Blast Stirs Memories Of Past Alarms

By FRED DULANEY

Yesterday's explosion and fire at Rover Commons brought to mind a number of fires which have occurred on Ohio State's campus.

Earlier this year two small fires broke out in one week. On Jan. 16, firemen were sent to the Veterinary Clinic building at 1981 Neil Ave. Damage was minor, but a senior veterinary medicine student was hurt when he slipped on ice formed by water from the fireman's hoses.

A week later, firemen were called to the Columbus Psychiatric Hospital when a mattress fire filled the top floor with smoke. Damage was slight and there were no injuries.

In 1958, two spectacular fires occurred less than a week apart. An 80-year-old Ohio State University sheep barn in the 2400 block of Oentangy River Road was destroyed on Jan. 7. On Jan. 13, fire caused $308,000 damage to Lord Hall.

The blaze at the sheep barn caused about $10,000 damage, but the 60 ewes and eight rams housed in the building were saved. Authorities theorized the fire might have been started by an electric lamp being used to keep water from freezing.

THE BLAZE which hit Lord Hall halted classes temporarily. It was the fifth major fire in the building in two years. Gordon B. Carson, vice president of the University, estimated that $170,000 damage was done to the building and $38,000 to equipment.

Probably the most famous fire ever to occur at Ohio State was the $50,000 blaze that destroyed the Armory in May 1938.

The castle-like structure, long a landmark, was damaged too extensively to be rebuilt. It was torn down and Mershon Auditorium was constructed on the site.

Twisted metal dangling from electric wires endangered the gathering crowd and hindered officials. (LANTERN photo—Keys)
EXPERTS SEEK CAUSE OF BLAST

Nine Hurt; Loss Put At $250,000

December 4, 1962 By LEN DOWNIE

Intensive investigation will begin today to determine what touched off a natural gas explosion that injured nine workmen and caused about $250,000 damage to a partly built student dining facility north of campus yesterday.

Most of the estimated 1,000 campus spectators who were at the explosion scene will return to their normal routine today. But University officials and construction supervisors face the task of trying to untangle the wreckage and unravel the mystery left by the blast that shot the roof of the dining hall nearly 100 feet into the air.

In University Hospital, three of the workmen, Walter Overcash, 38, of 4806 Annhurst Road; John Swisher, 22, 2137 Westerville, and John Noll, 28, of 233 E. Maynard Ave., were reported in satisfactory condition late last night. Overcash suffered multiple cuts of the head. Noll was treated for second and third degree burns, and Swisher's hand was badly cut.

The other six victims were treated and released. They were identified as: Robert Rowand, 52, 7400 Marlan Drive; Fred Zimmerman, 27, 1332 Evaline Drive; Paul Shaw, 45, Palace Lane; James Boggs, 29, 132 N. Burgess Ave.; John Burt, 49, 2143 E. Jeffrey Place, and Ward Brunty, 38; 741 Brown Ave.

At the explosion scene, a huge crane was moved into place to hold up the sagging first floor of the dining hall. Workmen today will take "corrective action" to prevent more damage while the area is cleared of debris.

Further new construction on the dining hall will be halted, according to Dr. Gordon B. Carson, vice president of (Continued on page 3)
finance, until repairs are made. But, he said, some work will continue on two nearby dormitories in which damage was only minor.

Carson said he expects the University's Explosion Committee to open its investigation of the cause of the gas line blast as soon as its chairman, Joseph H. Koffolt (chairman of the chemical engineering department) returns to the campus today. Other members of the committee are Paul H. Elleman, director of the physical plant, and Paul N. Lehoezky, chairman of the industrial engineering department.

THE PROJECT's insurers also will initiate an investigation. They will meet with the heads of the contracting firms and their employees early today, according to Carson.

The vice president said that all damage to the construction area is covered by insurance and that most of the losses incurred by nearby property owners also are "protected." This off-campus damage amounted to little more than blown-out windows.

No injuries were reported other than those to the construction workers.

A serious loss to the University will be time. This is at a premium because of the effort to keep the University housing program in step with rapidly rising enrollments, Carson said.

As a result of the explosion, none of the North Campus dormitories or dining areas will be occupied before next September, he said. It had been announced previously that some of the facilities would be ready by the 1963 Spring Quarter.

"IT'S A SHAME," he said, when you consider how much ahead of schedule we were. Even the weather had been working for us until this happened."

James Clark, campus planner, agreed with Carson, and said, "The only change in plans brought about by the blast will be a delay in the completion date of the damaged building."

"No other change in the master plan or specific plans for that North Campus residence area will be necessary."

The explosion occurred shortly before 11:45 a.m. while two plumbers, Noll and Overcash, were cleaning out gas lines in the boiler room of the dining hall. That central boiler room also was to serve the two dormitories being completed nearby.

Frank A. McNamee of the University architect's office said that he was near the construction area when he heard and felt the explosion and saw the building's roof "fly up higher than the trees."

As McNamee ran toward the building, Overcash struggled from feet from the building. Bodies of three pickup trucks belonging to the contractors and one construction official's car were crushed by piles of bricks and cement blocks. Windows of other windows were cracked by flying gravel.

Almost all the windows in the dining hall and in the dormitory facing it were blown either in or out by the reduced air pressure at the moment of explosion.

Carson said that the $250,000 damage estimate was only a "shot in the dark."

"There just is no way of knowing yet the extent of the damage," he said.

ONE INSURANCE adjuster said, "It will cost as much to repair this thing as it did to put up." He said he believed that the fire originated between the second and third boilers from the south wall of the building, which, along with part of the east wall, was demolished by the blast.

Gas company officials said that the point of explosion was 400 feet from the line which they had laid recently and added that their line had been tapped by the plumbing company with another pipe that ran onto the University property. Gas company men, they said, had then turned on the gas at the meter and left.

This crane was used to hold up some of the sagging beams after yesterday's blast, as inspectors, firemen, and policemen dug through the debris.
A construction truck is totally demolished by flying debris ...

This section of a campus map shows the extent of the blast. 1) Royer Commons, the site of the explosion. 2) Barrett House, still under construction, damaged. 3) Haloran House, also still under construction. 4) Chemical Engineering, damaged. 5) Chemical Abstracts, damaged. 6) University School, damaged. 7) McPherson Chemical Lab, damaged.
A close-up of the ruined dining hall. A fireman is hosing down the area as others hustle to keep danger at a minimum.

4 December 1962
People gather hurriedly to see "what that noise was." Firemen are already on the scene, inspecting the damage.
Firemen inspect the innards of the gutted dining hall. The blast apparently started here.

The owner of Ohio EF-40 is a victim of the blast.
Gordon B. Carson talks to LANTERN reporters, contractor officials, workmen, policemen, and fire inspectors . . .

4 December 1962

Windows in the uncompleted dorms buckled . . .
A repairman in McPherson Chemical Lab rushes to fix shattered glass...
Thought Earth Blew Up, Says Blast Witness

By KEITH McKNIGHT

"It sounded like the world blew up, that's all I can tell you," said Eddie Compton, 22, a construction worker who was an eyewitness to the explosion that jarred the campus shortly before noon yesterday.

"I was walking up the alley on my way to lunch when it exploded...the air was covered," he said. "I jumped behind a pole and stayed there.

"Fire shot out the end of the building...bricks and things were flying. It was lunch time and most of the guys were out eating...some of them were working on the pipes down there."

JOHN SWISHER, one of the injured who was admitted to the hospital, said as he was wheeled from the emergency room: "I don't want to see that place again.

Robert Rowland, who was treated and released, said: "Someone was purging the air out of the main. I was right outside of the boiler room, about eight feet from the wall. I saw timber, parts of the roof and masonry falling."

Rowland said he was partly protected because he was sitting down with his back to the boiler room. He said Swisher was with him but facing the boiler room.

WARD BRUNEY, also treated at the hospital, said he was about 50 feet from the building when the blast occurred. He described it as "just a big explosion...a lot of fire and debris falling...it knocked me down."

