



# THE ARCHWAY

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## Let Us Not Forget... The story of the fire was in their eyes It was in the eyes of every member of the "Providence College family."

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By Ron Winslow from reports by staff writer Tom Garipey and from Michael Delaney.

It was in the eyes of firemen, who, after they carried and guided more than 20 women down ladders and stairways to safety, slumped in exhaustion and thought about the seven women they couldn't reach in time.

It was in the eyes of the students of Providence College, who, long after the fire was out, walked again and again past the dormitory, pointing up at the blackened brick above two of the fourth-floor windows.

And it was in the eyes of the Very Rev. Thomas R. Peterson, O.P. president of the college, who, after notifying parents of the deaths of their daughters, paused and fought back the tears at a special noon Mass as he told more than 3000 students of the loss of seven members of the "Providence College family."

It was the worst tragedy in the college's 58-year history, he said. And because the school, through its roots in the Catholic faith, through its basketball team, and through its large, active local alumni, has a uniquely close relationship with Rhode Island, it was a personal tragedy for thousands in the state as well.

The 54 young women living on the fourth floor section of Aquinas Hall were proud of the Christmas decorations that covered almost every inch of wall, door and ceiling along the 175 feet of the L-shaped north wing from rooms 4A to 416. They had entered a campuswide hall decorating contest, and they had worked for most of a week staying up until 2 a.m. on two nights - to convert their hall into a massive holiday display around a theme of religious Christmas carols.

As they painted murals on papercovered walls, wrapped doors with brightly colored foil and even covered lights to darken the corridor into a "Silent Night," it did not occur to them that they were making a firetrap of an otherwise fireproof hallway.

And no one ever imagined that the most ambitious of the

decorations and the most sacred religious symbol of all - a manger scene with the Christ Child - would apparently spark a fire early on the morning of Dec. 13.

The judges of the decoration contest announced the winner late the week before.

"Everybody just gave up everything to do the hall," Lisa Daniels, a sophomore, explained. "When we heard eighth floor McVinney won, we all trooped over to see what they'd done. We all came back really upset, saying to the other girls, 'Go over and look at McVinney. Two people could have put it up.'"

*For the next two hours hundreds of kids broke the tension of coming exams, playing in the snow.*

Aquinas' was one of those unique projects where nearly everyone on the floor pitched in. The spirit of the competition and the happiness of Christmas brought them all together. Many of the girls were close friends and had chosen to live together on the floor, but few knew everyone on the floor well. Some knew each other only by first names.

About 10 p.m. Monday night, the floor had a Christmas party where they exchanged gifts. It was not a big bash, just a quiet break near the end of a reading period before exams.

Just before 11 p.m., Cathy Repucci, a freshman from Michigan, decided to have her picture taken in front of the manger scene. She and her two roommates, Laura Ryan and Jackie Botelho, who shared Room 4B, a two room suite at the corner of the ell, had constructed the manger scene from cardboard and paper. It was mounted on three overturned wastebaskets against a corridor wall opposite Room 406 and across the hall from their own room. Cathy wanted a picture of it to send home.

A high-intensity desk lamp was turned on to illuminate the scene. Cathy and Laura stood next to it while Lisa Sacenti, a freshman who lived in Room 414, snapped the picture.

The party ended about 11:30, just before Raymond Hall, a nearby men's dorm, challenged the floor to a snowball fight on the quadrangle in front of Aquinas. Most of the fourth-floor residents piled out of the dorm, as did women from other floors and students from Meagher and McDermott Halls. For the next two hours hundreds of kids broke the tension of coming exams, playing in the snow.

The women returned to Aquinas Four in small groups, laughing at the fun and at themselves: many of them were soaking wet. Before they went to bed, some of them stretched out their clothes to dry on the carpet in the corridor. By 2:30 a.m., nearly all of them had closed their doors and were in their rooms asleep. The corridor was quiet.

SHARON BAKIS, who lived in 410, in the middle of the main corridor, had not returned to her room by 2:30. She was studying in the south wing of the building. Shortly before 3 a.m., she headed back to her room. She opened the central fire door from the hallway opposite the elevator into the north wing and looked down the corridor. She stopped. The far end of the corridor was on fire. Flames seemed to be coming around the corner near the ell.

"Fire!" she yelled. "Fire!" "There's a fire!"

Her screams pierced the stillness in the wing. She ran down the corridor, toward the flames, yelling and banging on every door she could reach. Room 416. Room 413. 414. 411. 412. 409. The flames were eating up the paper that lined the walls. The fire was moving down the corridor toward her. Sharon had not quite reached her own room when the heat drove her back. Still screaming, she turned and ran back toward the fire door.

