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Animal experts argue need to ban pit bull dogs

By Loren Berthelsen
Staff Reporter

Despite a national concern about pit bull terrier attacks, local animal experts say the dogs should not be banned in Nebraska.

"Other dogs bite too," said Bob Downey, executive director of the Capitol Humane Society. "You don't see people trying to ban cocker spaniels and just a couple of years ago they were the number-one source of dog bites."

Minden recently passed an ordinance banning the ownership of pit bulls within the city.

In Lincoln, however, under the vicious-dog ordinance, any dog can be ordered destroyed if a severe attack places someone's life in jeopardy or if the dog has attacked three times in a 12-month period.

There have been seven attacks by pit bulls in the last three years in Lincoln, said Dave Churilla, field supervisor for

"The problem isn't with the breed of pit bulls. The problem is whether or not the owner is a responsible owner."

—Dave Churilla

the Lincoln Animal Control Center. Nationally, 12 out of 18 deaths from dog attacks have been attributed to pit bulls in the last 18 months, Churilla said.

While some pit bulls tend to attack without warning and will not give up the attack, these characteristics have been purposely bred into the pit bulls, Churilla said.

"The problem isn't with the breed of

pit bulls," he added. "The problem is whether or not the owner is a responsible owner."

Some owners do not train the dogs to be aggressive toward people.

One pit bull owner described the nature of his dog. "The only thing that Tyson (his pit bull) attacks is furniture," said James Davis III, owner of a 10-month old pit bull.

Tyson is a "pretty casual dog," said Davis, a senior chemistry major at Nebraska Wesleyan University, who has had Tyson since he was a puppy. He said the dog is afraid of people and is shy at heart.

Davis said he doesn't understand why people want to ban pit bulls. Any dog can be dangerous. And like a gun, Davis said, the responsibility is with the owner.

"Pit bulls aren't dangerous unless they are trained to be an attack dog," Davis said.

Dick Young, Minden city clerk-treasurer, said the Minden City Council's actions were in response to swelling public opinion against pit bulls.

"What the council did was to prevent an incident from occurring," Young said.

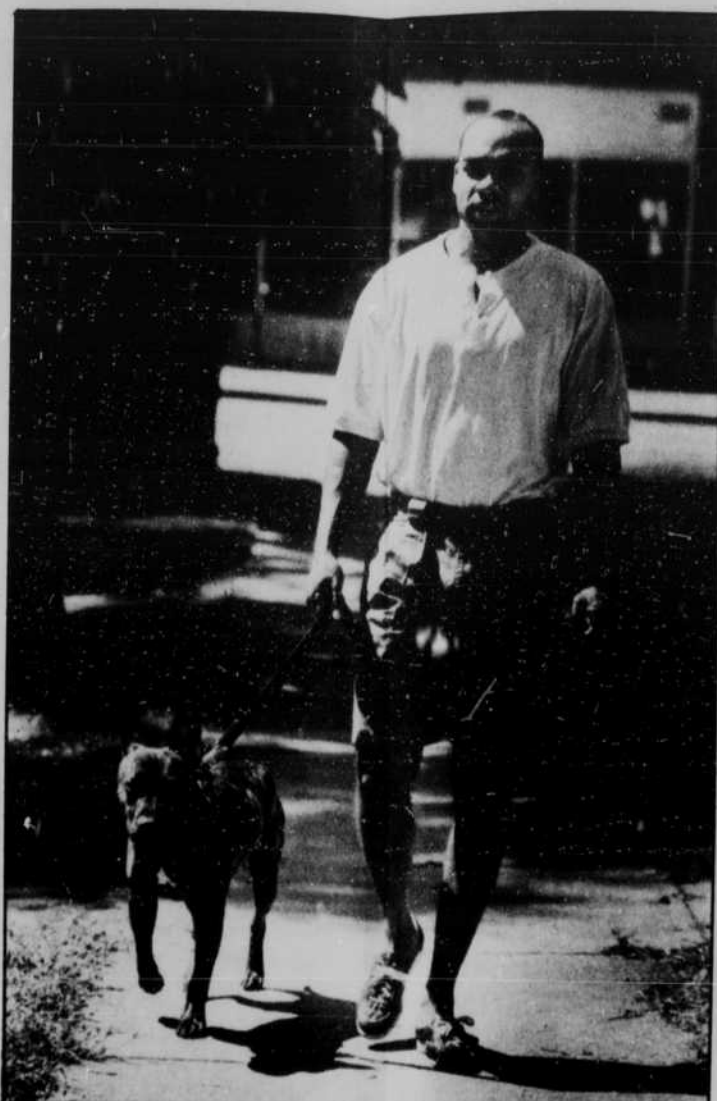
Churilla said he doesn't favor "specific breed" laws like the one passed in Minden. In most cases where a city has passed a law banning pit bulls, the law has been overturned when it was challenged, he said. Churilla said he thinks a vicious-dog ordinance, if properly enforced, will effectively reduce the number of dog attacks.

