

One student dead, five hospitalized after fire sweeps through Murray State dorm

College Press Exchange

MURRAY, Ky. (CPX) - One student was killed and five were hospitalized after a fire ravaged the fourth floor of a dormitory at Murray State University early Friday.

It was the second fire in a week to strike the eight-story residence hall, and university officials told the Associated Press that the latest blaze was intentionally set. However, they would not say if Friday's fire was related to a smaller one that broke out on the same floor on Sept. 13.

Michael Minger, 19, of

Niceville, Fla., died in the second fire. One of the five students injured in the blaze, 21-year-old Michael Priddy of Paducah, Ky., was flown to Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville with severe burns on his arms and back. He was listed in critical but stable condition on Monday. Four other students were hospitalized locally, and 10 more were treated at the scene.

All of the 300 students living in the dormitory were evacuated. The university is housing them in local hotels, empty rooms on campus and by converting single rooms into doubles.

Student authors consider legal action against Iona College

By Christine Tatum
College Press Exchange

NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. (CPX) - Students at Iona College are debating First Amendment rights with school officials who insist the law supported their decision to confiscate the school's literary magazine and delete all or part of three poems.

In a statement released Sept. 30, the college said its opinion is "consistent with the tradition of the Christian brothers, Catholic higher education and relevant law." The school also said its policy is to ban indecency from student publications.

Only days before the end of the last school year, Iona confiscated 380 copies of the magazine because it contained "offensive" and "totally inappropriate" writing, Iona President Brother James Liguori said. Two poems containing profanity were removed from the magazine. A third containing a sexually explicit word was edited but allowed to remain.

Iona students have complained that the magazine was altered without a recommendation from the college's media board, which is composed of students, faculty and administrators. One student author said her work was altered without her permission - and after she had

been assured the piece would run "as is."

School officials have said they could not muster a quorum of the media board because the conflict occurred during final exams. They also said the private school, acting as publisher of the magazine, had the right to change the magazine in any way it saw fit.

"Even if the school had the authority to do something like this, it's hard not to say this was educationally backwards," said Mark Goodman, director of the Student Press Law Center in Washington, D.C. "It's hard to believe that in 1998 someone would be shocked by the use of a vulgarity in a literary publication. The school is really naive to think it can have a high-quality literary magazine and not ever be confronted with this issue."

Goodman said students may have a case against Iona if the school violated any written policies stipulating that such editorial issues would be settled by its media board.

"If the school in fact censored a publication in conflict with its own written policies, then it has breached its agreement," Goodman said. "If a school agrees to do something through a policy or student handbook code, then it is legally bound as if that was a contract."

Professor combines undersea salvage with history of slavery

By Sandra Tan
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

HAMPTON, Va. - When Hampton University aquatics professor Erol Duplessis first ran into Mel Fisher in 1984, he had no reason to believe a word the man said.

Fisher, a treasure hunter, said he was in Florida to work on the salvage operation of the Atocha, a Spanish galleon that sank off the Florida Keys in 1622 with a fortune in gold and silver.

"I was saying to myself, 'Yeah, right,'" recalled Duplessis.

But the professor listened carefully when he heard Fisher say he had also found the remnants of a slave ship in the midst of his search for the Atocha.

It would be a few more months before news of the Spanish galleon discovery broke worldwide, and Duplessis found himself reconsidering Fisher's credibility.

He did some cursory research about the slave ship that Fisher discovered, the Henrietta Marie, which sank 35 miles southwest of Key West in the summer of 1700. It was the first slave ship to be discovered off the coast of the Americas and one of only seven discovered in the world.

Duplessis then decided he wanted to visit the site himself.

In November 1993, he and another professor, as well as five HU students sponsored by the university, made the trip to the slave ship's wreck at New Ground Reef off the Marquesas Keys.

Duplessis will talk about the experience tonight at Nauticus, where artifacts from the wreck are now on display.

The dive did run into a few obstacles, Duplessis said.

"The visibility was so poor, and the current was so strong," he recalled. "I was more worried about the current."

Fortunately for the HU group, the National Association of Black Scuba Divers had visited the spot a few months earlier and mounted a plaque on a two-ton piece of concrete to mark the spot.

The plaque read, "Henrietta Marie - In memory and recognition of the courage, pain and suffering of enslaved African people."

