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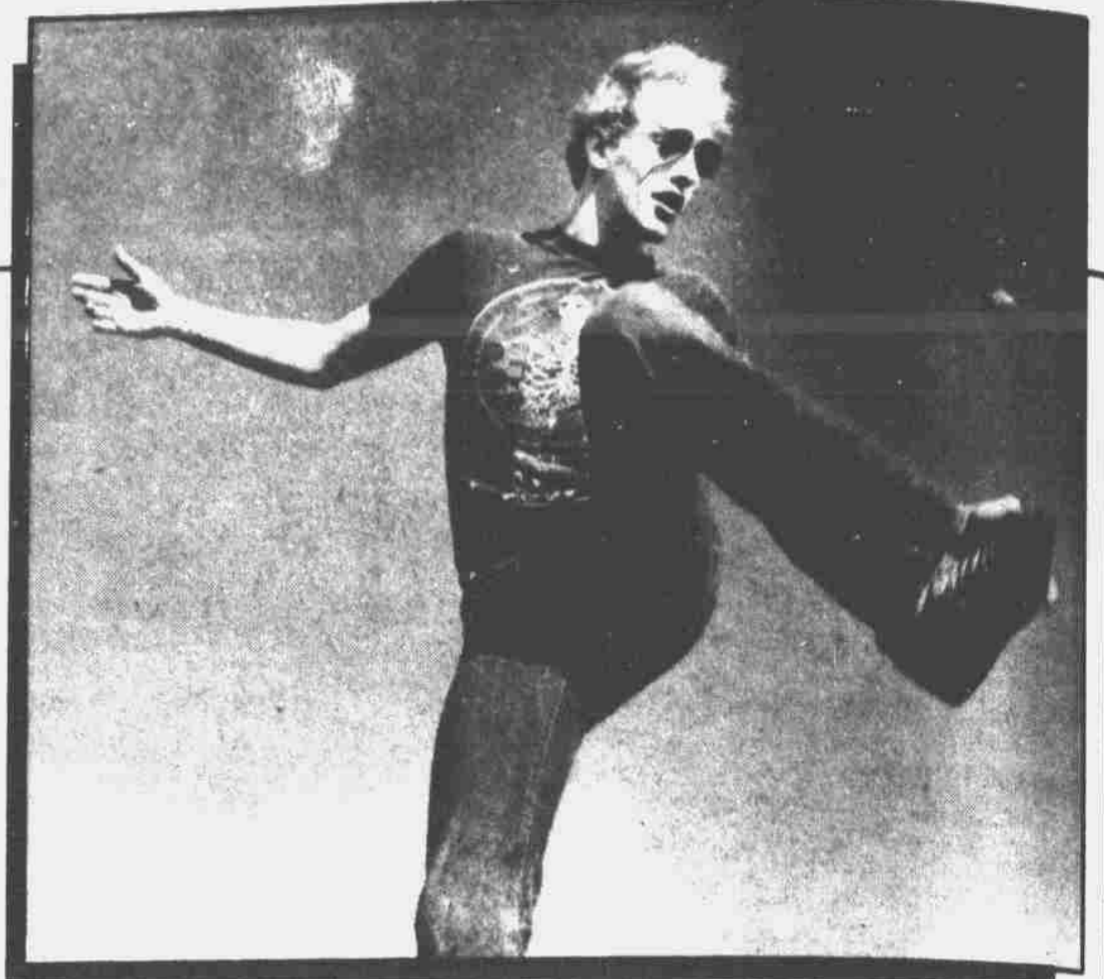
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Staff Photo by Jerry McBride

Jeff Pickerel, 24, of 6838 Aylesworth Ave., takes advantage of the warm weather to get in a game of Hackey Sack.

Crew prepares for cleanup

By Laurie Moses

With fall and winter on their way, the UNL grounds crew will start its annual cleanup of what Mother Nature has left behind.

"Usually there is a killing frost in November. The leaves are completely off the trees by then and we have until the first snowfall to get all the leaves," said the director of the grounds department.

Bud Dasenbrock said truckloads of leaves are taken to a compost pile on East Campus and will be used later as fertilizer.

The leaves are picked up by a power sweeper, similar to a vacuum, that picks up the leaves and deposits them into a container, he said.

"We usually don't pick up grass clippings. We leave them on the ground to leach into the soil. The only time we do pick up the grass clippings is when we've had a lot of rain and the clippings would suffocate the grass if they are left on the ground. These clippings also go to the compost pile," Dasenbrock said.

When it snows, the grounds crew must work to clear off sidewalks, streets and

parking lots so they are clean for students the next day.

"We need around \$25,000 to get equipment ready beforehand. After that, we need between \$50,000 and \$100,000 or more each year, depending on the amount of snow," Dasenbrock said. "Last year it wasn't very bad because we didn't have huge snowfalls to compete with. If we get 12 or more inches of snow, then we have problems," he said.

"We have a forecasting service who calls us and tells us if there is a storm system coming towards us. This is usually 48 hours before it arrives. They tell us how big the storm will be, when it will probably start and, more important, when it will end," he said.

"If we don't know when it will end, we could start getting things cleared off and then have to do it again. We only have one eight-hour period per day when we can work."

"We have over 30 different machines to clean up the snow. They range from blowers, plows, trucks, four-wheel pickups and hand-driven machines. We also have six loaders which help plow," Dasenbrock said.

The snow usually is piled onto the grass or in the corner of a parking lot, he said.

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