He said he heard no calls from inside the building.

Louis Zoeckler, A-2, who lives in a second floor apartment across the alley near the levelled building, said: "I was reading and the window started coming in on me. I saw the wires swinging around and felt the heat.

"I heard someone screaming 'get this stuff off of me'...that's all I could hear.

"IT SORT OF leaves you speechless."

Zoeckler told the LANTERN that about two dozen construction workers ran to help the men. He said there was no panic.

Zoeckler's roommate, George Parr, A-2, said: "I was in the bedroom changing clothes when I saw the flash...I got pushed into the closet.

"It all happened so fast...I thought it was a sonic boom until I looked into the bathroom and saw the ceiling was down."

One of the injured, 45-year-old Paul Shaw, a sheet metal foreman for Sheaf Contractors, said he was on a pile of dirt 25 feet from the point of the explosion and was blown backward 16 feet into a small hole.

Shaw, who was treated at University Hospital for second degree burns, said: "It blew us down in that hole...you could just see stuff flying every place. He said that after he was blown into the hole, "all you could see was a bunch of flames."

Iva DeBlasio, clerical assignment supervisor in the Chemical Abstracts building, said: "I thought it was a bomb...you hear all these airplanes going over all the time.

"THEN I saw smoke coming up and bricks falling off that building."

She pointed through an unbroken picture window at another of the new dormitories under construction. The large window, unlike the other two near her desk, had withstood the force of the explosion.

Carole Echols, A-4, said: "I was in Denney Hall when we heard the boom. Everybody turned to look out the window and just a fraction of a second later we saw the roof above all the other roofs. It looked as if a tornado had picked it up.

"After we decided it was an explosion, the instructor decided anything else he could say would be anti-climactic, so he dismissed class."

A TINNER who was around the corner of the building that exploded said: "We were pitching horse shoes on our lunch hour. We didn't feel the blast...we just got covered with sand.

"We ran across there behind that house." He indicated a house on the North side of West Frames. "We didn't know what was going on," he said.

Paul Roberts, an electrician from McCarty Brothers, said he had just stopped working for the noon hour.

"We were in that shanty eating our lunch," he explained as he looked at the debris-covered construction shack about 75 feet from the razed building.

"We thought it was our stove," he continued. "We ran outside and lay down on the ground. Bricks and metal were flying."

ANOTHER eyewitness, Dale Shafer, Engr.-5, said: "I was half way down the alley when I heard the explosion. I saw a roof flying up in the air and all sorts of debris floating around.

"I started running towards the scene of the explosion and a lot of workers came running away from it. They were yelling that there might still be gas in the area."

One worker said, "I was standing right next to it. It was awful loud. There was a lot of flame...just one big flash."

Another worker commented that "the whole roof lifted up in the air.

A crowd stood in silence, watching workers search through the rubble. The red lights flashed on the emergency trucks and the distant chimes of Orton Hall pealed.

"Hark, The Herald Angels Sing."
Blast Attracts 1,000 People
Workers' Progress Hindered

The explosion that leveled the south and east walls of a nearly constructed University dining hall yesterday was heard by residents in the Upper Arlington area, 3½ miles from the campus.

The blast attracted an estimated one thousand spectators who added to the confusion as they jammed the dormitory complex in an effort to see what had happened.

The spectators hampered the work of the firemen and workmen trying to clear the area and eliminate the possibility of further injury. Electric wires and broken glass were strewn over the area and caused officials to fear that bystanders would be injured.

TWO FIRE trucks collided en route to the scene. One fireman was hurt.

It was about 30 minutes after the blast before police and firemen could be certain all of the injured had been removed from the devastated building and taken to the hospital. Meanwhile the large crowd of workers, students and area residents waited and watched as firemen searched through the rubble for some one who might still be buried.

The injured were taken to University Hospital by University Police cruisers and Columbus Emergency Squad Ambulances.

MEANWHILE, the scene of the explosion was swarming with reporters, cameramen and University fire inspectors trying to discover and record what had happened. Those who had witnessed the blast talked excitedly to officials, reporters, bystanders and each other about what they had seen.

Residents of Peasley and Frambes avenues stood staring through the holes which had so recently been their windows and many were heard to remark that they hoped the University could "pay for all of this."

As the afternoon passed, the excitement died down and the original spectators were replaced by those who had been in class at the time of the explosion or had heard about it on their radios.

By 8 p.m. electricians had re-strung most of the electric wires which had been ripped down and workmen were shoring the remaining walls of the devastated structure.

The excitement was over and there was nothing for spectators to do but exclaim, "Look at that crushed truck," or ask "Was anybody killed?" Then, with their curiosity satisfied, they returned to their classes or homes.
BLAST HITS WIDE AREA

'Implosion' Shatters Glass

By JERRY BAILEY

The blast that shook the Ohio State campus yesterday broke windows and caused other extensive damage to buildings on the periphery of the area of the explosion.

No one was reported injured in the outlying buildings. Most of the glass fell harmlessly outside.

H. C. Slider, associate professor of petroleum engineering, said that an implosion caused the glass to fall out.

"The explosion itself created a low-pressure area," he said. "This caused air to rush toward the blast and the air that was pulled out of the buildings broke the windows."

The most spectacular damage was to the Chemical Abstracts Building at 2041 North College Road. The building faces Woodruff Avenue and the blast area.

Several large plate glass windows were blown out. Most of the glass fell outside into a large sunken window-well, where falling debris broke another window.

In McPherson Laboratory, 20 windows were broken and several experiments destroyed.

At the Chemical Engineering building several windows were broken, but there was no interior damage.

In the University School, two windows were broken and plaster was cracked.

In the Engineering Experiment Station, two windows were broken.

Damage to off-campus homes, some only 50 to 60 yards from the point of blast, was wider.

A men's rooming house at the rear of 86 W. Woodruff Avenue received the most damage. All the windows were broken and several lamps were knocked off tables and smashed.

Front windows were blown out of each suite in a four-unit apartment building on Peasley Street, west of the point of the explosion.

Residents of Peasley and Farm-
MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Cabinet
FROM: Gordon B. Carson

Re: Fire Activity on Campus

Gentlemen:

Since all of you from time to time have questions addressed to you concerning the amount of fire activity on campus, I thought the attached information, in summary form, would be helpful to you.

Accordingly, I am attaching herewith, Exhibit VI and VII taken from a comprehensive report on this subject, edited by Lenora Yates of our office.

The information was obtained from Messrs. Rufener and Bailey of the University fire prevention group in the Department of Physical Plant.

You will note that dormitories and OSU housing accounted for eleven (11) fire runs between July 1, 1966 and March 31, 1967, that buildings other than dormitories were responsible for nineteen (19) fire runs while the hospital area was responsible for five (5). Grounds fires accounted for six (6) and the total construction activity in the University for eight (8). Fire runs for the nine (9) months totaled forty-nine (49), far more than we should have had.

The break down by cause is shown in Exhibit VII. The largest single cause is carelessness.

We hope the foregoing information will be useful to you.
### BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORIES
**July 1, 1966 - March 31, 1967**

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<td>Baker Hall</td>
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Tower Fire Study Slated

The Lincoln Tower fire of May 22 will be reenacted as part of a scientific experiment, according to Gordon B. Carson, vice-president of business and finance.

Carson said Suite 1140 of Lincoln Tower, where the May 22 fire originated, will be reconditioned and reenacted to determine the rise of temperature rate, total temperature in the suite, surface temperature, and types of gases from the blaze.

The testing will be conducted by the National Fire Protection Association, the State Fire Marshall's office, and Carson.

During the blaze, Carson said he and several fire officials will be in the bedroom of the suite.

"This is not any type of a stunt," Carson said, "but is a scientific experiment."

"It is a test and will be conducted on a scientific laboratory basis."

No date has been set for the experiment, according to Carson.