Sue Frame, who was up studying in Room 414, one room away from the central hallway, was jolted by the screams. She woke up her roommate, Lisa Sacenti, and rushed to the door. She looked down the corridor at the flames, stepped into the hallway and started yelling too. Then she pushed open the fire door and ran down the narrow

32-inchwide central stairway, just ahead of Sharon. They dashed toward the quadrangle.

Lisa Sacenti followed Sue out of the room and looked to her right. The corridor was filled with fire. It seemed to be three or four doors down. It must be the manger.

She also heard somebody holler, "Pull the alarm! Pull the alarm!" But she knew the alarm on the wing could not be pulled. It was covered with a paper Christmas mural. Someone would have to feel around on the paper to find it. But that didn't matter anyway now. The wall was a mass of flame.

As Lisa turned to run toward the door, Dorothy "Dot" Widman bolted past, her nightclothes burning. Dot lived four doors down in 405, and the corridor outside her door was an inferno.

Lisa ran behind her, trying frantically to extinguish the flames as they dashed down the stairway, which is tightly wrapped around the elevator. They reached the ground floor and burst out the door onto the quadrangle where the flaming garment was finally put out. Lisa looked down at her nightgown.

*A ball of fire billowed through the opening. Joanne darted out under the flame, singeing her hair.*

It was covered with black soot, and spotted with blood. Her friend Dot Widman was hurt.

Once outside, some of the women looked back at the windows on the fourth floor. Sharon Bakis saw Gretchen Ludwig and Sally Ann Garvey yelling for help from the window of Room 405. And for the first time, Sharon heard the buzzing horn of the fire alarm sounding

through the building.

The alarm rang in at fire alarm headquarters at 2:57 a.m. The dispatcher called Engine 12 and Ladder 3 at the Admiral Street station, closest to the college, Engine 15 at Mt. Pleasant, and Engine 14 and Ladder 6 at Atwells Avenue. Chief 3, Battalion Chief John J. Creamer, was at the Branch Avenue station.

The men already had fought two fires that night and at some of the stations the men had just finished cleaning up. They were hoping for a breather to catch some sleep when the call came in.

At Admiral Street, Lt. Vic DiChiara of Engine 12 and Lt. Robert Carlson of Ladder 3 and their men roared out of the station, sirens blaring within a minute of the alarm.

Sharon's pounding and shouting also awakened Mary Kim Fasolo, Joanne Halsch and Terry Burchell in Room 412. They went to the door and opened it. A ball of fire billowed through the opening. Joanne darted out under the flame, singeing her hair. She ran for the fire door. Mary Kim slammed the door shut. She and Terry were still inside. They would never get out now through the hallway. They needed a ladder.

Each room on the floor had its own sink. Mary Kim and Terry ran to the sink, grabbed towels and soaked them in cold water under the faucet. They placed the first towel at the base of the door to keep smoke and flames out of the room. Then they wrapped wet towels around their faces and went over to the window and opened it. They shouted for help and tried to stay calm.

"Just pray," Terry said. In 413, Lisa Daniels, Kathleen Crowley and Linda Giguere

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### "MEET THE PREZ"

REMINDER: "Meet the Prez" is scheduled for Wednesday, February 1, in the Student Center from 2 to 4 p.m. The next session is scheduled for Tuesday, February 14, same time, same place.

For your information the sessions for the spring term will be as follows:

March 8 and March 29  
April 5 and April 19  
May 10



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fumbled around for clothing when they heard the cries of fire. They dashed out the door. Lisa didn't even look behind her, but the fire was ringing the corridor and rushing behind them. She heard the fire alarm go off as she entered the corridor, pulling Kathy along behind her. Linda followed. They made it to the door.

Women from 407 and at least one other room also fled through the corridor. As they ran, they felt the heat from the carpet on

*"How can they do this to us?" she moaned, remembering a false alarm at Raymond Hall a few weeks before.*

the soles of their feet.

In the small sixty-foot ell at the far end of the north wing, someone had also come out in the corridor to alert the women in those rooms.

Karen Storti in 404 couldn't tell who it was, but she heard someone right outside screaming "Fire!" and she heard the alarm.

"How can they do this to us?" she moaned, remembering a false alarm at Raymond Hall a few weeks before. But as soon as she flipped on the light, she knew it was real. Smoke was creeping through some small holes at the top of the door. She saw the white ceiling above it turn black. Karen went over and touched the door. It was warm. She remembered instructions from a floor meeting early in the year: when the fire alarm goes off, don't open a door that's warm to the touch.

