

Geoff Lewis knocks around golf balls with his fraternity brothers beneath Sigma Nu's up-to-par sprinkler system.

DTH/KARA ARNDT

## Greek Houses Meet Sprinkler Deadline

By DANIEL THIGPEN  
Assistant University Editor

With the deadline for all UNC fraternities and sororities to install functioning sprinkler systems quickly approaching, all occupied houses are ahead of the game.

The Chapel Hill Town Council passed an ordinance in the fall of 1996 requiring all Greek houses to have sprinklers installed by Nov. 11 of this year. The move was prompted by a fire at the Phi Gamma Delta fraternity house that killed five UNC students in May 1996.

Fourteen of the 24 fraternity houses have finished installing sprinklers and are open for the semester. Three other houses will open shortly after finishing their sprinkler installations.

The remaining houses are closed for reasons not related to sprinklers - Delta Sigma Phi and Pi Lambda Phi have closed indefinitely for financial reasons, and five other houses are not opening because of extensive renovations.

All 11 sororities have their sprinkler systems installed, with some having completed the project just in time for students to move in this fall.

Kappa Delta president Megan Shepherd said her sorority finished installing its system two weeks ago. Shepherd said the new system will clear the minds of people still worried about the Phi Gamma Delta fire. "It's going to

be more for the parents," she said. "They'll feel safer more than anything."

Other houses completed their sprinkler projects significantly ahead of schedule. Sigma Nu president Matt Honeycutt said sprinkler installation in his house was finished in summer 2000.

The sprinklers proved to be a saving grace for Sigma Nu when a small fire started in the house in December. Honeycutt said the system prevented what could have been another disaster.

But Jay Anhorn, director of Greek affairs, said all houses must take additional fire safety measures, including monthly inspections by a house-elected fire marshal. Each marshal must be trained by the Chapel Hill Fire Department.

Honeycutt said all inspections and violations are reported once a semester to the Office of Greek Affairs.

Each sprinkler system installation costs about \$50,000, and some groups are still raising money to pay for it. Both Kappa Delta and Sigma Nu are soliciting funds from alumni, and Shepherd said her group plans to sell personalized bricks for a proposed walkway. In the meantime, Shepherd said, her group will try to ensure that its new sprinklers stay functional. "We're just trying to make sure everyone takes care of the system."

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## Plans in Place to Expand Planetarium Resources

By DANIEL THIGPEN  
Assistant University Editor

Students soon will be able to experience science at UNC by leaving the laboratories and travelling interactively through the depths of cells and far-away galaxies.

Ideas for expansion of Morehead Planetarium's facilities are gaining momentum, but the project is pending the approval of a grant from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

UNC officials are eager to begin a six-to-eight-month architectural planning session for the proposed Morehead Science Discovery and Outreach Center, an interactive science museum that would update the planetarium's current resources.

Morehead Center Director Holden Thorp said he expects Congress to approve a more than \$1 million contribution from NASA in October, which would allow more specific plans for the future center. "When the federal budget is signed, this story will get more concrete," he said.

Thorp said the overarching mission of the projected center, which, Thorp said, will take about five years to complete, is to expand its outreach by creating an overall representation of UNC science.

He said resources now limit the planetarium's appeal, attracting mainly visiting elementary school students and astronomy students. "We want people to understand the quality of the research

we're doing here," Thorp said.

The main component of the project will be a new dome theater with digital capabilities and will also display interactive exhibits featuring frequently updated UNC research developments. Officials haven't yet decided if the building will replace the planetarium or complement it, but grounds behind the Morehead Building will provide room for any needed expansion.

Undergraduate Admissions Director Jerry Lucido, who serves on the project's steering committee, said the new Morehead Center could be an enticing way to introduce prospective students to UNC. "What we really are developing in the long run is a way ... to introduce people in a comprehensive manner," he said.

Thorp said other planned components include a Web-based center and new mobile laboratories. The buses would be an expansion of the already-functioning Destiny bus, which travels across the country bringing science education to communities. The units would be more specific to UNC science programs.

Thorp said he hopes architectural sketches will be ready by April so construction can begin. "With people from the University driving the content of the project, it could have the newest kind of knowledge in it."

The University Editor can be reached at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

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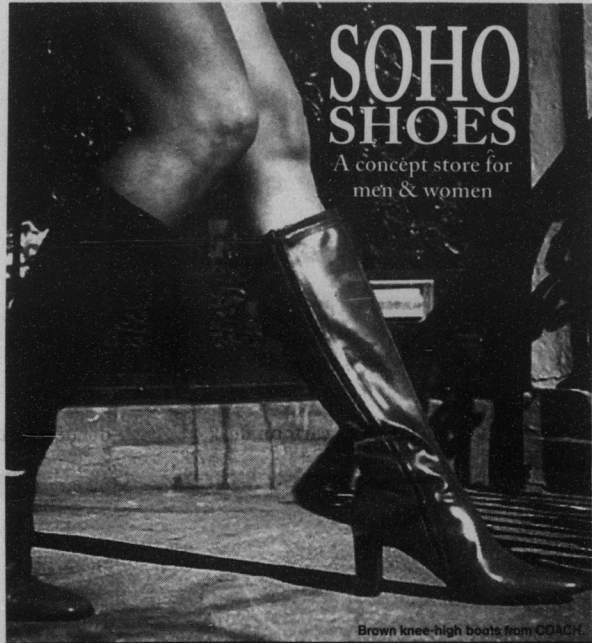
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