NFPA Officials Advise Repeated Fire Training

If the two girls who died in the May 22 Lincoln Tower blaze had realized the protection their own bedroom afforded, they would still be alive, the fire report completed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) of Boston said.

The report, received Monday by Gordon B. Carson, vice-president for business and finance, said both Pamela Sue Patterson and Retta D. Foster "panicked" and died.

Had the two coeds remained in their bedroom, the report pointed out, they would still be alive.

Meet Code Requirements

The report, compiled by Carl E. Peterson of NFPA, said the river dormitories met all Life Safety Code requirements, except the windows in the bedroom cannot be opened without the use of a special tool.

The NFPA report is almost identical with one completed by Richard W. Beltzacker, professor of civil engineering and a member of NFPA, according to Carson.

In his May 29 report, Beltzacker said the river dormitories are more than adequate for any conceivable fire involving the combustible contents of the student suites.

Training Recommended

Although the NFPA report declared the river dormitories safe, it did recommend the repeated training and education of students so they can "react properly when such emergencies do arise."

Carson said that although the NFPA report called the river dormitories "completely fire resistive," the University will still install sprinkling units in each living room and resident adviser's room in the twin towers.

The sprinkling units will use the standard control system and should be in operation by Autumn Quarter, he said.

Carson also said the University will develop "films to train students for more effective fire prevention and fire fighting and will conduct a scientific experiment to provide improved measures of fire control should another fire occur."

The scientific experiment will be conducted by Carson, the State Fire Marshal's office, the Columbus Fire Department, and the NFPA.

According to Carson, Suite 1140 of Lincoln Tower, where the May 22 blaze originated, will be reconditioned and the fire reenacted to determine the rise of temperature rate, total temperature in the suite, surface temperature and types of gases from the blaze.

During the blaze, Carson said he and fire officials will be in the bedroom of the suite.

"This is not any type of a stunt," he said, "but is a scientific experiment. It is a test and will be conducted on a scientific laboratory basis."

No date has been set for the experiment, according to Carson.
Two fires marred the University area Wednesday within twelve hours of each other.

A two and a half-hour fire caused an estimated $8,000 damage to an Ohio State farm operations building Wednesday morning at Lane Avenue and Kenny Road. No injuries were reported.

Contact of a coal stove flue pipe with wood or other combustible material caused the fire, which began at 8:50 a.m., according to a Clinton Township fire official.

A fire at 237 W. 11th Ave. took fire crews about a half an hour to bring under control. Fire pervaded the three floors of the apartment building, across from Canfield Hall. No injuries reported.

Fire Chief Merle Patterson said the cause of the 11th Avenue fire or the extent of damage have not yet been determined, but seemed to come from the plumbing and heating systems.

Charles Dillon, a maintenance employee, was in the farm operations building when the coal stove pipe exploded.

Dillon said lumber and carpentry equipment were stored in the army-style corrugated steel building.

The fire was confined to the single building.

Smoke and the steel sides and roofing hampered the firemen’s efforts to get to the burning wooden beams. Axes and a power saw were used to break through the steel.

$8,000 DAMAGE—A power saw was used Wednesday to get to burning wooden beams as firemen fought a fire at an Ohio State farm operations building at Lane Avenue and Kenny Road.

(Lantern photo by Leanne McLaughlin)
Arsonists set fires in 3 campus buildings

Fires were set in rapid succession in the basements of three campus buildings early Wednesday evening. No arrests had been reported by Lantern deadline at 1:30 this morning.

Battalion Chief Ralph Burden of the Columbus Fire Department said all three fires were set with rolled paper. Burden said the greatest damage was to classrooms and offices in Page Hall. He estimated the damage at $4,000-$5,000.

No injuries were reported.

Less severe were fires which gutted the Arts and Sciences Honors Student Lounge in Denney Hall and one which caused minor damage to a data storage room, 009, in Smith Physics Laboratory. No damage estimates were available from the Denney and Smith fires.

Fire officials said most of the damage to all three buildings was smoke and water damage, although flames were visible from outside Page.

The alarms were turned in at 7:17 p.m. at Page, 7:30 p.m. at Smith and 7:32 p.m. at Denney.

Campus Public Safety Director Donald G. Hanna said 30 extra campus policemen were called to duty Wednesday following the fires to patrol the campus in cars and on foot and to man observation posts by "crucial" campus buildings.

Hanna said extra Physical Plant personnel were called in and put on patrol in University maintenance trucks in an effort to "saturate" coverage of the campus "in certain crucial areas." Hanna declined to say which areas of campus were considered "crucial," but the Administration Building and Military Science Building are generally thought to be in that category.

At about 11:30 p.m., a false fire alarm was called into Nosker House and a false bomb threat was called into Siebert Hall.

Another bomb threat was called into Smith Hall at midnight but the building was not evacuated.

An all-night fire watch by South Campus resident advisers was in effect Wednesday.

Administration officials refused to comment on the fires.

The three fires Wednesday brought to five the number of suspected "set" fires within the past two weeks. A janitor was arrested last Friday and charged with setting a March 29 fire in Arps Hall.

Arson is suspected in a Saturday afternoon fire in Pomerene Hall. All five fires are being investigated by the state fire marshall's office.
Arson Ruled
In OSU Area

12 APR '71 DISPATCH

Columbus arson investigators said Monday that four fires in a building at E. 15th Ave. and N. High St., Sunday were set. Damage was estimated at $5,000 to the buildings.

"We have an ignitable liquid that's now in the hands of police," Fire Capt. C. Robert Grashel said. There are fingerprints on it.

THE FIRES broke out early simultaneously in four offices on the second floor of three buildings. "When you have four at once like that, it's suspicious," Grashel said. Then when we found the liquid, that was it.

Columbus and Ohio State University Police are working on the case.

THE DAMAGED offices included those of Dr. Lester Griffith, a dentist, and ZIP Services of Educational Activities Inc., both on the second floor. First-floor shops, including Charbers Restaurant, Tuckerman Optical, and University Jewelers, and the camera Shop, were not damaged by the fire.

Fireman John M. Burkey, 21, of 2340 Taymouth Rd., was treated at University Hospital for an arm cut suffered when he smashed a glass door leading to the offices.

BATTALION CHIEF Robert Daines said firemen were hampered by dense smoke and the intense heat.

"The whole building was full of smoke," said Daines. "The only clear spot was about a foot up from the floor."

The chief said a fire wall at the north end of the building prevented the fire from spreading to an adjacent structure which fronts on High St. and contains apartments, shops and a restaurant.

DAINES SAID the roof of the building was heavily damaged and had partially collapsed in places.

Shortly after the 7:47 p.m. fire erupted, large crowds of Ohio State University students and passersby gathered along N. High St., to watch as extra police arrived to help with traffic.

Patrolmen working the Mobile Crime Lab scoured the offices for evidence. Because the offices were ransacked, police also took a breaking and entering report and are working closely with fire investigators.

IN THE LAST 13 days, there have been seven fires, all believed to have been set in basements of OSU buildings.

An OSU dance instructor was charged last Friday with setting a fire in Derby Hall April 7. On April 1 an OSU janitor was charged with a $4,000 blaze in Arps Hall on March 29.
Taxpayers will foot bill for OSU fire damage

By TOM NIEHAUS  14 APR 71

The damage incurred in recent campus fires will be paid for by the University or the State Emergency Board, according to Henry M. Anderson, assistant University business manager.

Although the official estimates have not been released, Columbus Fire Department officials estimated the damage to Page Hall alone to be between $4000 and $5000. Several other buildings, including Denney, Derby, Pomerene and Arps Halls and Smith Physics Lab, have been damaged by fire this quarter.

Figures for the total damage caused by fire since the beginning of the school year are scattered in different budgets within the University and would be "very involved and costly to compile," according to Walter L. Hartman, director of the physical plant.

Of the 364 buildings on campus, 79 per cent were built with state funds, and therefore are not insured by the University, according to Anderson.

