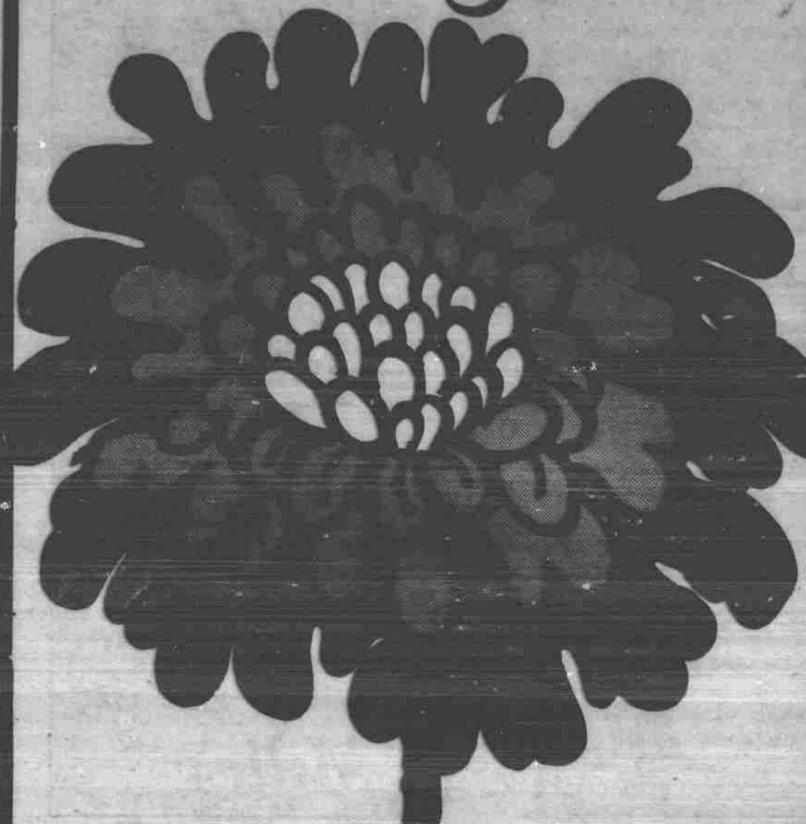


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Brown leaves Union post to take student affairs job

Suzanne Brown, assistant director of programming for the Nebraska Union; has temporarily vacated her position to become acting assistant to Ron Gierhan, acting vice chancellor for student affairs.

The lengthy, rather confusing title of Brown's office was created when former Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Ken Bader left his position Oct. 1 to become president of the American Soybean Association. Gierhan was appointed acting vice chancellor, and Brown has been named temporarily to fill Gierhan's post.

Besides assisting and advising Gierhan on any projects or problems dealing with student affairs, Brown also will serve as representative for the Office of Student

Affairs on several committees. Those include the Council on Student Life, the Student Affairs Staff Development Committee and the Career Action Committee (CAC).

Brown has a special interest in CAC because she was a member of an ad hoc committee that first initiated the program two years ago.

Sara Boatman and Gary Gilger, assistant programming advisers for Union Program Council (UPC), will take charge of Brown's vacated position as UPC programming adviser. Brown has served as adviser for four years.

Boatman and Gilger will receive a stipend for their increased workload, according to Union Director Allen Bennett. Bennett will assume Brown's other programming duties.

Annoying noise can be cut by planting, professor says

Irritating traffic noise often can be cut in half by selective planting of trees and shrubs, said a UNL engineering mechanics professor who has been studying the problem for eight years.

Prof. D. I. Cook is conducting research in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Forest Service) to find ways to control noise by using tree and shrub barriers.

"Traffic noise constitutes a social rather than a medical problem," Cook said. "We are dealing with irritation noise levels, not hearing-damaging levels." Daytime levels above 70 decibels generally are considered annoying, he said.

The research consisted of three separate studies financed through the U.S. Forest Service for about \$89,000. Initiated in Minnesota in response to interest expressed by the Forest Service, the project was later shifted to the Colorado Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station at Fort Collins, Colo.

"People employed by this station knew I had experience in noise studies," Cook said. After preliminary studies to determine the value of the research, Cook applied for the first of three grants.

Students helped

Working with Cook were David Van Haverbeke, a research forester from the station at Fort Collins, and three UNL students.

"The students were all very good and Van Haverbeke has been as involved as I have. It was a cooperative effort," Cook said.

Although the third study has not been completed, Cook said some conclusions could be drawn.

"I personally think a combination of trees and some sort of solid barrier is the best compromise solution in a majority of cases," he said. "Trees are not the only way to control noise, but in many

situations they are the best means available."

The studies showed that wide belts of trees planted 25 to 50 feet from the noise source effectively screen highway traffic noise. Construction of dirt dikes can provide immediate relief from noise before the trees grow tall enough, Cook said.

Smaller trees suggested

To reduce suburban traffic noise, Cook suggested planting smaller, higher density trees 15 to 20 feet from the noise source. However, he said that barriers were not effective in controlling noise from large trucks.

Because little previous work has been done on the subject, the first study was quite general, Cook said. Conducted 100 miles northwest of Lincoln in the Platte Valley area, it experimented with the use of trees and shrubs in noise abatement.

The second study combined trees and dirt dikes to form barriers and was conducted in Hastings.

Existing shelterbelts were used in the first and second studies, Cook said, but because suitable natural sites were difficult to find, the shelterbelt in Hastings was modified by constructing a dirt dike within the belt.

Tape-recorded truck noise was used as a noise source in the first two studies, although actual traffic noise was used almost exclusively as a source in the final study, he said.

Cook is completing the third study of suburban traffic noise on South 56th Street between A Street and Valley Road in Lincoln. He said many residents whose backyards face 56th Street have used trees or wooden fences as visual screens, which also helped reduce noise levels.

Results of the research have been distributed to forestry organizations, highway planners and environmental groups interested in reducing noise, Cook said.

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