

Officials suspect arson

Morning fire rouses dorm

By BILL MANNY
Of the Emerald

Arson is suspected in a fire early Saturday morning in the Hamilton-Spiller dormitory that sent 86 University men scampering into the dark.

The Eugene Fire Department estimated damage at \$10,000 — \$8,000 to the 23-year-old structure and \$2,000 to contents. The fire started in a small janitor's closet — a storage room for vacuums, brooms and mops — just off the first floor main lobby.

Resident assistant Brent Dahl said he awoke and smelled smoke soon after 3 a.m. Saturday and was roused from bed to the sound of students pounding on doors.

Dahl called campus security at 3:11 a.m., and students set off the first fire alarm at 3:15.

"I called it in first, before pulling a fire box," Dahl explained.

A reported fire gets a quicker response than a "typical" weekend dormitory fire alarm, he said.

"They would not jump on it as fast."

There were no injuries. One student leaped out a second-story window but was unhurt.

"He just heard a lot of screaming and yelling, and jumped," Dahl said.

Dahl, whose room is near the storage room where the fire broke out, said the adjacent dorm lobby was filled "with a great deal of smoke."

"The entire dorm was outside in five minutes," Dahl said. "Lots of people in my upper floors thought it was a false alarm."

False alarms — at least in Hamilton — haven't been a problem this year. Dahl said only one false alarm has been pulled this year.

The dormitory, more than two decades old, is not equipped with sprinklers. Smoke detectors are located in the residence areas, but there are none in the lobby, lounge or lounge restroom.

Dahl said his room had heavy smoke



Photo by Erich Boekelheide

A fire that awoke Hamilton-Spiller dormitory residents damaged the lobby area and sent University freshmen out into

the darkness early Saturday morning. Officials suspect arson in the blaze that caused about \$10,000 damage.

but was not damaged.

The fire department arrived at 3:23 a.m. and extinguished the fire in 30 minutes.

In an effort to prevent more arson fires, outside hall locks have been replaced and new master keys issued. In addition, the storage closet has been barricaded, and fire watches have been established.

Paul Bransom, emergency communications coordinator for the EFD, said 19 fire fighters responded to the alarm,

along with three engine corps, one truck corps, a fire marshal and a battalion chief.

Investigators should know more about the possibility of arson Monday, Bransom said.

"It's under investigation," he said.

The last campus fire occurred on April 5 last year in the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. A University woman died in the fire. According to EFD officials, the last dormitory fire was approximately two

years ago when a plastic coffee maker caught fire in a resident's room.

On Sunday a campus security representative said false alarms are common on campus, but there is no way to eliminate the danger inherent when students cry wolf.

"There are always going to be pranks," the representative said.

To stop the pranks, "I think you'd have to re-educate our whole society."

"What can you do about freshmen?"

Library finally chooses cataloging system

By MARIAN GREEN
Of the Emerald

If a newly chosen cataloging system lives up to expectations, University librarians will be able to catalog and find books for students faster and more accurately.

After almost five months of evaluating cataloging systems, the University Library Committee and library staff have chosen the Ohio College Library Center, says head librarian George Shipman.

When implemented — the tentative date is June 1 — the OCLC system will cost \$20,000 for terminals and other up-front costs. The system's expected yearly cost is \$96,000. About \$90,000 of that will be covered by funds used for the library's current system.

The library is negotiating with the University Foundation for the approximately \$20,000 in up-front costs and for the additional \$6,000 needed for yearly costs, Shipman says.

Three cataloging utilities — OCLC, the Research Libraries Group and the Washington Library Network — were tested for their ability to serve the library's needs. To determine this, the library gave each system 100 uncommon book titles to run through their data bases, Shipman explains.

OCLC came out the winner, he says.

"The richest data base by far was OCLC."

OCLC's "hit rate" for locating the books was in the "mid-90s" while the other two utilities had rates of less than 70, he says.

The OCLC system will enable the library to catalog books faster and more efficiently, Shipman says. And the system will help the library reduce its backlog of uncataloged books and reclassify books cataloged under outmoded classifications such as the Dewey Decimal system.

Shipman says the library still can find a specific book for a student, "but it's the day-to-day cataloging we're behind in."

At present, the library has a cataloging backlog of

14,000 new book titles and a reclassification backlog of 250,000 book titles, says Elaine Kemp, head of the cataloging department.

Kemp estimates that even with OCLC it will take "at least a year" to substantially reduce the new title backlog and "three to five years" to completely reclassify titles cataloged under outmoded systems.

Once that work is completed, "you ought to have an expectation that all materials will be cataloged consistently so you don't have to wander through a jumble of approaches," Shipman says.

Other benefits of computer cataloging are title searching for acquisitions processes and faster interlibrary loans, Shipman says.

Once in place, the OCLC system can be modified or a new system can be added if the library's needs change, Shipman says.

The library is the last of the national Association of Research Libraries to join a cataloging utility, Shipman says.

"We should've been affiliated years ago."