

WSU Blaze Prompts Inquiry

By JENNIFER HAGIN
Staff Writer

Responding to an early morning call, Washington State University firefighters found a burning fraternity house and an unusual sight in the guest room.

Washington State Fire Capt. David Grimes said no one was harmed in the Saturday morning fire at the Sigma Nu house, but firefighters were surprised to see a fraternity member bound by duct tape in a section of the house untouched by the blaze.

While the student, who officials would not identify, was unharmed, the fraternity is under investigation for hazing.

Grimes said a lit candle falling on a couch caused the fire which destroyed the third floor and damaged the two bottom stories. He said the students were slow to evacuate due to a recent string of false alarms.

After 20 minutes at the scene, he said several fraternity members alerted him to the possible presence of someone in the first-floor guest room.

Grimes said he entered the burning house and found a couch and chair stacked in front of the guest room door.

After removing the furniture, he said he discovered a college-age student wrapped in duct tape in the room.

"His ankles were bound fairly tightly," said Grimes. "His hands were not bound, but tangled with duct tape. He only had his jockey shorts on."

Finding the sophomore student bound in duct tape prompted a university investigation into the possibility that the student was being hazed.

Al Jamison, interim vice provost for Student Affairs, is conducting the inquiry. He said five fraternity members and the bound student had volunteered to meet with him.

Officials said it was not immediately clear why the student had been bound.

Jamison said some fraternity members could be charged with hazing or reckless endangerment. If found guilty, they could be expelled or have their fraternity charter revoked, or they could be fined and given community service.

No Sigma Nu members could be

reached for comment. But some officials doubted the incident involved hazing.

"My guess it was probably a prank thing," Grimes said. "It didn't appear to be hazing."

The bound student was not the only fraternity member needing help, Grimes said. They also found another member asleep in the basement.

Further compounding the possible danger and reminiscent of a Chapel Hill tragedy, Grimes said the Sigma Nu house did not have a sprinkler system.

UNC's Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house burned down in 1996, killing five people. The deaths prompted the Chapel Hill Town Council to require sprinkler systems in all Greek houses.

The fire also forced the evacuation of two nearby sorority houses, Alpha Chi Omega and Gamma Phi Beta.

Alpha Chi Omega member Brittany Carlson said the situation was unfortunate. "It's kind of sad that no one went to go get him, though."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Alumnus to Return for Encore Act

By DAVE POVILL
Staff Writer

It took singer/comedian Larry "The Dream" Weaver almost 10 years, but he's finally coming back to the Union Cabaret tonight for his encore.

The UNC alumnus got his start at a stand-up contest in the Cabaret a little less than 10 years ago, and now he's returning for another stand-up contest, this time as the host. The contest, presented by the STV sketch-comedy show, "Off the Cuff," starts at 8 p.m. Wednesday and is free and open to all.

Weaver, who was in "Off the Cuff" as a student, has expanded his comic career since his college days.

He founded the comedy group, Selected Hilarity, with four friends back in 1990. "We traveled all over the country, played 33 states and headlined over 500 shows. We played all the top clubs, including Caroline's Comedy Club in New York, along with The Laugh

Factory and The Improv (in Los Angeles)," said Weaver.

"The thing that most stands out in my mind was his business sense," fellow Hilarity member David Drake said of Weaver, who majored in accounting.

"In the early days, Larry ended up being the brains behind the marketing engine that was Selected Hilarity. If it hadn't been for him, we would have just been a bunch of guys hanging around acting silly."

After the group broke up in 1997, Weaver released his debut CD, "Pack Full of Comedy." The album received national airplay on the Dr. Demento Show. "Dr. Demento's exposure has been really good for me," said Weaver.

"Dr. Demento is on in a bunch of different markets," he said. "I did a show out in (Los Angeles), where he's based, and it was weird. I had never played out there in my life, but there were all these people who knew my lyrics. It's the power of radio."

Weaver said he was hoping to have his second album, "Everybody's Crazy But Me!" available by Wednesday through his Web site (www.larryweaver.com) and in stores soon.

The album showcases Weaver's unique blend of comic songs and skits with influences from country to hip hop. It even features a remix of his biggest hit, "Grandpa's Gone Gangsta."

Weaver was voted 1998 Male Comedian of the Year Runner-up at comedy.com and is a Feature Performer for the Weir Al Fan Convention 2000.

"We're really lucky to have Larry hosting the show," said James Khanlarian, the producer of "Off the Cuff" and organizer of Wednesday's show. "It will be great."

"A lot of people have already been excited about coming to see it, so hopefully we won't disappoint."

The Arts & Entertainment Editor can be reached at artsdesk@unc.edu.

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