Anderson said, "The University is only obligated to buy insurance on those buildings built with University funds."

The other 29 per cent or 105 buildings are insured for their actual cash value and not their higher replacement value according to Anderson.

"The buildings are reevaluated on an annual basis," he said.

"Universities are less of a good risk by far today than they were five years ago," Anderson said.

He said premiums for universities have increased as much as 300 per cent in the last five years. Ohio State may be in line for premium increases, as their contract with the Home Insurance Co. comes up for renewal later this year.

The 264 buildings built with state funds are self-insured, according to Anderson. If a fire occurs in one of these buildings and the University does not have the funds to repair the damage, the University can make a request for aid to the State Emergency Board, Anderson said.

"The Emergency Board gets a biennial appropriation of money to meet the unexpected and unbudgeted expenses incurred by a number of departments and agencies of the state," James H. Leckrone, president of the board, said.

"In 1969 we got an appropriation of $5.8 million, of which $2.3 million is left," he said. "As far as I know, Ohio State has never requested funds to repair damages."

A spokesman for the Ohio Inspection Bureau said "The state thinks they are ahead by not insuring buildings against fire loss. They are gambling that they will get adequate funds out of the tax structure in the case of a fire in one of the buildings."
University requests $167,833 grant to repair buildings damaged by fires

By THOMAS NIEHAUS

The State Emergency Board is expected to act Monday on a University request for a $167,833 grant to repair equipment and buildings damaged in six campus fires.

The University's business and finance office submitted the request Monday.

Arson is suspected in five of the fires. The sixth fire, in Botany and Zoology, is thought to have been caused by an explosion in a refrigerator.

A seventh campus building, Derby Hall, was also damaged in a recent fire believed to have been caused by arson. However, no funds were requested for repairs there because the Emergency Board application listed damages as negligible.

Suspects have been arrested in connection with the Arps Hall and Derby Hall fires. Investigations are continuing on Pomerene Hall, Page Hall, Denney Hall and Alpheus Smith Laboratory of Physics fires.

Total damages included $91,192 for buildings, $65,854 for equipment, and $10,807 for materials.

The B & Z building suffered the most extensive damage, with estimates set at $83,533. Damage in Page Hall was estimated at $39,919.

Earlier this quarter Henry M. Anderson, assistant University business manager, said of the 364 buildings on campus, 79 per cent were built with state funds and therefore not insured by the University.

"The University is obligated to insure only those buildings built with University funds," he said.

According to Anderson, 264 buildings built with state funds are self-insured. If a fire occurs in one of these buildings and the University lacks the funds to repair the damage, the University can make a request for aid from the State Emergency Board.

James H. Leckrone, president of the board, said in a previous Lantern article, "The Emergency Board gets a biennial appropriation of money to meet the unexpected and unbudgeted expenses incurred by a number of departments and agencies."

Walter L. Hartman, director of the physical plant, said, "The University will arrange to have the buildings repaired, and most of the work will be done by contract when the funds are available."
'Crying wolf' hazardous

Fake fire alarms costly

By Ken Kronenberger

One irritating problem of Ohio State dorm life is the threat of early morning fire alarms. Most alarms tend to be false, and students exit the dorms spewing four-letter words.

Seven false alarms were reported this quarter by the 27 campus dormitories according to a recent Lantern telephone survey.

Baker and Stradley halls each reported two false alarms, while Nosker House, Steeb and Siebert halls claimed one each. All these dormitories are located on North Campus, except for Nosker House, which is on South Campus.

About 150 to 200 false alarms have been turned in from the University area this year, said Brad W. Quicksall, public information officer for the Columbus Division of Fire.

Each alarm costs the department nearly $600 in equipment wear and fuel costs, Quicksall said. "But money is the least serious problem involved with false alarms," he said.

"OUR MAIN WORRY is that false alarms pull equipment out of circulation. Protection is reduced for the surrounding areas and a real fire could turn into a major problem," Quicksall said.

Traffic accidents are another hazard because fire engines can travel up to 45 miles per hour on city streets and "a 12-ton truck can't always stop in time," Quicksall added.

"In April, a girl was critically injured when an engine hit her car at an intersection," he said. "The call turned out to be a false alarm."

Turning in a false alarm is a first degree misdemeanor and can cost the offender up to $1,000 and six months in jail. If the alarm results in an injury, the penalty increases to a fine up to $2,500 and a mandatory two-year sentence.

Every call reporting a fire is taped and voice comparisons can be used to identify the caller, Quicksall said. Traces can be made in a matter of seconds. A variety of other methods are used to locate the lawbreakers, but Quicksall would not elaborate.

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY night false alarms present a problem because Resident Advisers (RAs) generally are out of the building on these nights, said Sean T. Morrissey, a junior from Owen Hill, Maryland, who works at the Stradley Hall front desk.

"When an alarm bell goes off, the RA on each floor checks the two fire alarms in the hall and makes sure that everyone is out," Morrissey said. "If some RAs are gone, those from the floors above are assigned to check their floors for them."

Most false alarms in Stradley are triggered by Frisbee games in the halls, which usually are reported to the desk immediately, he added.

"But the Frisbees break the glass bars in the alarms and sometimes just slamming a door shut can set one off," Morrissey said. "They cost $7.50 apiece and when we're trying to stretch the budget they don't always get replaced."

MICHAEL K. CARIM, Steeb Hall dorm director, said the first step during an alarm is to call the fire department. If it's busy we know they've been reached, he added.

"Next, the RAs take their phones off the hook. We try to reach them from the desk and if we get a busy signal, we know they are home."

"At this point, the RAs check their fire alarms in the hall and call us at the desk immediately if they find the alarm was pulled on their floor. This way, we can pinpoint the fire immediately and notify the firemen when they arrive."

"All RAs are responsible for making sure all students have left their floors. As soon as they have finished their duties, they call us at the desk. If an adviser is missing from a floor we can have another cover for him. The system works quite well," Carim said.
Group cites danger in smoke detectors slated for dorms

By Kathy Kishman

A certain type of smoke detector which could pose a threat to students should not be installed in university dorms because of a possible safety hazard, a student research group said. However, university and state fire experts say the possibility of harm from an ionization-type smoke detector is remote.

John Shordike, associate director of the Ohio Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG), said ionization smoke detectors contain radioactive materials that could escape and harm students.

The university has not decided what type of smoke detectors will be installed in the dormitories, said Elmer E. Stewart, chief engineer for the dorms. The most effective type of smoke detector will vary from room to room, he said.

OPIRG is an independent and non-profit research organization.

There are two basic types of smoke detectors. The photoelectric type, which OPIRG wants the university to install in the dorms, sounds an alarm when a hydrocarbon particle enters the chamber containing a photoelectric cell. Hydrocarbon particles are found in smoke. The particle causes light to be scattered into the view of the alarm photocell.

The ionization type relies on a radiation source, called americium, to become electrically charged. When smoke enters its chamber, the flow of electric current decreases and the alarm sounds.

The effectiveness of the two types of smoke detectors is almost identical, said Donald R. Ryan, chief of the state's Fire Prevention Bureau. The cost of the photoelectric detector is $90, while the ionization detector sells for around $100.

"The only way this ionization smoke detector could pose a problem is if you take it apart and eat it," said Kenneth Cole, radiologist for Disaster Services.

Shordike is concerned, however, with the possibility of students vandalizing the detectors and swallowing the radioactive substance.

The compliance date for installing the detectors is Nov. 23, and the university probably will not meet it, officials have said.

The new law requires that all residential buildings 75 feet or higher have smoke detectors, which in Ohio State's case, mandates installation in 11 dorms.

Ryan said that if the fire marshal sees the university is working as quickly as possible to complete installation, no punitive action will be taken.
‘Good’ OSU fire record cited

By Sandra Puskarcik

10-16-78

The number of fires on campus has remained relatively constant over the past three years, said George J. Bailey, chief of fire safety.

There were 76 fires in 1976, 70 in 1977 and 54 fires so far this year, Bailey said.

