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# Bug-eating bats reside in Lincoln

By Mark Baldrige  
Staff Reporter

Does the Capitol Building have bats in its belfry? Patricia Freeman thinks it's possible.

Freeman, curator of zoology at the University of Nebraska State Museum, is an authority on bats.

"I think there are certainly some bats there in the summer time, I'm not sure they're year-round," she said.

Freeman said large numbers of bats have passed through Nebraska in the last month or so in their annual migration.

"Every fall the animals that are farther north go south," she said, "You've probably seen geese doing the same thing."

The animals may stop over in homes as well, but Freeman said the bats were no cause for alarm.

Though some people feel uneasy about bats, Freeman said the uneasiness was a misunderstanding.

"Anything we don't know much about tends to get bad press," she said.

Of a thousand species of bats, only three are blood-eaters, she said, and all of these "vampire" bats live in South and Central America.

Although rabies can be contracted from bat bites, Freeman said that in the past 40 years—in Canada and the United States—only 14 verified cases of rabies in humans have been transmitted by bats.

"You have a better chance of winning at Lotto," she said.

Freeman said all bats in Nebraska are insect-eaters. That should make them more welcome in an agricultural area, she said.

"A favorite food of the big brown bat is the cucumber beetle," she said. "The larval stage of the beetle is the corn root worm, a huge agricultural pest."

Bats in Nebraska also eat stink



Brian Shellito/DN

bugs and leaf hoppers, as well as mosquitoes, she said. And an individual bat consumes insects in large numbers.

"If you don't save bats you're going to eliminate a huge predator on agricultural pests," she said.

Bat droppings are extremely nitrogenous, she said, and highly prized as a fertilizer.

"In fact," she said, "in the Civil War, there were efforts to mine bat guano to use in the manufacture of gunpowder."

But, if a bat should take up temporary residence in your home, Freeman advises caution.

"Don't poison them," she said. "Anything that kills a bat kills a human, only more slowly."

Some homeowners don't mind the guest, Freeman said, and build bat boxes—like a birdhouse for bats—to attract them.

But if you really want to get rid of them, "watch and see where they come in and out of the house," she said.

Then, when the bats are gone, simply block the hole.

But Freeman said homeowners should beware that in June and July the bats may be raising babies. Blocking the exit will cause abandoned babies to starve.

Jim Weverka, manager of Animal Control in Lincoln, said his company could take care of homeowners' bat problems.

"If people find bats in their room they can open the window and see if they fly out," he said. "Otherwise they can call Animal Control."

A bat on the ground can be easily captured in a coffee can, he said, because bats cannot take flight from a standing position on the ground.

"They have to climb up on something to get a gliding start," he said.

Animal Control captured about three or four bats last month, he said.

"That's pretty common this time of year," he said.

Animal Control treats the bats humanely and releases them after capture, he said.

## Green space forum scheduled

By Becky Becher  
Staff Reporter

UNL students and faculty can express their views on Chancellor Graham Spanier's proposed green space during an open forum next week.



The forum will be at noon, Sept. 29, in the main lobby of the Nebraska Union.

Forum organizer and Arts and Science senator, Deb Silhacek, said

Spanier declined an invitation to attend the forum.

Silhacek said she had hoped that Spanier's attendance would have attracted more people and more questions resulting in more answers.

Silhacek said that by declining her invitation to the forum, Spanier was sending a message that he did not care about University of Nebraska-Lincoln student and faculty opinion on the green space.

In other business, Association of Students of the University of Nebraska President Keith Benes vetoed a bill asking the NU Board of Regents to consider the renovation of Richard's Hall a higher priority on the regent's capital construction list.

Benes said the regents would not be voting on the list until next year.

## Athlete

Continued from Page 1

he said. "He didn't know the outcome of the case, and I think Kenny went through so much."

In the Baldwin case, Jones said questions still needed to be answered.

"Of course he was in the wrong, but no one came to Scott Baldwin's rescue," Jones said. "I'm still angry because the people in Omaha, Nebraska, just let the case fade away."

Osborne said athletes were not immune from coverage, but they were allowed to make mistakes like any other person.

"If you fumble or score a touchdown, you understand you're going to be a hero or a goat," he said. "But I hate to have off-the-field matters made public."

"But if that same amount of coverage would be given to another student, I've got no problems with it."

Jones said athletes were viewed only as athletes and not as students most of the time.

"People are watching you to see if you do good, and some watch to see if you do bad. Once you make a mistake, people won't forget."

Bender said if the news was of interest to the public, it was worthy of being published.

"The athletes have some control over their lives," he said. "They can live fairly quietly and avoid the spotlight."

"They didn't have to become athletes. They could have done other things."

Osborne said it was difficult for athletes to stay out of the spotlight because of all the coverage they received.

"Somehow athletes are expected to be above reproach in so many areas," he said.

Osborne said he wanted his players to go through a normal four years of college.

"I'd like to see them go four years without a lot of scrutiny, where they can make some mistakes and also do some good things."

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