

Frisky ferret full of surprises

Last summer, I allowed a female friend of mine to live in my house and help with living expenses.

She was in need of shelter, and in the spirit of some week-willed man from long ago, who's probably a saint now, I provided.

My roommate, however, neglected to mention she was also bringing her pet ferret.

This was one of the many things she failed to tell me; important things like I also wasn't supposed to wear her bed sheets like a diaper when she wasn't home.

Well, how was I to know?

It's only fair to note that this same ferret is, to this day, still residing with me even though its owner has been gone for some time now.

Don't get me wrong, I have nothing against ferrets as I am always in the constant pursuit of housing rodents.

I allow them to stay rent free in my kitchen, and invite them to feed at their will on my unopened bread loaves.

I must admit, however, this ferret was nothing like the mice I had become so accustomed to.

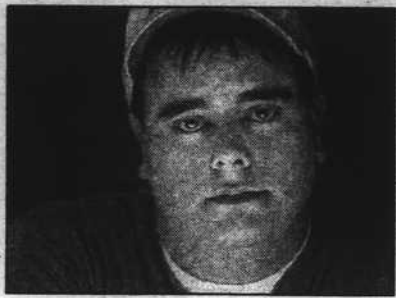
For starters, I've never had a mouse bite and then proceed to urinate on me after I gave it a bath.

If you're not familiar with what a ferret is, please allow me to explain.

A ferret is essentially a biting, gray tube sock, similar to the ones our parents made us wear in junior high, only without the purple rings.

Ferrets, unlike most animals, also possess the uncanny ability to be picked up and played like an accordion.

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Steve Willey

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She is completely comfortable demonstrating her unique talent, and although she prefers to do so on clothes I happen to be wearing at the time, she happily substitutes

electronic equipment if necessary.

Often times she'll go without food or water for months at a time with no effect whatsoever on her productivity.

It's truly the ninth wonder of the world. (The eighth of course being my never-ending desire to consistently fail chemistry.)

Ferrets are innately curious creatures, and love hiding in dark, cramped places.

Consider yourself blessed if they choose places not found on your anatomy.

If they do, be prepared to use every tool, including the jaws of life, to remove them.

My ferret loves hiding deep within the folds of my couch, occasionally peeping her head out and nipping off a piece of buttocks.

The only method of getting her out is by turning the couch over and kicking the bottom, all the while screaming her name "Albooky" — which is Hebrew for "Have mercy Yayweh, shoot this thing."

When she comes out, she scampers about the room doing her little "hiss, hiss I'm a happy ferret," laugh.

This laugh, though similar sounding to her all too common "hiss, hiss, I gotta poop," laugh, has much more pleasant results.

Days pass as quickly as paper towels are used and I can't help but wonder about my one-time friend and roommate.

She's nowhere to be found, but I'd bet a dollar-to-a-donut she's on some remote island sipping a drink out of a coconut shell.

And I'd also wager she's doing her little "hiss, hiss, what a moron in Nebraska laugh."

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From the

INTERNET

Men deserve own reproductive rights

The following essay was discovered on the Internet at <<http://info-sys.home.vix.com/men/choice/natcentmen.html>>

By Kingsley G. Morse Jr.

The National Center for Men is in the process of selecting the best plaintiff for a case described as the male Roe v. Wade.

We feel that all people are entitled to a reproductive "choice," and that men should be allowed to terminate their parental rights and responsibilities during a limited period.

It's beyond question that unplanned parenthood can completely disrupt a male's life. It disrupts his education, it disrupts his mental health, and it often disrupts his entire family life.

We feel that, because of the impact to the male in this matter of such basic concern, inasmuch as there are any rights which are fundamental, that he should be allowed to make the choice as to whether he'll terminate his parental rights and responsibilities.

The detriment that the government would impose upon the male by denying this choice altogether is apparent.

Paternity, or additional offspring, may force upon the male a distressful life and future. Psychological harm and heartbreak may result. Mental and physical health may be taxed.

There is also the distress, for all concerned, associated with the unwanted child. The continuing stigma of unwed fatherhood may be involved.

The male is the victim. The government cannot deny the detrimental effect that the current paternity laws have on males.

Certainly there are problems regarding even the use of contraception. Regardless of the circumstances of conception, whether it is because of rape, whether it is because of contraceptive fraud, whether it is a case of mistaken identity, or whether the male is extremely immature, he has no relief.

In a Constitution for a free people, there can be no doubt that the meaning of "liberty" must be broad indeed.

The Constitution nowhere mentions a specific right of personal choice in matters of marriage and family life, but the "liberty" protected by the Fourteenth Amendment covers more than those freedoms explicitly named in the Bill of Rights.

Certainly we cannot say that there is in the Constitution, so stated, the right to terminate parental rights and responsibilities.

But neither is there stated the right to travel or some of the other very basic rights. There is a great body of precedent where the Supreme Court has held that it is the right of individuals to determine the course of their own lives in family matters; for whom they will

marry — the Loving case; that the state may not interfere with the individual's choice regarding birth control — the Griswold case.

Roe v. Wade is the main case, holding that a woman's right to privacy includes the right to abortion. Women's right to control their reproductive lives was upheld in Planned Parenthood v. Casey.

So there is a great body of cases, decided in the past by the Supreme Court, in areas of marriage, sex, contraception and procreation, which says that there are certain things that are so much a part of the individual's concern that they should be left to the determination of the individual.

