

# Officials investigate dorm fires

By JUSTIN McGUIRE  
Assistant University Editor

University police and the N.C. State Bureau of Investigation are investigating three separate fires set on bulletin boards in Hinton James Residence Hall on Wednesday night and early Thursday morning.

Sgt. Ned Comar of University police said the incidents are being investigated as class E North Carolina felonies. A person found guilty of the crimes could be sentenced to serve time in state prison, he said.

"This is something you can't let slide," Comar said. "When there's the potential of losing life and serious property damage, you can't treat it as a prank."

The first fire was reported at 7:38 p.m. Wednesday on the third floor. The fire caused about \$75 worth of damage to the bulletin board and the wall behind it, Comar said.

The second fire was discovered when a fire alarm went off at 3:54 a.m. Thursday on the fourth floor. Comar said the fire was still burning when police arrived and an officer put it out. The fire also caused about \$75 worth of damage.

The third fire was reported at 4:26 a.m. on the 10th floor and was put out by the residence hall staff, Comar said.

Police have been investigating the fires by questioning Hinton James residents, Comar said. "Sooner or later, somebody is going to say something," he said.

## Death from page 1

may have been manic-depressive and the shooting could have been the result of a manic episode.

"I think it's unfounded," he said. "I was not aware of it. If that is the case, then only Bill knew."

However, McMichael's death may not mean the end of Helium Highs, Haydock said.

The final decision about the future of the successful wholesale balloon company will be made by McMichael's father sometime this week, Haydock said. William J. McMichael Jr. is part owner of the company.

But Haydock spoke with McMichael's father on Monday and received tentative approval to keep the business in operation.

"As of now there is a 99.9 percent chance of us keeping it going," Haydock said Monday. "The majority of everything has to be worked out, but his dad thought Bill would have liked it (the company) to continue."

But the mood in the office was not noticeably improved by the news, Haydock said. "We're up here still kind of mourning over Bill's death," he said.

The company has canceled its contract to provide balloons to the George Bush inaugural celebration due to McMichael's death, Haydock said.

He would not comment on the amount of money involved in the contract, but he said the terms specified about 15,000 balloons to be used as decorations for various events.

McMichael was excited about the inaugural contract and the exposure and publicity it would have brought the company, Haydock said. Word that Helium Highs had received the contract came just before McMichael's death.

Police are not commenting on the investigation, and Sizemore has been unavailable for comment since the shooting.

Detectives working on the case will compile their results in a report to Orange County District Attorney Carl Fox, but police officials would not say Friday if indictments are expected in the case.

# Congress budget process to get early start

By NANCY WYKLE  
Staff Writer

Student Congress will conduct its annual spring budget process earlier this year than in previous years because the University's spring schedule will make it harder for the congress to meet its deadline for passing the final budget.

The budget hearing will take place on March 5 this year, said Gretchen Knight, chairwoman of the Student Congress Finance Committee. Organizations must

submit their budgets by Feb. 10. Preliminary hearings will begin on Feb. 23.

Groups seeking funds from congress must be recognized by both the University and Student Government. Organizations must fill out a form describing the group and submit a detailed itemized list of expenses to the Finance Committee by Feb. 10.

The University's spring schedule influenced the decision to hold the process earlier, Knight said. The

budget hearing, which takes several hours, is normally held over a weekend. Because of spring break and Easter holiday, the only weekend available before the budget deadline date is the first weekend in March, she said.

In the past, newly elected congress members have resigned their positions after the budget process ended, Knight said. She said congress members were concerned that students might run for congress only to help certain groups through

the budget process, and this also affected the decision to move the date.

The current members of congress will vote on the budget for 1989-90 because they do not leave office until March 29. Members of this congress also voted on the 1988-89 budget.

"Since the budget date has been moved, this is going to mean a lot of tight scheduling for groups," Knight said. "It doesn't necessarily

give groups coming before Student Congress for funding the time they might need."

Members of groups funded by congress expressed some concern about the change, but said it would not pose a real problem.

Susana Dancy, editor of the Yackety Yack, said the staff had decided to elect the editor for the following year earlier, partly because the budget hearing is earlier.

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