Duplessis' diving team hooked a line from their boat to the monument, giving the team members an easy guide to the wreck site. The group collected data and took video footage of the dive.

"I wanted to see if it was the kind of reef that could cause a ship to crash," Duplessis said. "It was not."

The professor said he believes the ship probably struck the shoals, the more shallow reefs, of the Marquesas Keys, then drifted and eventually sank. Others believe the ship was wrecked in a storm.

According to research that has been done on the ship and its voyage, slaves were probably not on board at the time because they had already been delivered and sold in Jamaica. However, Duplessis said his research on the unusual location of the wreck suggests the ship may have also been making a side trip to Cuba to sell more slaves.

At the completion of the diving expedition, the HU group visited the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Museum in Key West and looked at other slave ship artifacts kept in the

MTV reporter studies the appeal, perils of porn

By Thomas Huang
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

Tabitha Soren, the MTV reporter who once got Bill Clinton to reveal his favorite Rolling Stone and Beatle - Mick and Paul - is back at the network after a year at Stanford University.

She's already in the thick of things. She has been watching people have sex.

"With condoms," she says. To examine the pornography industry, she spent several days on movie sets in California's San Fernando Valley, chatting up young actors and watching them work.

Occupational hazards have forced the actors to take precautions. "In the last six months, they've had five HIV cases," she says by phone from New York. "The industry really reacted to that."

Such is the state of porn in the age of AIDS. That's not all the 31-year-old journalist discovered - as she reveals in "I Am a Porn Star," a 90-minute MTV special that airs Wednesday.

The documentary, which Soren co-produced, is the latest in MTV News' "True Life" series. The series focuses on the concerns and real lives of young people.

"The biggest consumer of porn is between 20 and 30 years old," she says. "The people who are on camera, as well as those writing, producing and directing (porn), are between 18 and 30."

The porn crowd is an increasingly young set - right up MTV's alley. What's driving that demographic trend? Soren points to a troubling phenomenon.

"Our society is so caught up in being famous and young people measure their self-worth by how famous they are, how famous they might be," she says. "The porn world is another way for young people to get attention. In the industry they're

treated as stars, flown everywhere.

"And they're impatient about making money quickly," she says. "They're no different from the people I've interviewed on Wall Street." Mix the love of the buck with the love of the lurid and you've got a \$4 billion industry, she says. Americans rented nearly 700 million X-rated videotapes

will pay attention but not be distracted? Artists and painters have done this for years."

She also studied literature, reading everything from "The Education of Henry Adams" to "The Fire Next Time." She tackled Shakespearean plays. She took a course on Ovid, the poet of ancient

for a year and I don't understand how you can forget how your behavior would affect members of your family," she says. "It would really give me the creeps if that were my father..."

"I do think we (the media) should be covering this," she says. "You need to be able to trust the president. What kind of person would risk the hard work of all those (staffers), who work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, giving up time with their families, killing themselves for this guy? And he's jeopardizing it with a 22-year-old who's come to Washington to learn how government works."

"The capacity to do that is very frightening. He's so smart, so educated. I thought he was intelligent and this shows he's not very emotionally intelligent."

For now, the days of covering politicians are behind her. Soren is focused on making long-form documentaries that explore subcultures in society, whether they be pornographers or cadets at Virginia Military Institute.

Her contract at MTV is up this year but she says she'd be happy to stay. "I feel like they're family," she says. "I've grown up there."

It's not as if she's a wizened 31-year-old but she says that, as she's gotten older, she's become less frenetic about work. This week, she and her husband, writer Michael Lewis, are celebrating their first anniversary and she's staying away from the office.

"Anyone trying to have a life and a career has to make sacrifices," she says. "But when I was younger, I sacrificed the fun I was having outside of work."

"Now I'm not willing to spend four or five nights in a hotel room; I'm not willing to fly to Wisconsin at the drop of a hat. I've given up a little credibility, reputation, prestige. But I'm happier. I feel more fulfilled because I'm pursuing other interests. Journalism and news don't take up 100 percent of my brain anymore."

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Tabitha Soren, MTV reporter

last year.

"Our society is so drenched in sex, from the Starr report to covers of magazines where women's shirts are off," she says. Young people's "tolerance for things that are sexual is high because of advertising, music and so many things coming at them."

