

Police investigation continues; departments working together

Still unknown if arson linked to Welch's position

By KIM BURGER
Collegian Staff Writer

The State College Police Department and University Police Services are continuing to investigate a Monday night fire that was ruled arson.

The house of Susan Welch, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and her husband Alan Booth, professor of sociology, was damaged when the front door and rear of the 555 Ridge Ave. residence were attacked during the night, causing minor damage. The family was not home at the time and there were no injuries.

Both police departments are investigating because they both have specially trained personnel for arson cases, said State College police Lt. Carmine Prestia. The two

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— Carmine Prestia
State College police Lt.

departments often share information or services when needed, he said.

"It is not at all unusual for us to ask the University for help," Prestia said.

The investigation will consist of techniques standard for arson, such as looking for accelerants, motives or suspects, Prestia said. But he did not know specific steps the police would be taking.

Several witnesses who may have

seen or heard something or have information will be interviewed, Prestia said. Several neighbors said Tuesday that they had heard an explosion and squeaking tires. Prestia said there are no suspects.

Prestia said he does not know if the arson is related to Welch's University position. As dean of the college, Welch has been involved in controversy surrounding University Future Committee cutbacks.

"We certainly will consider that," Prestia said.

Executive Vice President and Provost John Brighton said Tuesday that news of the fire upset him and University President Joab Thomas, adding that they were concerned the family could have been home during the incident. Brighton said they would leave the investigation to the police departments.



In vogue

A veiled saleswoman checks inventory at a trendy Cairo clothes store specializing in Islamic fashions. As fundamentalism gathers force in Egypt, an entire fashion industry has sprung up to sell modesty — the hegab (veil) with a flair.

AP LaserPhoto

Health care workers' union ratifies new contract proposal despite problems

The nurses are not completely happy with the contract compromise but they think they have proven a point.

By MICHELE MARCHETTI
Collegian Staff Writer

Members of the District 1199P Health Care Workers' Union have expressed a bittersweet attitude toward the ratification of Centre Community Hospital's contract proposal.

"I'm not totally happy and I'm not totally disappointed," said Megan Yonkee, a registered nurse in the hospital's critical care unit.

Union members voted Tuesday night to ratify the hospital's new contract reducing health insurance co-payments to between \$12 and \$98 a month. Wage increases of 3 to 9 percent the first year and 3 to 3.5 percent the second year were also approved.

The contract will be retroactive to July 1 of this year and will last two years.

Although Yonkee agreed members on both sides were happy to settle, she said she was

disturbed by the negotiation procedures. Hospital administrators kept their distance, Yonkee said, adding that administrators never spoke face to face with union members.

"They used a mediator as a go-between," she said.

Scott Stover, a hospital maintenance worker, agreed the administrators handled the negotiations arrogantly. Administrators did not enter the negotiating room until the last proposal was given, he said.

But David Lee, chairman of the hospi-

tal's board of trustees, said that is the proper procedure for negotiations. The trustees appointed a negotiating team to represent the hospital — a move union members tried to stop, Lee said.

"That's the way it's been in every negotiating session over the years," Lee said.

The contract was very fair, Lee said, adding that there was give and take on both sides.

Although the contract was a compromise, union members said their persistence in the negotiations proved that workers should not be passive to their administrators.

"It gave the indication that (workers) have the right and ability to stand up," said Jon Forster, the union's administrative organizer.

The trustees will vote Monday night on the new contract, and administrators hope it is approved. If the contract is not approved, negotiations will continue.

Lance Rose, president and chief executive officer of the hospital, said he will recommend the board approve the contract.

"I see no reason why (they) will not approve it," Rose said.

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