Something else told Karen this one was no false alarm. She could hear the crackle of burning paper right outside the door.

She and her roommates, Debbie Tefft and Anne McKeough, went to the sink in their room, soaked some towels and jammed them under the door. They put other towels around their faces.

"We've got to stay calm, just stay calm," they told each other.

Anne picked up the telephone and called the fire department.

"Don't worry," the dispatcher said. "We'll have help right on the way."

Next door in Room 402, Patricia Harrison jumped out of bed when she heard screams and opened the door. The corridor was full of smoke, and it poured into the room. She slammed the door shut.

"It's a fire! Let's get out of here!" she hollered to her roommates, Sue Lancella and Kathy Pfeifer. She stepped into her shoes, ran to the door and bolted into the hallway. She thought her roommates were right behind.

The corridor was filled with thick black smoke. Patricia couldn't see anything. She ran straight down the short hallway toward a door to the stairway at the corner of the ell, just fifty feet away. When she burned her right hand against the wall, she knew where she was. She slid her hand over a few feet to the right, pushed the door open and walked out on the landing. The door closed behind her.

It was bright on the landing

and not too smoky. She stood there for a few moments, waiting for her roommates. They didn't come. She waited longer. They still didn't come. Finally, at the urging of women evacuating the third floor, she went down the 63 steps to the ground and waited outside the door. One of her friends told her Sue and Kathy were all right, and then escorted her to the infirmary in nearby Stephens Hall.

Kathy Pfeifer started to follow Patricia out, but she choked in the smoke. Across the hall, in Room 401, Debbie Kopin opened her door as well.

"Kathy! Kathy!" Debbie shouted. "Is that you?"

"I'm over here! Where are you? Are you there?"

They groped for each other in the smoke. Though only a few feet apart, they could see nothing. Kathy jumped back into her room. Debbie couldn't breathe. She felt her way back to the room, pushed her way in and slammed the door. Her roommates were away. She was alone.

She ran to her medicine cabinet that opened through to the medicine cabinet in Room 403, where Joan Bacon and Jeanne Wolff lived, and called through to warn them of the fire. She heard nothing, went to her window and opened it because her room was full of smoke.

Joan heard the shouts. She and her roommate were already at the window, which they had opened as well. As the three of them leaned out for air, they heard someone trapped outside in the corridor.

They shouted to the people on the ground below for help for whoever was trapped.

Then Joan heard her door open. Someone fell to the floor. The smoke was so thick, she couldn't see who was there. And she couldn't hope to rush to help her.

Several other women in the six rooms in the ell ran into the corridor at the cries of "Fire!" and the sound of the alarm. But none could follow Patricia through the fire door at the corner and down the stairway. The manger was just across from that door and the heat and smoke blocked their only escape route.

From Room 4A, at the tip of the wing, Sasan Cancro tried to follow Patricia down the stairway. But she stumbled into something and fell. She couldn't get up.

The entire corridor was now filled with acrid black smoke, end to end. Jackie Botelho, Laura Ryan, Cathy Repucci and Katy Andresakes ran from their rooms, to help others out, and to escape the heat and the smoke as it filtered into the 12-by-22 foot rooms. Some of them fell as they groped through the smoke. They coughed and choked as the heat seared their throats.

From Sharon Bakis' warnings, the women had perhaps a minute to flee through the corridor. And from whoever it was that alerted the women in the ell, it was only a few seconds. After that, smoke, heat and flames sealed their exits. And those who stayed or rushed back to the safety of their rooms were isolated. None knew for sure

what was happening in the corridor or on another side of the building.

Meanwhile, the door to Room 406 had opened, and the once they saw the fire, the women inside could not close the door again. Barbara Feeny, Donna Galligan and Christine were trapped. Their best protection against the flames—the door itself—was useless. They opened their windows and screens to breathe fresh air and to shout for help. But with their door also open, the open windows created a draft. The smoke that had built up in the corridor billowed into the room followed quickly by flames. The smoke and the heat built up against them as they stood at the windows.

The screams by now had attracted men from nearby dorms, who came running with blankets and jackets for those who had escaped, and to help those who were at the windows. By 3 a.m. the sound of sirens from the approaching fire engines mingled with the chilling screams for help.

Shortly before 3, the Very Rev. Aloysius Begley, prior of the college, was awakened in his room in Harkins Hall by a telephone call from Father Ralph Hall, who was in a dorm near Aquinas.