The documentary follows the making of an adult video and profiles a husband and wife who have appeared in more than 100 films, a veteran actress who was diagnosed as HIV-positive this year and a young actress on her first shoot.

Soren's year at Stanford - where she had a prestigious John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship - helped her frame the documentary. The fellowships enable a select few journalists to study whatever they want. Soren, a San Antonio, Texas, native whose military family moved several times across the country and overseas, decided to broaden her liberal arts background.

She took several art history classes, one in which a professor "directed me to articles on the visual vocabulary of sex and bodies," she says. On MTV, "we can't show sex. So how do you shoot this in a way that is informative and so that people

Rome. Heady stuff. A life-changing experience - so much so that she's considering going to grad school.

That doesn't surprise David Sirulnick, 34, MTV News' executive vice president, who first met Soren 12 years ago when he worked at CNN and she was an intern there. "It was clear this was someone who was very curious about everything and was not going to be satiated with some of the answers," he says.

"In a smart way, she's saying, 'I've got a lot of years to go. I want to keep learning and moving on.'"

Soren worked at ABC News and CNN when she was a journalism student at New York University. After graduation, she got a job as an anchor and statehouse correspondent at a Vermont TV station. Her 1992 presidential election coverage for MTV helped the network win a Peabody Award.

During the 1992 and 1996 campaigns, Soren interviewed Clinton several times, as well as George Bush, Bob Dole and Ross Perot. Her voice grows angry and emotional as she reflects on the president's affair with Monica Lewinsky.

"I went to school with Chelsea

Syracuse suspends fraternity after pledge injured

By Ryan Van Winkle
Campus Correspondent-Syracuse University
College Press Exchange

SYRACUSE, N.Y. - The circumstances surrounding a Sigma Chi pledge whose drunken stupor landed him in the hospital prompted Syracuse University officials to suspend the fraternity for what they say could be another Greek hazing incident.

While no charges have been filed against Sigma Chi or the bar where 19-year-old Jonathan Robbins was served alcohol, many students on campus are asking whether anyone other than Robbins should be held responsible for his lapse in good judgment.

Robbins had been passed out for nearly 18 hours by the time his roommate called for help on Friday. His blood-alcohol content was 46 - four times the legal driving limit and dangerously close to death, university spokesman Kevin Morrow said.

"His roommate probably saved his life," Morrow said.

According to police reports, Robbins was seen drinking the night

before with members of the fraternity at a local sports bar popular with the university's Greeks. Fraternity members drove him home and helped him to bed. Robbins was hospitalized the next day and released on Sunday.

University officials suspect Sigma Chi - already on probation for other violations of campus policies - played a role in Robbins' binge drinking, Morrow said. As a result, the fraternity could face expulsion - a fate many Syracuse students are debating.

"He (Robbins) was stupid and is a total idiot," said Lyn Wimple, a 20-year-old illustration major. "He deserves what happened."

"That he was pledging a fraternity gives the university a place to point the finger," said Lyle Shemer, a 21-year-old advertising and marketing major. "Maybe beneath this there is a real issue about self-control and our culture."

And what if Robbins had been drinking with a group of non-Greek students, asked Sue Markert, a 21-year-old magazine major who also criticized the fraternity's suspension.

"If a group of friends went out drinking and this happened to one of them, there is no way the university

would punish the friends," she said.

Nevertheless, some students say the fraternity should accept some responsibility for the incident - regardless of whether hazing was actually involved.

"The brothers are in a role of responsibility," said Jason Stefanik, a 20-year-old advertising and marketing major. "If (Robbins) is in a bar, underage, drinking with brothers, then the fraternity must bear some of the blame."

Prosecutors in Massachusetts used similar reasoning when they filed charges of manslaughter and hazing last week against Phi Gamma Delta in connection with the 1997 binge drinking death of MIT freshman Scott Krueger. That fraternity is the first the nation to face a manslaughter charge. Fraternity members had left Krueger, whose blood-alcohol content was .41, passed out in a room at the fraternity house during a raucous party. He died two days later.

Syracuse authorities temporarily closed the bar where Robbins was served. While it is scheduled to reopen next week, it is still unclear whether it will face charges in connection with the drinking incident.

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