"For a campus our size, I think we have a pretty good record. Even though there are many fires, the amount of large ones is kept at a minimum," he said.

However, a fire on May 22, 1968 in Lincoln Tower which was deliberately set was the worst fire this campus has witnessed, Bailey said. It left two students dead.

Suspected arson fires have decreased, Bailey said, from seven in 1976 to two in 1977 and only one so far this year.

Bailey said he was surprised how little persons know about fire safety. He would like to see a fire prevention program included in freshman orientation.

The fire safety department holds a program every fall for dorm directors, assistants and resident advisors.

"We could talk all day long, but if the material isn't passed on correctly it doesn't help anovg-"
Fire drills, inspections set

By Beth Cox
10-25-78

About one-third of campus classroom buildings are scheduled for fire drills and fire safety inspections this week, according to Richard W. Bletzacker, Chairman of the University Evacuation Committee.

Ten buildings were drilled and inspected Monday and Tuesday and no significant safety violations were found, Bletzacker said. "We're 100 percent so far," he said. Inspectors consider such things as unlit or blocked exits, cluttered aisles or locked doors as significant, Bletzacker said. Between 20 and 30 buildings will be inspected this quarter, he said.

The evacuation committee, made up of faculty, administration and staff members, is responsible for fire and tornado drills, Bletzacker said.

Personnel in most buildings are notified during the first week of the quarter of the inspection and drill dates, Bletzacker said. Non-classroom buildings such as maintenance and storage buildings are "unscheduled," he said, and are inspected "at our discretion."

Bletzacker said many students are unaware of the steps to take when a fire breaks out. "They (students) think all they have to do is go outside when the alarm goes off," he said.

Alarms in all campus buildings except the tower dorms are local alarms, Bletzacker said. They ring only in that building or building complex, and are not automatically transferred to the police department, he said. Alarms in Lincoln and Morrill Towers ring simultaneously in the police department, he said.

If no one calls the police to report the alarm, the fire department will not come, Bletzacker said. Calls are placed to the University Police dispatcher, who records the information and relays it to the fire department, he said.

Police are notified before drills take place, Bletzacker said, and will not call the fire department unless a fire has actually broken out. Only one person called the fire department during any of the drills Monday, he said.

Tornado drills are not conducted on campus, but warning sirens are sounded every Friday at noon to test the equipment, Bletzacker said. In an actual tornado alert the siren will sound for seven minutes, followed by 10 minutes of silence, he said. This will be repeated until the danger is passed.
Firefighters perform inspections

By Ken Drenten
The Lantern
12-5-80

Although the city's Fire Division has only a handful of full-time fire inspectors, nearly two-thirds of the division's firefighters are licensed to perform inspections.

Of 829 uniformed officers and firefighters in the division, about 600 are certified by the state to inspect buildings, said Battalion Chief A.K. White, head of the Columbus Fire Prevention Bureau.

The Fire Prevention Bureau employs only about 10 to 12 officers, some of whom are responsible for specialized inspections. One bureau officer is responsible for inspecting campus nightclubs and bars, and another inspects underground gasoline tanks, such as those used for service stations, White said.

Other bureau officers oversee inspections in various areas of the city, he said.

The rest of the inspections are done by regular firefighters. Firefighters are required to inspect buildings for fire code violations three hours per day on weekdays, according to Lt. Bill Schwab, an officer at Station 7, 1425 Indiana Ave. Only medical rescue squad personnel are exempted from inspecting, he said.

Each station keeps a file of buildings within its inspection area which must be checked periodically. "We generally get to each building twice a year," Schwab said.

Station 7's inspection area is bounded by Goodale on the south, Fifth Avenue on the north, the Olentangy River on the west and Fourth Street on the east.

In addition, each company officer is responsible for inspecting and setting up emergency procedures for a high-rise building.

Schwab's assigned high-rise is OSU's Main Library. Since the university has an "excellent" fire safety program, Schwab considered himself lucky to be assigned to the library.

High-rise buildings are not required to be inspected a certain number of times a year, but Schwab said he inspects the library about four times annually.

Other buildings owned by the university, that are not high-rise, are not inspected by city firefighters, he said, but by university fire officials.

Private residences also are inspected by the firefighters who allow three extra hours per month to inspect homes, he said.

Apartment complexes are not inspected unless requested or unless a water pipe in the apartment building directly connects with the water main, he said.

In the case of home inspections, firefighters point out hazards, but it is up to the homeowner to correct them, he said.

Four other fire stations have inspection responsibilities in the campus area in addition to Static
Danger still flickers on campus

Editor's note: There have been eight fires in the last 12 days in South Campus dorms. No one was injured and damages were not extensive. A fire about two weeks ago at the Inn-Toerne apartments on Lane Avenue, however, left 10 people looking for temporary shelter and did an estimated $30,000-$40,000 damage. The Lantern begins a series today on fire safety in campus buildings and throughout the city.

2-9-81
By Linda Bien

Wednesday, May 22, 1980. The pre-dawn stillness of the spring morning is suddenly shattered as a fire sweeps through Suite 1140 of Lincoln Tower and claims the lives of two students.

In the days following the fire, angry students charge that the towers, which in 1968 were not equipped with smoke alarms or sprinkler systems, are unsafe.

Almost 13 years later, however, only seven campus buildings are completely sprinkled and only one dormitory smoke alarm system — Blackburn Hall — is fully operating.

The number of buildings sprinkled is low because of the high cost of installing smoke alarm systems, said Thomas B. Smith, associate vice president for physical facilities. Also, the state building code requires sprinkler systems, only in buildings 75 feet or higher that were constructed after the code went into effect on July 1, 1979.

Those buildings completely sprinkled are: the medical parking garage on Cannon Drive, the Student Services Building, Rhodes Hall, Neil Hall, Oxley Hall, the agronomy building currently under construction and the food warehouse facility on Kinnear Road, he said.

Partial sprinkler systems are in use at Drake Union, the state area of Mershon Auditorium, the Women's Dining Hall on 12th Avenue and Lincoln and Morrill Towers, he added.

The sprinklers in Lincoln and Morrill Towers, for instance, were installed in 1970 and are arranged with one sprinkler in the lounge area of each suite, he said. Each suite has one bathroom and four sleeping units, each equipped with a smoke alarm.

Other campus buildings have sprinkler systems near trash areas, painting rooms and furnace areas, he said.

Although there are no plans to completely sprinkle more buildings, a $60,000 system will soon be added to cover the Derby Hall Bookstore, he said.

The project is on hold because of budget cuts, but Smith said installation could begin summer quarter. Funds for the project, from the Ohio Board of Regents, are part of a safety program approved in 1975.

In addition to water sprinklers, smoke detectors are also being installed in campus buildings.

Although smoke detector installation in campus dormitories began in June 1979, only one dormitory's smoke detector system is operating.

Blackburn Hall's system was completed in March 1980 as a 'test building,' said Terry O'Brien of National States Electronics, the contracting firm installing the detectors.

The law requiring the detectors was passed in 1978, but funding and the number of buildings involved have pushed the project's completion date to April.

When completed, a total of 7,500 alarms will cover every campus dormitory, said O'Brien.

Each building will have smoke detectors in every sleeping room with a central alarm in common areas like hallways and lounges, he said.

If a fire were to break out, the smoke alarm would sound off and electronically transmit signals to the dormitory office, O'Brien said.

Signals would also be transmitted to one of three central monitoring stations located at Royer Commons on North Campus, Baker Area Office on South Campus, and Morrill Tower in the Olentangy dorm area. Form either the regional station or the dormitory office, a call would then be placed with the Columbus fire department.
High-rise dorms beyond fire squads’ aid

By Davyd Yost
Second of a series.

Seven campus buildings topping nine stories are not equipped with sprinklers. In a fire, persons on the upper floors of these buildings could be trapped with virtually no means of rescue, according to a fire official.

