow whistles.

"Possibly there could have been losses of life if the fire had occurred at 3 a.m.," Nordstrom said because there would have been no way to evacuate everyone quickly enough with whistles.

Tragedy escaped in Clark fire

The fire in Clark Hall will probably be remembered as one of the more exciting social events of 1977.

It would have been even more exciting if one or two corpses had been roasted in the blaze, but this did not happen . . . no thanks to

the University.

It seems the University considers fire extinguishers ornaments to adorn dormitory walls. Extinguishers are nice to look at and keep the fire marshal happy.

One fire extinguisher was

located in its glass steel box less than 20 feet away from the front door of the room on fire—but this fire extinguisher was unused because it couldn't be removed. Downstairs a fire extinguisher was taken to fight the fire. But this fire extinguisher was not just taken out of its case. The glass on the front of the steel case had to be broken. . . but of course the University couldn't be expected to provide a hammer. Fists and shoes are good enough for TCU students.

And after the glass was broken,

the fire extinguisher was still not removed. The case was locked, to prevent students from playing with the fire extinguisher. It was removed only after the metal door of the case was forcibly bent up far enough to remove the extinguisher.

What would have happened if a student's clothes had been on fire? Would he be inclined to sit patiently and wait while someone tried to open a cabinet that would be almost impervious to nuclear attack?

And what if the RA's and the hall director had not been there to sound the alarm with their whistles? If the fire had been large enough, smoke could have easily overcome several residents before they would know what was happening.

Students have abused fire equipment in the dormitories. Too many times a fire alarm has turned out to be the work of a prankster crying wolf. And someday a life might be lost when a fire extinguisher is empty because someone decided to have a little fun.

Opinion

But the University has no defense in locking up the fire extinguishers to prevent students from misusing them, especially when they are locked up so that no one can use them even in an emergency. Parents can afford to take away toys from naughty children when they are misused. A University cannot afford to make life saving devices inaccessible when they are needed.

In every dorm on campus, a potential tragedy is waiting for chance to call.

The University was lucky this time. But in the next fire chance might take a heavier toll.

Perhaps it would have been better if one or two people had been roasted in that fire. Then those who keep a stranglehold on the University's purse might have been persuaded to dole out funds to provide for adequate fire protection in all buildings on campus.

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Frosh find magazine writing more fun

Dr. Harry Opperman decided to offer students an alternative to the traditional Freshman Writing Workshop this semester.

His students are producing a literary magazine.

"I was looking for a way to give the freshman honors class a reason to do the writing I asked them to do," Opperman said. Writing a magazine for a student audience would provide that reason and give students a way to focus their writing.

Patterned after *Texas Monthly*, the class is considering calling its creation *Playfrog*.

His students appear enthusiastic about the project. "Dr.

Opperman has helped me improve my writing a lot. It's definitely going to be fun," Leah Morette said.

Dr. Opperman has had no training in journalism and does not want journalistic writing from the class. In fact he said the only difference in his class's writing and that of other classes lies in the magazine's specified audience.

"I want good writing," he said, "I define that as opposed to journalistic writing. That's not real writing."

Opperman set up seven editorial boards to determine the magazine's content. Six of the boards, concerned with subject matter, include, Fine Arts, Social-Political, TCU,

Fort Worth, Fiction-Poetry and a catch-all board called *Ephemera*. The seventh board, Copy and Layout, has charge over the mechanical production.

Each student is expected to turn in from 900 to 1,000 words of copy during the term. Opperman said he looks for quality not quantity.

Plans call for the first issue of *Playfrog* to appear before Spring Break. But whether this goal will be met remains to be seen Opperman said.

Besides lacking an ample budget, the class lacks experience. "We work on a crisis basis," Opperman said.

House passes carpet, audit legislation

A bill calling for free auditing privileges for all University students unanimously passed the House of Representatives this week.

Submitted by the Academic Affairs Committee, the bill states conditions of professor approval and pre-scheduled classes.

No academic or audit credit will be placed on the student's transcript. He will not be allowed to take advanced placement tests in the course area.

Seating must be readily available and papers or tests will be graded only if the professor chooses to do so.

The bill will now go to the Bill of Rights Committee.

Also unanimously passed was the allocation of \$3,000 from the Permanent Improvements Fund for Library carpeting.

Costs will be evenly divided between the University and the House for carpeting the library's reference room. Carpeting will be similar to that on the first floor. If not completed during spring break, the project will be finished this summer, following final exams.

Both bills have been submitted previously but eventually defeated. TCU is one of the few universities in Texas not presently offering auditing procedures similar to those proposed.

Though auditing is available at a reduced cost now for placement on transcripts, that policy will not be changed. An alternate course will simply be made available if the bill succeeds.

"The classroom (auditing) bill has unlimited possibilities to extend opportunities at TCU, Junior, Steve Green said.

"The same with the carpeting. It shows we aren't going to wait for the University to do something," Green continued.

Green was a member of past committees that were unsuccessful with the bills' passage.

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Track team stumbling to Laredo

By Chuck Ault

Montreal Olympians Johnny "Lam" Jones and Paul Craig of Texas and Jim McAndrew of Texas Tech will highlight this weekend's 45th annual Border Olympics track and field meet.

The event held at Laredo, Texas, is billed as the first major outdoor track meet of the year, and is divided into college, junior college, university and high school divisions.

Defending champion Baylor, who defeated second place Texas by three points last year, will defend its title against the Longhorns, Rice, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, TCU, SMU, North Texas State, and Lamar.

Jones, who won the U.S. 400-meter relay team at Montreal, will probably run the 440-yard dash and relays, while Craig, a 1,500-meter thinclad for the Canadian Olympic team, will run the mile for the Longhorns.

Another Canadian, Tech's McAndrew is a transfer from Odessa College, where he was national juco long jump champion last fall.

Five individual University champions will return to Laredo

to defend their titles. Baylor's Mark Collins in the 440, and Dave Duncan in the 120 high hurdles, Texas A&M shot putter Frank West, Lamar pole vaulter James Smart and Texas high jumper Rod Harvey.

This past weekend the Frogs participated in a tri-meet at Austin against Texas and North Texas State.

The Frogs were routed. Texas won the event going away bagging 102-1/2 points to

NTSU's 47-1/2, and TCU's meager 16.

The highlight of the meet took place in the 100-yard dash. Texas' Johnny Jones clocked 9.21, the fastest in the world so far this year.

Jones also marked a 21.60 in the 220, though hampered by

winds that gusted to 40 mph.

In the mile relay Texas again won with a time of 3:23.23. The Frogs were second at 3:25.33, and North Texas showed at 3:25.55.

TCU's results follow:
 ●●● JAVELIN—Ronnie Miller, 2nd, 149' 11"
 ●●● 440 RELAY—2nd, 44.23

●●● 440 DASH—Alfred McAfee, 2nd, 51.67; Mark Wren, 4th, 56.30.

●●● 100 DASH—Phil Delancy, 4th, 9.75.

●●● 440 HURDLES—Greg Roberts, 4th, 58.08.

●●● MILE RELAY—2nd, 3:25.33.

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