

# Pound for pound



by A.J. McClanahan

Bad eggs come from many sources—and many times it's animals who end up paying for it, according to Bernard L. Patton, director of the Lincoln Humane Society.

The bad eggs, Patton said, are irresponsible owners who abandon their pets. College students are not any worse than anyone else, he said. But like most low-income persons they abandon more pets than those with high incomes, he said.

Last year 16,000 animals were either picked up by the Humane Society, or given to the Lincoln Animal Shelter that is operated by the society. Of these, about 9,500 had to be killed, and according to Patton, only 2,000 of those animals were paid disposals or sick and injured.

"Some people bring in a healthy animal and pay for its disposal. There are a few tears shed, but I'd rather go ahead with their wishes," he said. He added that although it would be bad public relations to go against someone's desires,



"you never get toughened to it."

A disposal costs \$3. It includes putting the animal to sleep and cremation. If an owner doesn't want his pet cremated, he can pay \$5 to have it buried in a mass grave or \$37.50 to have it buried with a marked headstone in the pet cemetery, Patton said.

Other money for the shelter comes from city animal license and pound fees. Besides these, Patton said the society has a stipend contract with Lincoln for rabies control and picking up dead animals from the street.

The rest of the money comes from ambulance fees and private donations. But Patton said he would need at least \$20,000 to build a new kennel which he said the shelter needs. Part of the money would be used to complete the veterinary quarters. He also said the shelter should have \$40,000 to complete all necessary building.

Any animal brought to the shelter, or picked up as a stray remains in the shelter for three days, Patton said. The animals are evaluated and either destroyed or held in hopes that someone will buy them. The price varies from \$5 to \$35, Patton said. The average price for a puppy is about \$8.

Patton said all cages are washed every day and some are washed twice a day. Even so, airborne diseases are a problem at the shelter, he said. These diseases are more difficult to control when all the animals are kept inside, he added.

"I sometimes wonder why I came here (the animal shelter) but I was determined to make it more humane. I'm still fightin' and talkin' for those who cannot speak for themselves," Patton said.



photos by  
Dan Ladely