Churilla said certain characteristics of the pit bull breed do make it dangerous in an attack situation. The biting power of a pit bull is 1,400 to 1,800 pounds per square inch, compared with the 800 to 900 psi jaw power of a Doberman pinscher or a German shepherd.

Bob Downey, executive director of the Capitol Humane Society, agrees with Churilla.

"We are opposed to ordinances that discriminate against a breed," Downey said.

Six people have died this year in the United States of pit bull attacks. Downey added that these figures still don't convince him that pit bulls in particular should be banned. Good laws that are properly drawn up and enforced will address the problem of all vicious



Doug Carroll/Daily Nebraskan

James Davis and his pit bull, Tyson. Although pit bulls have a reputation for being vicious, Davis said Tyson will turn and run if a stranger approaches during one of their walks.

dogs who attack people, Downey said. Lancaster County Commissioner Jan Gauger said the commissioners are discussing a resolution that deals with vicious dogs.

"Certainly the incidents concerning pit bulls have brought the need of an ordinance to mind," Gauger said. "I personally wouldn't want to go in the direction of a ban against pit bulls."

Gazers view stars from top of Ferguson

By Amy Edwards and Linda Holmes
Staff Reporters

People who want to wish upon a star can see the balls of fire close up at a variety of places in Lincoln.

Don Taylor, associate professor of physics and astronomy, said elementary astronomy classes at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln meet on Mondays and Thursdays to look at the sky from the roof of Ferguson Hall.

Taylor said the sessions are similar to a laboratory. Students look through telescopes positioned by graduate students and undergraduate teaching assistants and fill out a detailed questionnaire about what they see.

Students can bring friends to the sessions, but telescopes are limited, Taylor said. As long as students can complete their studies, no one will be turned away, he said.

Taylor said September is a good month to view Saturn in the early evening and Jupiter around 11 p.m.

Taylor said there are no public sessions at Ferguson since viewers must be supervised by a member of the astronomy department. Taylor also said Ferguson is not an ideal location for viewing the sky because it is downtown and the sky is too bright to allow viewing of anything other than the brightest planets.

The physics and astronomy departments are building a lens for indoor skygazing at Ferguson. Taylor said the Minnich lens, named after the man who donated the money and lens for the telescope, will be mounted in the Minnich astronomy resource center in Ferguson.

The telescope has a 6-inch refracting lens that will allow people to view the southern sky without going outside. Taylor said the telescope should be

completed sometime this fall.

People who are not taking astronomy courses won't be left in the dark.

Jack Dunn, the planetarium coordinator for Mueller Planetarium and a volunteer at Hyde Memorial Observatory in Lincoln, said September is a good time to watch the sky because the weather is ideal and the planets are in a good position.

Dunn suggested using a sky calendar to help locate the planets and constellations. Free calendars, issued by Michigan State University, are available at the planetarium.

Dunn said he hopes to see an electronic version of a sky calendar in the Nebraska Union for students to see what is in the sky any time of the year.

Mueler Planetarium shows stargazing films monthly. This month, "More than Meets the Eye" brings the sky to an amateur's level, showing what is visible with binoculars or with the unaided eye.

The show is presented at 2 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays in the domed theater at the museum. In the domed theater, the images appear three dimensional through laser beams or a series of electronic impulses.

Hyde Memorial Observatory, one of 150 to 200 public planetariums in the United States, will start its fall hours in September, Dunn said.

The observatory, free to the public, will be open from 7 to 10 p.m. Saturdays and is run by volunteers. For a general update of what is in the sky, call the observatory at 471-7094.

FarmAid food sales to pay for repairs

From Staff Reports

Profits from concession sales at the Sept. 19 FarmAid III concert will provide the basis for an estimated \$1 million Memorial Stadium repair job, said Gary Fouraker, athletic business manager for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Stadium repairs, such as fixing water leaks from the balcony and replacing expansion joints, have been needed for a long time, Fouraker said. The athletic department will have to raise from other sources money to complete the project, he said.

Fouraker estimated concessions profits at \$100,000.

"This is so different, we really don't have a lot to go on. We have no idea how soon people are going to come or even if the concert is going to start at 10 o'clock," he said.

Some money from concessions will go to FarmAid. Profits from concession items donated to the concert will go to FarmAid instead of UNL.

So far, ConAgra has donated between 8,000 and 9,000 pounds of hotdogs. Wrap for the \$10,000-worth of hotdogs also was donated. Revenue from hotdog sales will go directly to FarmAid.

The contract between UNL and FarmAid gives UNL full charge of concessions.

Both Fouraker and FarmAid officials said they have no plans to encourage other businesses to donate concessions.