"Bring all the priests," he said. "Bring all the sacred oils. Aquinas Hall is on fire and the girls are in the windows."

Father Begley hung up at exactly 3 a.m., alerted everyone he could, gathered the oils and headed for the dorm.

Lieutenant DiChiara of Engine 12 was one of the first firemen on the scene. As he rounded a corner on Huxley Avenue onto the campus he saw

*Some of them fell as they groped through the smoke. They coughed and choked as the heat seared their throats.*

smoke. Then he saw women sitting on the window sills.

"Engine 12 to fire alarm. Pull a second alarm," he said. It was 3 a.m.

He ordered all engine companies to park clear of the building to give the ladder trucks a chance to get in close. It was going to be a rescue, he said to himself. Fighting the fire was secondary consideration.

Lt. Robert Carlson on Ladder 3 was right behind. "I could see people in many windows," he said. "To see so many people on three sides of the building, it was unbelievable."

At first he headed for the north side of the building, the outer section of the wing, because that's where he saw the women first. But once he saw smoke, he ordered the truck to the back of the building.

Barbara Feeny, Donna Galligan and Christine Manuel were screaming and leaning far out of the windows of 406, where smoke poured into the air. Flames flickered behind them.

DiChiara, Carlson and the men on their trucks as well as students looked up.

"Don't jump! Don't jump!" they shouted. "We're going to get you out. Stay where you are!"

Please stay where you are!"

Firefighter John Angelone climbed onto the aerial ladder as another member of Ladder 3 worked the controls. The ladder lifted out of its bed on the truck and into the air.

"The ladder is coming. We're

*"My God, we're here!" DiChiara cried. "These girls are jumping. There's no need for this. We're here!"*

going to get you out," the men shouted to the women.

The women leaned farther out. Two of them were out on the window sill.

The ladder swung around, its end pointed toward the building, and it started moving toward the window. Angelone scrambled up the rungs.

No one was certain just how close the ladder was, but it seemed to be only seconds away from the window when the first women jumped, falling 45 feet to the ground. The second woman followed a second or two later.

Barbara Feeny and Donna Galligan hit the frozen ground at the base of the building, near the rear parking lot. They died instantly.

"My God, we're here!" DiChiara cried. "These girls are jumping. There's no need for this. We're here!"

He watched as Angelone reached the window and lifted Christine Manuel, who had stayed at the window, onto the ladder. Angelone carried her down himself and passed her to Carlson near the foot of the ladder.

DiChiara feared a chain reaction. He saw several women at the windows, and they all seemed so alone, he thought. He was afraid they all might jump. He ran around the corner of the building toward the quadrangle, shouting until he was hoarse.

"Please stay where you are! We have ladders. We are here. We're going to get you out. Just stay in your room!"

Fire trucks moved in from every direction. Battalion Chief Creamer's car screeched onto the campus at 3:02. He saw smoke and immediately sounded a third alarm. At 3:06, the call went out for every ladder in the city. And then all available rescue trucks were called.

As the ladder trucks came to a halt underneath the windows, firefighters and students pulled the wooden ground ladders from their racks and set them up against the front of the dorm. A 55-foot ladder went up to Room 401 and Gerald Penta climbed up to rescue Debbie Kopin.

Another aerial went up to 404, where Karen Storti, Anne McKeough and Debbie Tefft were in the window. They had never opened their door and, looking out the narrow end of the building, they couldn't see much. They did not know that two of their friends had jumped.

Anne went down first, then Karen. On the ground, they looked up at Debbie as she came down the ladder. Someone came around the corner carrying a body that had been on fire. Anne and Karen embraced, crying.

Acting Lt. Frank Turbitt of

Engine 2 sent one of his men into the building with an airpack. His two other men grabbed a 45-foot extension ladder and put it up against the front of the building about four windows down from the front door. He picked up a 35-footer and set it up two more windows down. Fully extended, it fell against the building six feet short of the window.

And it wouldn't lock into place. Three students rushed over and hung onto the rope, holding the ladder out to its full length while Turbitt climbed toward the women. Two other students held the ladder against the building.

Turbitt stood on the next to the last rung and reached up to the window.

"Turn over on your stomach," he told the first woman, "and then slide yourself out. I've got you."

