



CHIMES

Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI

VOLUME
LXXXVIII
No. 20
February 4, 1994

Library unveils tough security system

David P Deavel

All of last semester and during interim, students did not have to be in fear of being detained by the library security system if they "forgot" to check out books or periodicals. While library desk workers continued to go through the motions of desensitizing materials, many students (and presumably faculty members) knew that the alarm and gates did not work. The result, said library director Marvin Monsma, was evidenced by Security returning stacks of books and magazines from the FAC dorms, and various other buildings on campus. Becky Dykhouse, sophomore library worker, said that by the end of last semester most people knew "Kids started asking questions and then a lot of books turned up missing—they weren't where they were supposed to be, but they were checked out."

According to Monsma, the old alarms and gates ceased operation in late August when new overhead lights, installed by 3-M, sent out a high frequency signal which canceled the powers of the more than ten-year-old detection system. This was not exactly a crisis: "Periodically equipment like this becomes obsolete because of its age. The

first system was installed about 1970; it wore out about 1980 or so." The third new system did not become available until the last week of interim.

What's different about the new alarm system: For one thing, it doesn't have any exit gates like the old. Dykhouse doesn't notice any difference in behavior: "It's not a problem without the gates—people turn around and come back to the desk when the alarm goes off." Lack of gates is also a boon in providing access for wheelchairs. Monsma noted, "Gates are harder for the handicapped, but if this works out, we won't need gates anymore."

The other major difference is the strength of the system. First-year student worker VaQuisha Stanley has seen students with Blockbuster videos and car keys trigger the alarm. And for those students who try to illegally slide books along the counter outside the detector. Stanley warns that the system picks up books there too. Dykhouse added that library patrons should be patient because the library staff occasionally forgets to desensitize materials before obtaining the new system. Those returning books may be surprised to set off the alarm while returning those materials.



photo by Riemersma

Junior Susan Bauer tests the new security system.

WORLD NEWS

BOSNIA

Radical Russian leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy said Sunday that Western air strikes in Central Bosnia, if implemented, would be synonymous to declaring war on Russia.

IRAQ

US News and World Report, citing London intelligence sources, says that Iraq has managed to recapture much of its Gulf War strength. The magazine estimates that while the Iraqi army remains half of its 1991 size, the country has still regained 80% of its pre-war fire power.

JAPAN

Political crisis for Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa ended with the Japanese parliament's approval of a political reform compromise. Hosokawa, who had originally threatened to resign if the bill was not passed, will now visit Washington, DC on February 11.

RUSSIA

A US scientist reports that the Soviet Union's Chernobyl plant, the sight of the 1986 nuclear disaster, released more than five times more radioactivity than originally estimated. The scientist spent 18 months studying the melted core and its ruins.