One of the purposes of the U.S. Constitution was to guarantee individuals the right to determine the course of their own lives.

The ability of men to participate equally in the economic and social life of the nation would be facilitated by their ability to control their reproductive lives.

It is our position that the freedom involved is that of a male to terminate his parental rights and responsibilities.

One out of four U.S. children is born out of wedlock. While 1.6 million U.S. women abort and decline parenthood each year, half a million males have their "paternity established" in U.S. courts.

Males have been treated as an underclass without reproductive rights for the two decades since Roe v. Wade, despite the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of "equal protection," and we seek to emancipate males from this hypocrisy.

Denying males reproductive rights is humiliating, oppressive, offensive to the basic principles of human dignity.

Where fundamental rights such as procreation are involved, limiting these rights may be justified only by a compelling state interest.

The potential child's right to child support and to share in the male's standard of living is not absolute, as is demonstrated by single parent adoptions, which the various social service agencies look upon favorably.

Biology is not destiny. Beyond the rights involved, we question the propriety of a public policy that subsidizes out-of-wedlock births with child support.

Crime and other social ills are associated with illegitimacy.

We aren't taking a position on abortion. We aren't advocating that males should terminate their parental rights and responsibilities.

Nor do we even advocate that it's a good idea, or what circumstances it would be desirable under.

We don't argue the male's right to terminate is absolute.

What we do advocate is that the decision as to whether or not a particular male will terminate his parental rights and responsibilities is a decision that should be made by that male.

Fall perfect season for play

A warming sun and a cool breeze blowing across campus. Russet and gold leaves drifting from the trees. Monarch butterflies gracing the flowers while on their migratory journey. Chubby little squirrels taking aim from their lofty perches.

There is nothing, and I mean nothing, like fall in the Midwest. And Nebraska is no exception.

The beauty is simply astounding. Not only are the leaves an amazing array of hues, but so are the flowers, the skies and the grasses.

And fall has this smell; distinctive and comforting. It's a mixture of the decaying leaves, football Saturday cookouts, new clothes, old clothes.

It's a warm smell. A familiar smell. Like your mother's perfume. Or an old friend's.

The sunlight is unique, too. A hazy sort of light settles on the land. A filtered light. Nothing as brash and as bold as the summer sun. Or as blinding as winter sunlight reflected off the snow.

Sunlight perfect for basking in. Perfect for playing tennis in. Perfect for building big leaf piles in.

I can't even remember how many fall afternoons I spent as a child raking up leaves into a huge pile and jumping into them. Except one.

The afternoon was overcast, with a slight chill. We were wearing last year's play-clothes, so as to not dirty our new fall school clothes.

The pile was huge. We had built it by the curb, so we had at least a little height against the beast. It easily pushed 6 feet. When you're hovering at about 4-foot-2, that's a pretty daunting leaf pile.

We played on our hill of fall colors for hours. There were leaves in our hair and twigs stuck to our clothes. We didn't care. We were expressing our sheer joy in being alive.

I think fall is the perfect season for playing — regardless of your age. Southeastern Nebraska has



Jessica Kennedy

"As a child, fall provided a whole new wonderland of playtime opportunities. And just because you've gotten older doesn't mean you shouldn't still take advantage of those chances."

many marvelous places to goof-off during our beautiful fall weather.

In just the Lincoln area there are plenty of spots. Wilderness Park borders most of southwest Lincoln and provides plenty of opportunities for outdoor adventure.

It has a physical challenge course, trails to hike or bike or run, paths that meander along streams, and bridges taken right out of a Norman Rockwell painting.

Many summers ago, a Wilderness Camp counselor told me that a section of what is now Wilderness Park used to be an amusement park. If you visit the area, you can see old foundations and occasionally find relics of the times.

Pioneers Park offers the adventurer any kind of adventure she may want. There's an observation zoo, a nature center, trails, open fields, paths, statuary, and playground equipment.

If you're interested in a quicker trip back to nature, try Holmes

Lake or Antelope park. Each has great fall scenes: large, old trees, small children and playground equipment.

Holmes is best for a romantic stroll with a loved one, or just a quick study break with friends. Frequently you can find ducks taking a swim or the UNL crew team practicing. And you can always find spectacular sunsets.

Antelope Park is good because it's right off the bike path and has some really, really fun playground equipment. This can be a good time for you and extra fun if you bring along a young friend, sibling or relative.

I advise everyone to try the Walton bike trails east of Lincoln. They're a beautiful walk, run or ride. It's Nebraska at its finest: fresh air, young trees, wildlife and corn fields.

If you're feeling more adventurous, try Mahoney State Park, Indian Caves State Park or anywhere around Nebraska City.

DeSoto Bend is a spectacular wildlife refuge along the Missouri river. Large numbers of migrating water fowl stop there each year. It's worth the trip.

A quick road trip is always a fun way to spend a fall afternoon. There are plenty of books to help you choose a route. One of those books, written by Alan Boye, talks about little-known Nebraska landmarks and their history. As well as notes on scenery along Nebraska roads.

As a child, fall provided a whole new wonderland of playtime opportunities. And just because you've gotten older doesn't mean you shouldn't still take advantage of those chances.

Seize every moment you have in the next couple of months to enjoy the smell of fall, the sights around you and the light upon you.

After all, there is no place like Nebraska.

Kennedy is a junior broadcasting, public relations and advertising major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

BE OUR GUEST

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Must have strong writing skills and something to say. Contact Mark Baldrige c/o the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588.

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