As she slid out, Turbitt grabbed her legs, pulled her out easily and braced her against the brick until she got her footing on the ladder. Then he lifted himself off the ladder as she crawled beneath him and went to the ground. He did the same for the second woman. The third roommate was afraid she couldn't make it. But by this time, men on Ladder 7, who had plucked a couple of women from the corner rooms with their aerial, swung the ladder over and put it in the window. Turbitt talked her onto the ladder while a man from Ladder 7 helped her out of the window.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF the building, Howard Stevens of Ladder 8 guided the aerial toward Room 412, where Mary Kim Fasolo and Terry Burchell waited in the window. They had waited and watched as men from nearby dorms helped firemen with ladders and hoses and had lifted cars out of the parking lot to make room for the fire engines. They had hollered for help out the window, and they heard pleas from students and firefighters not to jump.

Walter Scorobogoty was at the top of the ladder as it swung into place at the window. He lifted Mary Kim over the sill, climbed down a half dozen steps and passed her to Lt. Sidney Lima.

"Get right back and get the other girl," Lima said. "I don't want her alone. She might faint." As Scorobogoty returned to the window, Lima helped Mary Kim climb down. About halfway to the bottom, she stopped.

"My hands are freezing," she said.

Lima quickly removed his gloves, helped her put them on, then escorted her the rest of the way down.

It had seemed like forever to Mary Kim, and she nearly collapsed when she touched the ground. Her roommate was close behind.

There were no more faces in the windows at the back of the building. But Lima noticed that the bodies of the women who jumped lay on the ground still uncovered.

"Walter, get some salvage covers," he said. "Let's cover the bodies."

WHILE FIREFIGHTERS and students pressed ladders

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against the outside of the building, other firefighters went inside. They climbed the corner stairway down which Patricia Harrison had escaped. They carried at least one woman to safety just before a ladder reached her window. They found the injured and four of the dead in the corridor. One of the victims was found on the floor in her room.

Firefighters quickly passed them down to the third floor. Those still alive were carried out to rescue wagons, whose workers were so busy that at least one fireman drove a rescue truck to the hospital. Others were taken down the center stairway and placed in the lobby until they could be taken to rescue trucks.

Father Begley arrived shortly after 3 a.m. and watched as three women were brought down a ladder. Then he walked in the front doorway and went up the stairs to the third floor, where he anointed the bodies of the dead. A fireman summoned him to the fourth floor.

"I think there's a body up here, Father," the fireman said.

Father Francis D. Nealy was already on the fourth floor. He placed his hand over the flames on the clothing of one woman to extinguish them. She had died.

WITH THE HELP OF STUDENTS, firefighters hauled hoses into the building to extinguish the blaze. By 3:35, 38 minutes after the fire alarm sounded, the fire was under control. The corridor and one room had burned. Several rooms were blackened with soot. And several others, where the students had kept their doors

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closed, were hardly touched by the heat, fire and smoke.

RESCUE TRUCKS shuttled 16 injured students from the scene to four different hospitals. Six others were covered with salvage blankets and carried to the chapel on the first floor of the south wing of Aquinas.

Several students ran from dorm to dorm, checking on the names of the women who had escaped. The women standing in the chill air were offered shelter, blankets, clothing and comfort by the students who poured out of their dorms to help.

In the company of priests, at least one other student helped identify the bodies lying in the chapel. They were: Debbie Smith, from Room 4A, at the tip of the ell; Cathy Repucci, in 4B; Gretchen Ludwig of 405; Barbara Feeny and Donna Galligan of 406; and Katherine Andresakes, of room 408.

Jackine Botelho, the resident assistant who lived in 4B, was pronounced dead on arrival at Roger Williams General Hospital.

The five most seriously injured suffered severe burns. The rest, including Sue Cancro, who had tripped on her way to the fire door, suffered mostly smoke inhalation. She woke up in the hospital, remembering nothing after falling in the corridor. Of the survivors, 13

had run out of the dormitory, six were carried out by firemen, and 16 were brought down ladders.

WHEN THE RESCUE was over and the fire was out, the team of fire fighters that had grown into an army within 15 minutes of the first alarm, rolled up hoses, retrieved ladders, put away airpicks, and slowly

*Lieutenant Lima thought about the women in the windows and about his 12-year-old daughter. He began to cry.*

returned to their stations. It was then, the frantic fight over, that they began to feel the impact of the tragedy.

The men of Ladder 8, who helped rescued Mary Kim Fasolo and Terry Burchell from their window, rode home in silence. Lieutenant Lima thought about the women in the windows and about his 12-year-old daughter. He began to cry.

"Don't worry, lieutenant," Scrobogaty said when he saw the tears. "You're not the only one."