The Columbus Division of Fire lists the Electronics Lab, Stradley and Stebb halls, Jones, Drackett, Morrison and Taylor towers as structures that could pose special threats in the event of a fire. Battelle Memorial Institute and Harrison House are in this category also.

Fire ladders extend a maximum of 100 feet, but may be practically limited to about 75 feet in an emergency situation, said Lt. David Morbitzer, coordinator of research and development for the Columbus Division of Fire.

In the event of a fire in those buildings, fire department strategy would be to try to keep an escape route open, such as a stairway, Morbitzer said.

However, all escape routes could be blocked by the time firefighters arrive.

“If normal escape routes are blocked, we have no way to rescue those people,” he said.

If necessary, Morbitzer said the National Guard could supply helicopters to airlift trapped persons from the burning building. However, this is “a last resort and a very hazardous undertaking,” Morbitzer said.

Smoke from the fire or weather conditions could seriously reduce visibility during the exacting maneuver. The helicopters have never been used in the four years they have been available, Morbitzer said.

He added that complete sprinkling can contain a fire in 98 percent of all cases, preventing an emergency call.

“Sprinklers are the technology that is needed” to make high-rise buildings safer, Morbitzer said.

Sprinkler heads are activated by temperatures of more than 160 degrees, soaking the area below. Each sprinkler head is activated individually and covers only a limited area.

The current fire code requires any building of more than six stories to be equipped with sprinklers. The code only applies to new construction, so many buildings built before the current requirements are not compelled to comply. Many of these are partially sprinkled.

The Columbus Department of Safety is studying the feasibility of making the sprinkler requirement retroactive to cover all high-rise buildings.

This presents a problem because of the cost of installing sprinklers in older buildings, Morbitzer said. But part of the cost may be defrayed through lower insurance premiums, and some building owners may recover their investment in time.

Few cities have attempted to enact such a retroactive requirement. New York has adopted a measure which was phased in over time, and that has worked moderately well there, according to Morbitzer.
Helicopters vital to high-rise fire rescue

By Linn Grossman

Third of a series.

There are 95 buildings in Columbus higher than the fire department's ladders can reach.

After the fatal fire at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas last November, city fire officials met with the Ohio National Guard and Division of Police spokesmen to plan the use of helicopters in fire rescues.

"If we ever have a high-rise fire, people would get an idea of the worth of the helicopter," said Deputy Chief James Rutter of the Columbus Division of Police.

National Guard helicopters were used once to fly firefighters to the top of the Borden building during a construction fire about 10 years ago, a guard spokesman said.

But there are dangers in using helicopters for fire rescues. If it is too windy, or visibility is limited, the helicopters could not fly, Fire Chief Raymond Fadley said.

A fire also creates an updraft which can hinder an aircraft's maneuverability, Fadley said, adding that there is always the possibility of a helicopter accident.

If a high-rise fire occurs, fire department officials will call the Ohio National Guard. The guard helicopters would fly to the police heliport on the corner of Third Avenue and Olentangy River Road and stand by.

Fire House No. Nine is adjacent to the heliport, and Riverside, Doctors North and University Hospitals are all nearby.

The smaller police helicopters, which have no rescue capacity, would be used for observation and coordination, Rutter said.

If the National Guard could not bring in enough pilots to fly its helicopters, the police pilots could go up in the guard helicopters as co-pilots, Rutter said.

It may be beneficial to call in the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, Fadley said. If there was a fire, the SWAT team could be lowered onto the roof of the building to maintain order in a crowd.

Rutter said that while it may be advantageous to use SWAT to maintain order, it would also mean six more people to rescue later.

If the helicopters are requested to aid firefighters, they could reach most of the high rises quickly from the heliport.

National Guard helicopters could perform rooftop and window rescues, and fly firefighters to the top of buildings.

If possible, the helicopters would land on top of a building to rescue people. But if they are unable to do so, there is a 250-foot cable and two rescue nets to lift people into the helicopters.

But communication between the National Guard helicopters and fire trucks needs to be worked out, officials said.

The radio frequency in most of the helicopters is not the same as fire truck radios, although Fadley said they can communicate with one of the National Guard helicopters.

Officials are also considering
False fire alarms
a high-priced prank

By Linn Grossman
2-13-81
Last of a series.

The Columbus Division of Fire spent approximately $929,131.58 last year responding to alarms on campus where there was not an actual fire, according to statistics.

There were 220 false alarms in 1980 and 118 malfunctions, Don Wintringham, assistant chief of University Fire Safety, said. A false alarm occurs when somebody pulls the fire alarm, and malfunctions usually involve smoke detectors, Wintringham said.

So far this year, there have been 15 false alarms and 19 malfunctions on campus.

For an alarm anywhere on campus, the Columbus Division of Fire responds with three fire engines, two ladder trucks, two battalion chiefs, a rescue and an emergency squad. The cost for each run is approximately $2,746.91.

The cost includes maintenance, wages and depreciation of equipment, officials said.

In addition to Columbus firefighters, University Fire Safety responds with one or two vehicles, an emergency squad and a response vehicle carrying fire extinguishing equipment.

University Fire Safety officials have been unable to determine their cost for responding to a false alarm.

"There's always the possibility of an accident where someone could be killed," Wintringham said. "And how can you determine the value of somebody you run over?" he asked.

There is also the danger of an actual fire breaking out when fire trucks and emergency squads are on campus investigating a false alarm.

When equipment is dispatched, the remaining equipment is redistributed to cover the city, but this could cause a loss of life because of the slower response time if an engine has to travel a longer distance, Battalion Chief Arnett K. White said.

Even on false alarms, firefighters search a building to make sure there is no fire. The necessary time to determine that an alarm is false can be anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour, fire officials said.

Setting off a false alarm is a first-degree misdemeanor, and carries a maximum penalty of six months in jail and a $1,000 fine.
Faulty alarms delay dorm fire protection

By Linda Bien

Defective sounding devices are responsible for causing a six-month delay in the completion of OSU's $3 million smoke alarm system, an OSU official said Monday.

Richard D. Jackson, vice president for business and administration, said the smoke alarms in most of the dorms have not been connected because the horns in about 5,000 of the 7,500 alarms do not work all of the time. Smoke alarm installation began in June, 1979.

Jackson said he did not know exactly why the horns were malfunctioning. The problem was first discovered when testing of the complete system began prior to fall quarter, he added.

Since then, OSU officials, representatives from the contracting firm installing the alarms, the distributors of the alarms and the Ohio Department of Public Works have been trying to determine exactly how the problem should be solved, he said.

Those negotiations resulted Friday in a tentative agreement requiring the removal of the defective horns, he said. The horns will then be replaced with new horns that have a different voltage, he added.

After the horns are replaced, the system in each dorm will be tested on an individual basis before it is converted from the present system to the new smoke alarms, Jackson said.

The only dorm not affected by this will be Blackburn House, where the system was completed in March, 1980, as a test building.

Because it is a small residence hall, any defects with the smoke alarm horns were corrected immediately, said Roger A. Meyer, director of administration and operation for the Office of Residence and Dining Halls.

Meyer said work on the systems was halted when workers found similar problems in other dormitories on campus.

Because of past delays in the project, both Meyer and Jackson would not estimate when it will be completed. They also would not reveal the cost for replacing the horns.

William Hall, director for the Office of Residence and Dining Halls, said students living in the dorms should be aware there is a delay in the operation of the smoke alarms. But because of the potential for legal problems, Hall said he was not able to discuss the exact reasons for the delay.

He also said the reasons for the alarms not being connected are not as important as informing students of the delay and making clear the old fire alarm system still is being used.

 Resident advisers were informed of the delay and were told to keep students aware of the smoke alarm situation, he added. Hall also added that students were given residence hall newsletters which mentioned the smoke alarm system delay.

Firm will replace 5,000 dorm alarms

After a six-month delay, a $3 million smoke alarm system in OSU residence halls soon could be operating, said Richard D. Jackson, vice president for business and administration.