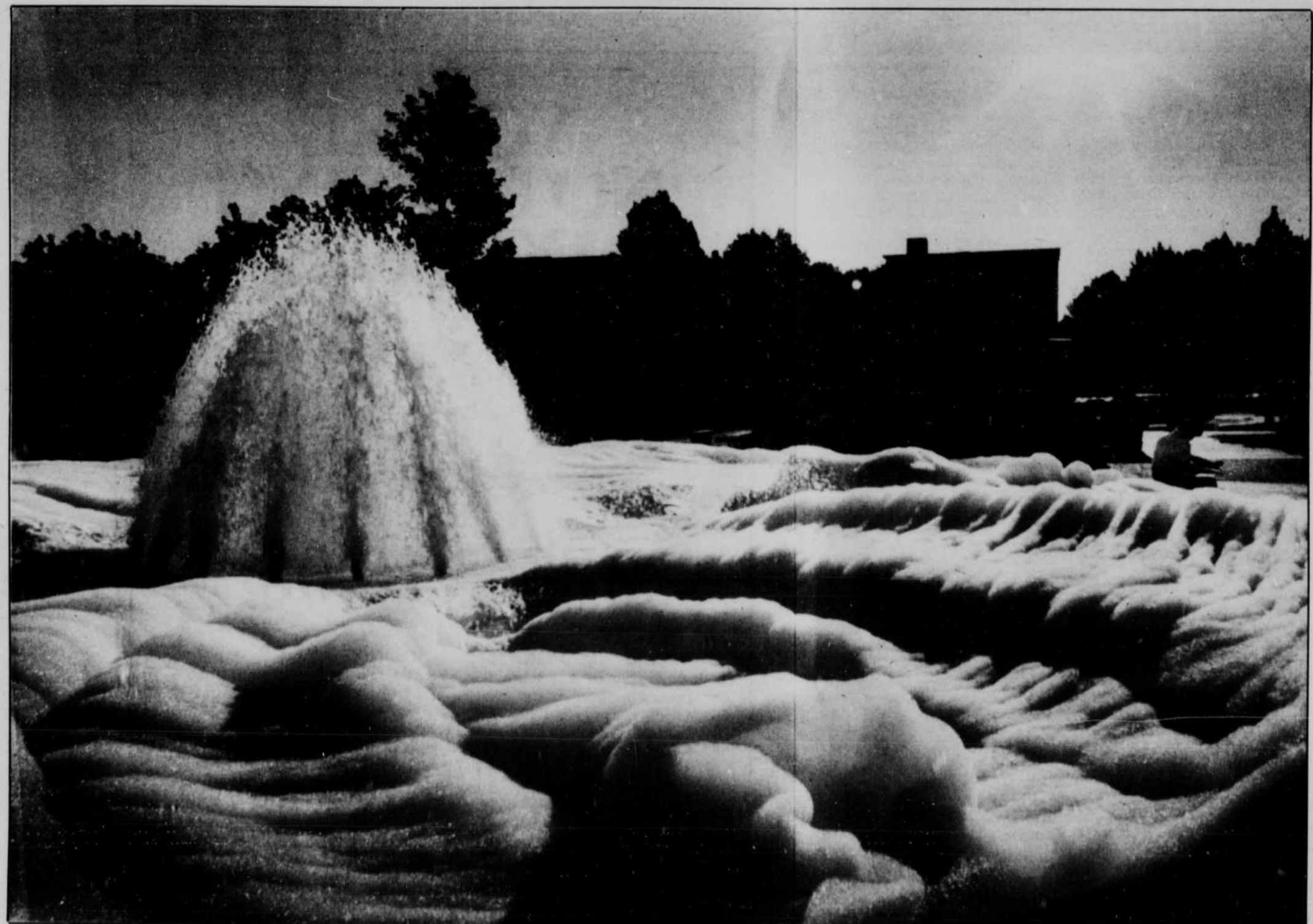
Benson to become interim director of UNL research

John Benson, associate director of institutional research and planning at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, will become interim director of the office Sept. 1. The announcement was made Wednesday by UNL Chancellor Martin Massengale.

Benson will succeed Harry Allen, UNL's first director of institutional research, who will retire today after 22 years as the university's research and planning director.

During the 1986 fall semester, Benson was acting director of institutional research while Allen was on leave serving as an adviser to the Israeli Council on Higher Education.

Benson has been a member of the UNL faculty since 1962, first as assistant professor of architecture and then associate professor since 1970.



Doug Carroll/Daily Nebraskan

Sun and suds

Pranksters dumped soap into Broyhill Fountain sometime Friday morning and the result was drifts of suds. Early risers who walked past the fountain were treated to a billowing art form. Officials said the prank will cost \$2,200 to repair and will take two workers a day's work. "It looks like snowdrifts," freshman psychology major Charles Goodwin said, "I think it's pretty neat."

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