FATHER PETERSON, the college president, was at the scene of the fire for much of the morning, spending time in the chapel where the bodies were taken. In many cases, it is the police who accept the responsibility of notifying families that a loved one has died. But Father Peterson decided that he would do it.

He called families in Michigan, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Connecticut and in Bristol to tell them of the tragedy that had befallen them. He asked parents who lived close by to come to the college, where he and other priests tried to comfort them.

By late morning, word circulated through the campus about a noon memorial Mass to be held in Alumni Hall. There was no time for an official announcement, and no sure way to reach the students, who were scattered around the campus. But shortly before noon, a line seemed to appear at the rear of the gymnasium. And for more than 20 minutes, students streamed into the building, and walked silently to seats in the bleachers and on the canvas-covered floor.

Father Peterson led a concelebrated Mass in which he told of the love and support of the students who went to the aid of their classmates, the offers of aid from other schools and the heroism of the firemen who struggled to rescue the women trapped in their rooms.

It was such a quick fire. It was extinguished in just 38 minutes and probably did its damage in less than 10. Only one room was badly burned, yet seven had died. Seven young women, other students thought, who could have done nothing to deserve death in a fire.

The campus is small and close, and almost all the 3,400 students knew at least one of the victims well enough to say "hi." And nearly all had friends on the floor.

Father Peterson called upon them to find comfort and strength in their faith.

He told the gathering of his conversations with the families of those who had died. "I was struck by their deep sorrow," he said. "And I was struck by their deep faith." And then he spoke of one of the mothers of the dead.

"You've just got to have hope, Father," she had said. "You've got to have hope."



Photo by J.W.

Snow blocking a fire exit door by the Rotunda

## Nationally Ranked Springfield Visits Bryant Saturday

Springfield College's basketball team, ranked fifth in this week's national NCAA Division Two poll invades Smithfield Saturday night for an 8 p.m. game with the Bryant Indians.

The game marks the first time since the Indians moved to the Smithfield campus in 1970 that a nationally ranked team has played in the Bryant gym.

Springfield, led by college-division All-American David Pugh, will come into the game

with a 14-1 record. In addition to their national ranking, the Chiefs are ranked second in the New England Division Two standing, behind undefeated Merrimack.

Bryant, currently ranked sixth in the New England standings, began this week with a 9-3 record. The Indians have been led by freshman sensation Ernie DeWitt. The 6-4 forward twice was named the ECAC "Rookie of the Week" during the semester break.

# FOCUS

Fires, how can they be prevented? Some fires are avoidable and some are not. We must therefore try and deal with the avoidable ones; make the dorms, unistructure, townhouses, Student Center... as fire safe as possible. This includes: adequate fire extinguishers, keeping the building electrically safe, making sure that all fire hydrants are functioning, and lastly make sure that all of this equipment remains in first class working order.

The next step is what to do if indeed there were a fire. All fire exits must be free of debris. Debris includes skis, boxes, and also snow. Fire exit doors must be freely opened and closed and should not be blocked by snow in any form. If for example one of the doors in the dining hall was blocked because of snow (which at the time of writing this article it was), this could cause panic among the students trying to get out of the building and ultimately lives could be lost. It should be the responsibility of the security and maintenance department to make sure that they are free and clear at all times.

Fire equipment should not be abused but respected. Students can assist maintenance and security by notifying them when a fire extinguisher needs to be recharged. If you know of someone or certain people who are pulling fire alarms let security know, it is for your safety, as well as his or hers.

The purpose of this special edition is to let students become aware of what actually happened at Providence College. This paper was not meant to scare you, but make you aware of what happens when indeed people do become afraid. Aquinas Hall was up to fire safety code but students became frightened and did not think logically. We must as individuals know what to do if indeed there is a fire and also learn how to use fire safety equipment. We must know how to fend for ourselves, if such an emergency does exist no matter how remote it may seem.

*Cindy Rowan*

## Fire Safety at Bryant

By Cindy Rowan

During Wintersession, a representative group of students met to discuss what should be done to improve the fire procedures on campus.

Firstly, what physical aspects in the unistructure, dorms or townhouses should be modified?

It was proposed that:

1. Stickers should be placed over the pull boxes so that false alarms will be decreased. It would, therefore, become mentally more difficult to pull the alarm.

2. The people who live in dorm suites without an announcer have difficulty in hearing the alarm. Announcers should be placed in these suites or some alternative form of effectively notifying students of a fire should be done.

3. Caps should be placed over the heat detectors in the suites so that they cannot accidentally be hit.

4. Periodic checks of all fire alarm equipment should be made including heat sensors in the townhouses, fire extinguishers on campus, heat detectors in the dorms and the alarm system.