Jackson said tentative agreement between OSU and National States Electronics Co., which was finalized Wednesday, requires National States Electronics Co. to replace defective sound devices in about 5,000 smoke alarms. States Electronics is the contracting firm which began installing the alarms in June 1979.
Dormitories must pass evacuation tests

OSU fire drills build safety awareness

By Dawn E. Wilson
Lantern staff writer 11-1-82

Each year the OSU Division of Fire Safety conducts a series of fire drills to familiarize people with the fire alarm systems and to acquaint them with the building evacuation routes, said George J. Bailey, division chief.

The drills are run three times a year in the summer, fall and spring quarters.

Bailey said each dormitory has been drilled once this quarter, but some have had more than one drill because the first was unsuccessful. A drill is unsuccessful when the residents take too much time to leave a building.

Evacuation time limits are determined by such factors as the number of occupants, the size and number of doorways and stairwells, and the time of day and weather, he said.

Evacuation goals

Five to seven minutes is a satisfactory evacuation time for a large dorm like Drackett Tower, Bailey said. A small dorm like Blackburn House should be evacuated in 1 1/2 to two minutes.

Drackett Tower has 12 floors and 800 residents. Blackburn House has four floors and 220 residents.

"We have to play it by ear," Bailey said, referring to evacuations conducted under different conditions.

All dorms have a smoke detector system, he said.

When one of the detectors senses smoke, it sounds an alarm in the dorm office. The staff member on duty calls Fire Safety, which then calls the Columbus Fire Department. The Columbus Fire Department sends 10 or 11 vehicles to the scene. This equipment includes engine companies, ladder trucks, hose wagons, rescue carriers and medical squads. OSU Fire Safety sends one vehicle carrying Fire Safety inspectors.

With the smoke detection system, "the fire is detected in its early stages so the person has time to escape or extinguish the fire," Bailey said.

Sensitive systems

The sensitive detection system can be set off by talcum powder, steam and aerosol sprays. An alarm will sound in the dorm office if the system malfunctions.

It is a "fail-safe system," he said.

"It tells you when it's not working," adding that the system is backed up by batteries in case of a power failure.

People refusing to leave the dorm during a drill may be disciplined by their hall director.

Students intentionally hindering fire safety personnel or fighting a fire can be fined as much as $100. Anyone risking physical harm to a person or property during an emergency may be fined $250 and sentenced to 30 days in jail, according to OSU Police Supervisor Nicholas J. Bondra Jr.

The division also conducts drills in academic buildings.

"If we don't get them in the (academic) buildings, we'll get them in the dorm," Bailey said.

He also said the upcoming Christmas holiday presents special hazards. Live Christmas trees are prohibited in public buildings and artificial trees are allowed only in specific areas where they would not interfere with emergency evacuation procedures. Division officials also recommend minimal use of electric light decorations.

"If and when you suspect a fire, do not hesitate to call the fire department," Bailey said. "In a fire, seconds count."
Power surge disrupts campus; alarms ring

By Brian D. Daher

A power surge disabled university computer systems Sunday night setting off fire alarms, leaving people stranded in elevators and disappointing computer science students waiting to run their programs.

The surge, which occurred at 5:15 p.m., was a fluctuation of power which could have been caused by nearby lightning, according to Stephen K. Cramer, a student employee at University Systems.

Although the surge caused the fire alarm to sound at the main library, the building was not evacuated.

"Quite a few alarms switched to trouble," said John Strawser, dispatcher for OSU Police.

"We left it up to them (main library personnel) as to whether they wanted to evacuate," he said.

"The alarms have been going on and off all night. The one in the basement ran for the better part of two hours," said Robert D. Lynch, weekend supervisor at the main library.

The Library Computer System went down immediately. The system came up at 7:45 p.m. but continued to go off-line for the rest of the evening, Lynch said.

A spokesman for Physical Facilities said people were stranded in elevators in Baker Systems and MacQuigg Lab for about 30 minutes.

Computer science students were unable to run their programs for most of Sunday evening. The system that computer and information science students use was still down at press time.

Most power, however, was restored by 8 p.m.

Alvin G. Daugherty, superintendent of Construction and Renovations of the University Architect's Office, said the surge is being investigated.
Faulty exhaust fan wiring blamed for apartment fire

By Becca Karam
Lantern staff writer

The residents of 75 W. 10th Ave. had a rude awakening around 7:15 a.m. Wednesday when a fire was spotted in the top floor of their apartment building.

According to the Columbus Fire Department, the fire, which appeared to have started in a kitchen range hood exhaust fan, was caused by either a short or a malfunction in the wiring.

Julie Helms, 20, a sophomore from Urbana, was getting ready to go to class when she smelled something burning.

"I checked my curling iron and around the apartment and then I saw the smoke outside my window," Helms said. "So then I started to wake people up."

James Snee, 20, a sophomore from Columbus and his roommates Todd Wray, 20, a junior from Virginia, and Greg Morris, a junior from Shady Side, said Helms woke them up in their basement apartment at about 7:20 a.m.

Snee said he and his roommates thought they would be able to go back to their apartments in no time.

"When it started, it looked like a small fire," Snee said. "Then the next thing we knew flames were shooting out of everywhere and smoke was pouring from the windows."

Extensive damage was done to the building. The roof was too weak to support the weight of the firefighters walking on it, so holes had to be made in the top of the building to reach the fire.

The firefighters also had to make a hole in the side of the apartment to allow smoke to escape.

Battalion Chief of the Columbus Fire Department, Bill Hanf, said although he could not estimate how much damage was done to the building, the cost would be significant.

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised if the dollar value was $75,000 to $100,000," Hanf said.

He said there was extensive damage to the ceilings, and there will probably have to be a number of repairs to the building.

Both Hanf and the residents of the apartment said there were no injuries, and everyone made it out of the building safely.

Brian Graham, a manager of Ivan Town Homes and Apartments, said all of the residents of the apartment building have been placed in other Ivan Town apartments throughout the campus area. He said he has yet to receive an estimation of damages to the complex.
OSU-area blaze displaces 33

Columbus firefighter David Williamson looked out through a hole burned in the roof of the Inn Town Apartments, 77 W. 10th Ave., after a two-alarm fire yesterday. The blaze forced 33 tenants to flee about 7 a.m., but no injuries were reported. A short circuit in a stove fan was the apparent cause, fire officials said. Damage was estimated at $50,000. Most tenants are students at nearby Ohio State University.
Suspicous fires, arson fewer, more expensive

Fire department examines arson in campus area

By Steve Helwagen
Lantern Special Assignment reporter

The number of suspicious fires and arsons in the OSU area were down slightly in 1988 from the previous year, but those fires caused over $60,000 more damage than the previous year, according to Columbus Fire Department records.

There were 208 suspicious fires or arsons on the OSU campus or in the surrounding area last year, down from 225 in 1987. In 1988, damages from those fires totaled $256,001, up from $189,878.

The OSU campus proper has had little problem with arson in the past two years. A total of 15 suspicious fires have done just $2,150 in damage, according to fire department records.

Fire marshal Mark Devine, a battalion chief for the Columbus Fire Department, said arson has been a big problem in the OSU area.

"We know for certain that we have had 40 fires set in the immediate OSU area since March of last year, most coming since August, and most of them are attributed to one person," he said.

Devine believes there are two main culprits for the recent outbreak of suspicious fires and arsons.

"We have an ongoing investigation now," Devine said. "We believe there are two different arsonists - one on north campus and one on south campus.

"We have two investigators working on it fulltime," he said.

Capt. James Smith, the department's records captain, agreed with Devine that there are two "regular" arsonists, but said others may be involved as well.

"It could be anywhere from a group of teenagers playing pranks and setting dumpsters on fire to arsonists for hire," Smith said. "It could be anyone in the complete range of fire setters.

"They are setting fires randomly and not sticking to one property owner. But, there are certain patterns that we are looking into," Smith said.

