

BOWLING

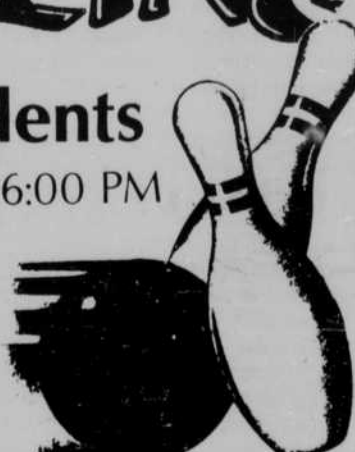
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Andrea Hoy/Daily Nebraskan

Diane Whitten tries to steer her rubber raft in Holmes Lake while her brother Travis sits back and navigates.

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Area swimming holes help make summer cool

Dive in and take a dip

By Megan Millea
Staff Reporter

Tired of lying on a lawnchair and worshipping the sun to get a great tan? If you want to tan and have a good time, you can go to any one of the outdoor recreation areas near Omaha or Lincoln.

The Salt Valley Lakes are minutes away from Lincoln. James Carney, chief of recreation areas for the Nebraska Games and Parks Commission, said Branched Oak, Blue Stem, Pawnee and Wagon Train Lakes have recreation areas and swimming beaches.

Carney said Branched Oak, the largest of the Salt Valley Lakes, is 20 miles northwest of Lincoln; Blue Stem is 20 miles southwest; Pawnee is 12-14 miles west; and Wagon Train is 15 miles southeast of Lincoln.

Marvin L. Kunze, superintendent of the Salt Valley Lakes for the Nebraska Games and Parks Commission, said Branched Oak is the only recreation area where people can rent row boats, paddleboats, pontoons, and water skis.

Carney said though the Salt Valley Lakes are used for recreation, the main function of the lakes is to control flooding. The United States Corps of Engineers constructed the dams in the 1960s to control flooding in Lincoln, he said.

All vehicles must pay a park entry fee to use the areas. Daily park permits cost \$2 and are valid until noon the following day. Yearly permits may be purchased for \$10.

Holmes Lake at 56th and Van Dorn streets, offers many water sports but swimming is prohibited.

Stephen M. Hiller, assistant superintendent of athletics and aquatics for the Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department, said swimming is prohibited in Holmes Lake because excessive amounts of fecal chloriform (animal and human waste) have been found in the water. According to the Lincoln Journal, swimming in the lake was banned in 1977.

Hiller said people may boat, sail, canoe, paddleboat, fish and sunbathe at Holmes Lake.

Ronald G. Floyd, owner of Holmes Park Marina, said he rents paddleboats, sailboats, pontoons, canoes and aqua cycles. A \$5 deposit is required for all rentals.

Oak Lake at 1st and Charleston streets, offers sailing, fishing, canoeing and sunbathing. Swimming is not permitted in Oak Lake because it is not deep enough, Hiller said.

Merritt Beach and Peony Park pool are privately owned swimming beaches both less than an hour away from Lincoln.

Merritt Beach, 60 miles east of Lincoln, is "for people of all ages," according to Assistant Manager Sharon L. Merritt.

Merritt said the beach has water basketball, a water trapeze, five sand volleyball courts, two small fishing lakes and a children's swimming area.

It also has picnic tables, grills, a concession stand and a beer stand, she said, and people can rent paddleboats and surfboards.

Merritt Beach is open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Admission is \$4 for adults.

Peony Park at 81st and Cass streets in Omaha has a large pool with two water slides, two speed slides and a sandy beach.

James M. Hronek, manager of Peony Park pool, said the 36-foot fiberglass water slides are circular and the 55-foot fiberglass speed slides are "a straight drop." People can ride the water slides and speed slides all day for \$6.95.

The pool is open from 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., daily. Park admission is \$1.50 for children and adults and pool admission is \$2.50 for children and adults.


If you want to swim outdoors in Lincoln, municipal pools are open for general swimming from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. daily. Admission is \$1.25 for adults.

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Can't swim? Why not learn!

By Doug Forbes
Staff Reporter

Summer is no time to miss out on swimming. If you haven't learned how to swim yet, there are at least three organizations in town that can teach you the basics: the YMCA, the YWCA, and the American Red Cross.

The YMCA offers courses for beginners of all ages, from four months to adult. The adult course runs five weeks and there are 10 lessons in each session. The next one begins July 13. The cost for a non-member adult is \$26 and \$11 for a YMCA member. Participants are issued a certificate upon completion of the course.

Other courses offered are a "water exercise" course and a course for parents with children under three years

of age. The water exercise course is a good opportunity for the uninitiated to get used to the water. For a complete listing of class schedules and other information, call the Northeast YMCA at 464-7481.

The American Red Cross offers courses for the general public, to those people who don't know how to swim or for those who want to improve.

The course for children runs two weeks and contains 10 lessons. Registration begins June 27. The adult course lasts four weeks and also has 10 lessons.

During the summer, the Red Cross holds classes at the city's public pools. The pool is closed to the general public during class time. There is a \$10 fee for enrollment in the course.

A certificate is awarded at the end of

all courses. For more information, call 471-7997 and ask for "Safety Services."

The YWCA offers a variety of courses for the beginners with different abilities. The instructors are advertised as being patient and full of understanding. For the person who doesn't want to get their hair wet, there is a "water exercise" course. It is held in shallow water and is a good introduction to fitness and overcoming water-phobia. Classes are once a week for six weeks and cost \$16 for members and \$21 for non-members. Classes are open to both males and females. The next term begins July 20, call the YMCA, 476-2802, for more information.

Swimming is a great way to cool off, chill out, and beat the heat, exercise, and enjoy the water. Besides that, it is a valuable skill that could someday come in handy. Gurgle, gurgle.