5. Fire pull boxes should be covered with glass to prevent misuse of the alarm system.

6. Fire safety instructions should be permanently posted in all townhouses and dorm rooms.

Secondly, what can we as students do? Sensitize yourself to the sound of the alarm. It is difficult with the number of false alarms, but you must nevertheless take notice and respond accordingly. We can never be sure whether this alarm is a false alarm or not. We must leave our rooms.

Hot plates and cooking appliances are not allowed on campus for a reason, the reason being that electrical fires spread very quickly. Do not put water

on such a fire as it may cause a shorting of the whole building.

Do not store items between the fire doors. This exit may be your only form of getting out of the building. Storage facilities are available. Ask your RA for more information.

The sound of the announcer is indeed annoying, but do not put anything over it to muffle its sound. The announcer is there to protect you; and if indeed the announcer is muffled, you might not hear the alarm that could have saved your life.

The Resident Student Judicial Board made the recommendation that Student Fire Marshals be set up in each suite or townhouse to help assist RA's keep the students informed if there was a fire and help evacuate the building. These marshals would also be informed of fire safety procedures.

Exit signs on the wall are there for your safety. They do look very nice in our suites, but in a state of panic that little extra sign could be the matter of life or death.

Townhouse residents should check their fire extinguishers and make sure that they are recharged. Keep all of your filters and ovens clean. The filter in your kitchen fan is very easy to clean: just simply remove it and rinse the filter with water.

Become aware of where the pull boxes are in your location, they are there to make other students aware of a potential fire. They are not there to play with.

Finally, if you know of someone who has pulled a fire alarm, let security know.

If you know of any additional ways that this campus can become more fire safe, let Chief Gardner, Chairman of the Fire Safety Committee, know.



# Immortality & "Other Persons"

It goes without saying that the residence hall fire at Providence College last December was a most tragic event. The loss of human life, itself, is tragic in most cases. But, when nine young college women in the prime of their lives are taken so quickly, the tragedy is personalized and hits closer to home to those of us who live and work in similar environments.

I am afraid that many of us often take our mortality too lightly. I *knew* as a boy that accidents only happened to other persons. I *knew* that serious illness and misfortune only struck others. The laws of probability, at least as I interpreted them, coupled with my own blindness to reality, were psychological crutches I was only too happy to live with. The only accidents and deaths I *knew* were those that were reported in the paper or those

that befell persons less fortunate than I. Perhaps within our own family a grandfather or grandmother would die. But this was natural. They were expected to die someday, and they did. The terrible things only happened to other persons.

As an administrator at a small college in Massachusetts several years ago I was shocked into altering my shallow awareness of mortality. Although not experiencing death or serious illness in my own family, my college community was visited by death on several occasions. And, the deaths were among students. How could this be? Young people are not supposed to die. Parents are not supposed to bury their children, it is the other way around. Isn't it? Whatever the case, it would only happen to other persons. At least this explanation served me well up to that point. For the first

time, though, I began to seriously analyze that kind of thinking.

These experiences had a profound effect upon me and my outlook on life. I accepted the grim reality for the first time that I am not immortal. I actually will die someday. My wife, my children--everyone--will die someday. But, does fate have to be tempted? Do I take chances that I know I shouldn't? Should I tease the Grim Reaper and play precipitously with the unknown? What are the probabilities of certain events happening if the conditions are arranged in a particular way? Who arranges the conditions? Am I different? In a straightforward way, I learned the simple truth that to other people I am "the other person." We are all "other persons."

I realize that to all too many people the events at Providence

College are now behind us and forgotten. This is regrettable. It is understandable, too. Life must go on. Sure, we can look at our fire drill procedures, our heat sensors, our fire extinguishers, and all the other items of safety and security and feel quite good. Bryant's campus is new and our facilities are modern and quite safe. But, the one element that was present at Providence College is present here--in fact, present everywhere. What is this element? It is the human one. Bright, young, health, active, and "immortal" humans. But, without the presence of humans (students) in Aquinas Hall there probably would not have been a fire--at least not one that originated the way this one did. Human error or miscalculation form the basis of almost every accident. The evidence suggests strongly this was the case at Providence College. We are

humans. We are mortal. We are imperfect. We are vulnerable.

The point I am trying to make is that we must all pay more attention to what we are doing--especially when it comes to our behavior and its effect on others. IT CAN HAPPEN HERE. We are not immune from fire, accident or other peril. We can reduce the likelihood of tragedy striking us simply by realizing that we are not immortal. We--each one of us--are "other persons." If you don't want to think about other persons, think of yourself.