"We have been lucky so far that nobody has been seriously injured in any of these fires," he said.

"The task of locating and apprehending the arsonists is difficult," Smith said.

"One time he is going to get hurt and he'll get caught that way, or we are going to have an eyewitness, or the person will tell somebody and they will come to us," he said.

Smith said the fire department is relying on assistance from students in finding the arsonists.

"Students can just observe and if they see anybody acting suspicious or if they hear anything other than gossip, they should call the arson bureau," Smith said. "If they have anything other than gossip or rumors we will be happy to listen to it.

"In 1989, there were eight suspicious fires or arsons with damages in excess of $12,000 in the 43201 area code (which includes sections north, east and south of the OSU campus).

"Last year's largest suspicious fire loss came in November to a series of

A weathered and torn sign taped to the exterior of an Unlimted Property Management building on North High Street declares a fire there in mid-December may be the result of arson.

DeSantis Properties, said his company has been lucky to avoid fire problems in the past but 1989 saw a slight increase.

"Overall, in our company's history, we have been very fortunate. A bulk of our property is in the OSU area and we have not had a problem with fires," he said.

"In 1989, we had five or six fires at our properties at Ohio State, which is a little higher than in past years there," Hobbs said.

Hobbs agreed with Matthews on the treatment of the tenants following a fire.

"Our policy is to get the people out and relocate them," he said. "Unfortunately, it seems these things always happen in the coldest months and we have to react in a hurry to get them moved."

"In a tenant's belongings, though, is always the tenant's responsibility even in the case of arson. "We are not responsible for personal belongings; we are only responsible for the apartment," Matthews said.

"We have told students that if something is lost or destroyed in a fire that the damages are likely covered in their parents' homeowners insurance. Since they are students they usually have full coverage under their parents' policy," she said.
Fire leaves 25 residents homeless

By Michael Chabler
Lantern staff writer

Fire destroyed eight apartments at 64 E. 12th Ave. early Friday morning.

At 1:20 a.m., an Inn-Town Homes & Apartments building caught on fire. The blaze started in a basement unit of apartment B and spread to the third story. No one was in apartment B when the fire started.

Twenty-five residents were displaced by the fire, which caused an estimated $35,000 in damage, said Jim Flynn, a battalion chief for the Columbus Fire Department.

A cigarette left burning on a couch is suspected of causing the fire, Flynn said.

Firefighters arrived at the scene in five trucks. Two people were rescued with ladders. Two others had to jump 12 feet from the third to the second floor to escape the fire, Flynn said.

No one remained trapped inside the building as it burned, and there were no injuries. Residents' pets also escaped unharmed.

"Miraculously, no one got hurt," Flynn said.

A crowd of people watched as firefighters worked until 4:30 a.m. to extinguish the blaze. East 12th Avenue was blocked from High Street to Indianola Avenue until officials left.

Several tenants said they did not hear smoke alarms. Brian Grim, landlord of Inn-Town Home & Apartments, said the smoke alarms were fully operational, but tenants could have disconnected them.
Campus fire leaves students out in cold

By Anthony Reynolds
Lantern staff writer

A fire near the Ohio State campus Friday afternoon caused heavy damage to the second and third floors of an apartment building and caused six students to evacuate.

Columbus Fire Department officials said no one was hurt in the fire but at least four units responded to the emergency at 99 Chittenden Ave.

James M. Flynn, Columbus Fire Department Battalion Chief, said he asked the units to respond in order to prevent the fire from spreading to nearby apartments.

Jason Warner, a junior majoring in English, said he noticed a couch on fire on his second floor balcony. He tried to get the couch away from the balcony wall but was unable before it caught the balcony on fire.

"It only took five minutes for the whole balcony to go up," he said. "We knocked on all of the neighbors' doors to get them out."

Molly Hanna, a junior majoring in journalism, said there was no indication the building was on fire from her first floor apartment.

"There was all this stuff flying from the balcony and then one of the guys from upstairs ran past my window brushing his shirt," she said.

The exact cause of the fire is still being investigated, said Flynn.

Firefighters inspect the charred rubble from a fire at 99 Chittenden Avenue Friday afternoon. No one was hurt in the fire, but there was heavy damage done to the second and third floors of the apartment building. The exact cause of the fire is still being investigated.
False alarms draw most fire squad runs to OSU

By Jennifer Crabill
Lantern staff writer

Columbus firefighter Gary Rowe groaned when he heard the address of the latest report on the station scanner. "OSU Hospitals again," he mumbled. "It's probably another false alarm.

Rowe, right. He returned to the station shaking his head. "What did I tell you?" he asked. Rowe's reaction stemmed not from laziness but from frustration. False alarms are 92 percent of the 261 trips Columbus firefighters have made to Ohio State.

Despite the high number of false alarms, firefighters treat each call as if it were a full-scale fire, Captain Craig Bauman said. "We'd rather be prepared any time than get caught with our pants down one time," Bauman said.

Expenses for an average run in Columbus are about $750, but the average campus run costs about $4000 because of the extra equipment, Bob Beard, captain of research and development said. However, those figures contain constants such as administrative and firefighter salaries, equipment and maintenance, Beard said.

The only extra expense involved in false alarms is mileage and gasoline, he said. But expense isn't Bauman's biggest concern. Beard said.

He said he worries more about the danger involved in responding to calls: "People are zipping up and down High Street and all of a sudden they see flashing lights and hear the sirens. We'd feel pretty bad if we caused an accident responding to a false alarm."

Beard said that when firefighters are responding to a false alarm, people with legitimate emergencies could suffer because the department would need more time to respond.

"The engines that could be there in two minutes take another five minutes to get there," Beard said.

A fire can double its size every three minutes, Beard said.

The Columbus Fire Department responds to OSU alarms with three engines, two ladder trucks, a rescue squad and a battalion chief, Bauman said.

The department sends more trucks to university calls than others because the campus has many densely populated buildings crammed close together, Nancy Mangani, Columbus Fire Division spokeswoman said.

Bauman said the university generates a high number of false alarms because it is densely populated.

Other densely populated areas such as downtown office buildings also have many false alarms, he said.

In 1987, the city passed a resolution assessing service fees ranging from $25 to $50 for false alarms to city fire and police departments. But the section applying to fire departments was later repealed.
Fire ousts OSU students from apartment

By Heather McGurk and Mark Gsellman

Lantern staff writers

A fire at 1431 Neil Ave. forced OSU students Seth Holland and Bryan Aicher out of their third-floor apartment and into the cold last night.

A malfunction in the furnace caught the top floor apartment on fire, said Craig Bauman, Battalion 1 Fire Chief. A neighbor called the fire department at 7:25 p.m. when he noticed the apartment was on fire.

Holland and Aicher received assistance from the American Red Cross because they could not return to their apartment.

Holland and Aicher said they would be staying with some friends.

“...They have a big hole in their roof now,” Bauman said.

It took about 30 minutes to contain the fire, Bauman said. The ceiling, roof, furnace and walls of the apartment had to be ripped out, Bauman said.

The fire was relatively easy to contain, but it took a lot of work to pull the ceiling down, Bauman said.

Damage was estimated at $15,000. The damage estimates included the contents of the building and the building itself, Bauman said.

The damage was confined to one floor, Bauman said. The ceiling and roof had to be ripped out so that the fire wouldn’t spread to the next apartment, Bauman said.

Realty Services was notified about the damages. They are a division of Olentangy Management Company, and had no comment about the fire.

Holland said they had been having trouble with the furnace all week. The furnace quit working Saturday night, Bauman said.

A maintenance man was called in about 20 minutes before the fire began to fix the furnace, Holland said.

The maintenance man looked at the furnace and flipped the circuit breaker back on, Bauman said.

Holland smelled something burning after the maintenance man left. He then left the apartment, Holland said.

Holland and Aicher received overnight kits from the American Red Cross.

It is notified by the fire department anytime residents will not be able to return to their homes, Bauman said.

There were no injuries.