

Guilfordian

December 6, 1976

Facts on the Fires

BY DAVE OWENS

Student leaders invited to a special meeting last Friday afternoon in Founders were told that:

- The Greensboro Fire Department's official position is that the Mary Hobbs Hall fire last Monday morning, Nov. 29, was a case of arson.

- Guilford College has insurance on each building on the campus to cover the cost of repairing or replacing it and did not, as a rumor has it, take out insurance on Mary Hobbs "just before the fire" or "double the insurance" very recently.

- A small fire was discovered between 10 and 11 a.m. last Friday in the women's rest room on the first floor of Duke Memorial Hall with no damage done.

- The college has doubled security and is checking buildings more often and more thoroughly than before the Mary Hobbs fire.

- It would be appreciated if students hearing detrimental rumors about the fire would take them to Jim Newlin, business manager, or Dean of Students Ken Schwab.

- It is hoped that Mary Hobbs can be cleaned and repaired sufficiently to allow the residents to return their belongings to their rooms before Christmas break and live there spring semester.

- Ways should be found, perhaps through dorm meetings, to eliminate the "negative" reactions some Mary Hobbs residents have met from residents of some other dorms, such as "We don't want you here" and "Why don't you go back where you belong?"

- All Mary Hobbs residents are to be interviewed by police officers, not as suspects but as possible sources of information which might help in solving the mystery of who set the fire.

- All students are encouraged to confide in Ken Schwab any information which they

feel might throw light on the case. The same is true in the case of the Duke blaze.

And — since the Friday meeting — true of residents of Shore Hall, as well. Around 3 a.m. last Saturday, a trash fire was discovered on the second floor. Since then, a Fire Watch has been organized in each residence hall for round-the-clock surveillance.

In disclosing the minor fire in Duke Memorial, Jim Newlin said it involved trash from the waste can "with matches all around," he commented that he had no way of knowing whether that incident was connected with Mary Hobbs but, "if somebody's doing things like that to keep the rumors flowing, it's a sick way of doing it."

Fire officials are convinced that the Mary Hobbs fire was deliberately set because there were "several fires set at the same time many feet apart, pretty hard evidence to dispute," Newlin said.

As far as the college knows, fire officials have not received an analysis of charred remains with a determination of what was used to make the fires burn rapidly after they were set.

The City of Greensboro's chief building inspector was to be on campus today to determine whether Mary Hobbs' roof can be repaired and strengthened — a relatively simple matter — or whether a new roof will be required.

The latter, said Newlin, would create a serious problem, requiring the college to build a temporary roof under the present one, then taking off the old roof and building a permanent one.

That Mary Hobbs is still standing is probably due to the fact that all partitions were removed from the third floor last summer. (The attic was converted to living quarters in the 1940's, and taken out of use for residents 12 years ago.)

"If the partitions had been standing last Monday, there would have been no way firemen could have fought the flames from inside," Newlin explained.

The charred remains on the third floor are being removed, wiring is being repaired, new smoke detectors will be installed, the attic will be sealed off and the stairways blocked.

In shooting down the rumor of "new" fire insurance on Mary Hobbs, Newlin declared: "That's not the way insurance works; you insure a building for what it would take to replace it." He stressed that the college will not have to use the money it has raised for renovating Mary Hobbs for repairing the fire damage.

Some students were surprised that "several" Mary Hobbs residents had been told by other to "Go back where you belong." Schwab said five women had told him of their unpleasant experiences in this respect, and some of the students present Friday said there were many more.

"It's incredible that people can be that mean," offered Carla McAdams, president of Mary Hobbs.

Schwab commented that he has found the attitude of Mary Hobbs women to be "amazingly good" and noted that many faculty and community residents telephoned him to offer rooms to the uprooted group.

"We were glad we could find rooms for them on campus, however, since it will be better for maintaining the spirit of Hobbs by having all of them here," he said.

NEXT FACULTY MEETING . . .

Wednesday, December 8, 1976, at 1:30 p.m. in the Moon Room of Dana Hall.

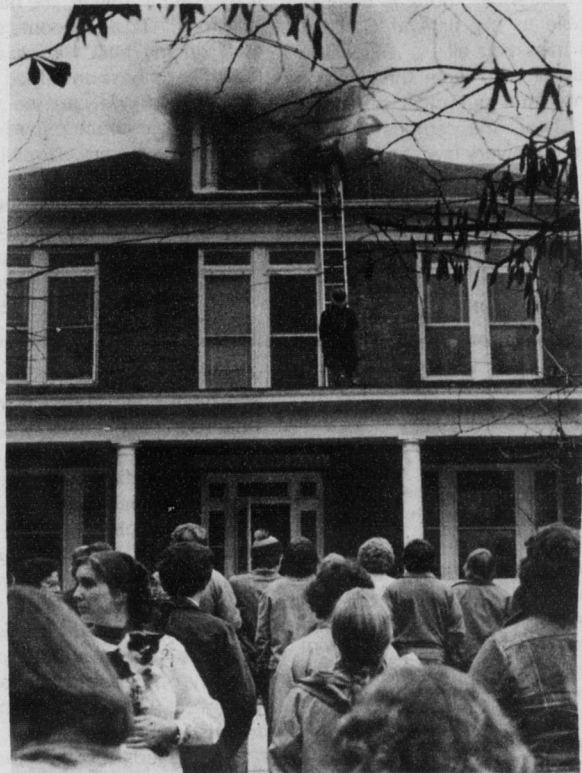


Photo by Catoe

Bystanders and residents watch Mary Hobbs fire on November 29.

Senate Minutes December 1, 1976

The meeting opened with a moment of silence; roll was called. Sherri Wall, John Biedler, Warrn Kozak, Linda Paul and Pat Townsend were absent.

John Janney announced that the Graduation Planning Committee needs two Seniors to be elected by the Senate. Senators were concerned that other students had not had a chance to be on this committee and requested that the election be held at next week's meeting. There was also concern that the committee did not have enough student representation. John will approach the Administrative Council with a request that the committee be opened to more student members. Senators are asked to have their student nominations in the Senate Office by Monday afternoon.

Dick Coe has been forced to resign from Cliffhangers, as advisor, because of the potential for accidents in this organization's activities. He, as well as the College and

the Senate, could be sued in the even of an injury occurring during a college sanctioned activity. For this reason, the Senate voted to abolish Cliffhangers as a recognized organization and absorb their funds back into the Senate account. Jim Newlin plans to discuss alternatives with the Legal Council to see if there is any way the organization can function independently, while still using the school's equipment.

The constitution for English Hall was submitted and approved with minor phrasing correction.

Hugh Stohler presented a request from the Circle K club of UNC-G that the Senate consider the possibility of forming such an organization at Guilford. The Circle K club is associated with the Kiwanis club, an international men's service organization. The Circle K club performs such activities as sponsoring

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