One of my favorite quotations goes as follows: "For of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, 'it might have been.'" Let us hope we do not ever have to utter them.

Barry A. Fullerton  
Vice President for Student Affairs

## A Note From Dr. O'Hara

During the last week of December, I was saddened to hear of the deaths of Sally Garvey and Dorothy Widman, bringing the death toll in the recent Providence College fire to nine. Two weeks earlier, on December 13, flames swept through the fourth floor of Aquinas Hall before dawn. In 38 minutes the women's dormitory had been destroyed, seven students had died, and thirteen more, including Sally and Dorothy, had been seriously injured. The worst fire in the history of Rhode Island left an almost unendurable sense of tragedy on the small campus.

The friends and classmates of those who died must now confront and live with their grief. The magnitude of the efforts of firemen, faculty, student and administrators in saving lives during the fire made the ensuing loss even more difficult. In the aftermath of the misfortune at Providence College, many institutions are reevaluating their policies and procedures for fire prevention. It is as necessary because we, too, have lives to protect; painful because our most sincere efforts cannot bring back the dead.

Bryant College is remarkably similar to Providence College in size and composition. The administrative staff at Bryant is duty-bound to do everything in its power to ensure that what took place that dreadful morning at Providence College will not happen here. Yet, without the active assistance and cooperation of you, the students, our efforts will be meaningless.

Ultimately, you are the one resource to insure the prevention of any fires. It is you who live in the residence halls, you who know and care for each other, and you who would live with the results of any tragedy that occurred. Therefore, this is the reason I seek your help.

The residence halls and townhouses here at Bryant College are modern and well-equipped with the requisite hardware for the prevention, detection, and containment of fires. But it must be remembered that Aquinas Hall, too, not only met but exceeded the safety requirements. Obviously reliance on the physical property is not sufficient. That is why your participation is of paramount importance. There are a number of ways in which you can be of assistance. First, I feel that you are in an excellent position to identify any potential fire hazards and obstacles to the effective evacuation of the buildings. Secondly, your leadership in the use of the current equipment and evacuation procedures is imperative. Thirdly, I understand that prior to the Providence College fire, there had been three false alarms on that campus. One student reflected that, as a result, many residents doubted the genuineness of the real alarm when it sounded. By a thoughtful respect for such equipment, you can provide the assurance that a similar incident will not happen at Bryant.

I am sure that each of you will continue to exercise good judgment in the most obvious, but critical area of fire prevention, namely, not overloading electrical outlets and not using unauthorized equipment. In the concern for prevention of death and injury, we are not only responsible for ourselves, but accountable to one another.

W.T. O'Hara  
President



Photo by J.W.

**This is not a toy**



Photo by J.W.

**Become aware of your pullboxes**

**Archway Staff Positions Open**

Want to become involved? Do you enjoy writing, typing or layout? The Archway has opportunities for you! Come in on Wednesday, February 1st at 3:15 p.m. or Thursday, February 2nd at 7:00 p.m. and see what your college newspaper is all about!

## SPB Winter Weekend '78

Wednesday, Feb. 1

**Livingston Taylor in Concert**

8:00 p.m. in the Gymnasium  
Tickets: \$1.00--Bryant students  
\$2.00--General admission

Thursday, Feb. 2

**Gary Schmidt-Magician**

12:00 noon in the Rotunda  
**Movie: The Shootist**

7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 3

**A Night of Entertainment**

**Tom Parks-Comedian**  
**Roy Meriwether Jazz Trio**

8:30 p.m. in the Salmanson Dining Hall  
\$2.00 per person (no jeans please)

Saturday, Feb. 4

**Ice Sculpture Contest**

Starts 10:00 a.m. by the Student Center  
judging 4:00 p.m.  
Prizes: \$100.00, \$50.00, \$25.00

**Mixer, featuring New Bay Colony**

9:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m. in the Student Center  
FREE (guest passes \$1.00)

Sunday, Feb. 5

**Ice skating**  
**Sleigh rides**  
**Bon-fire**

6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.  
by the pond  
cookies, hot cider, hot chocolate  
FREE in the Student Center

Monday, Feb. 6

**Morley Safer**  
**of CBS' "60 Minutes"**

8:00 p.m. in the Gymnasium  
\$3.00--General admission  
\$2.00--with student I.D.  
\$1.00--with Bryant I.D.

All tickets available 10-2 in the SPB office (next to The Archway)