

7-27-10

To whom it may concern, *Common Council*

We humbly ask that you hear what we have to say concerning the possession of our pet chickens on our property. We hope that you can better understand our views and look at amending the current ordinance to allow us to keep our family pets.

Many people may think that raising chickens is affiliated with farming or country living. In fact, this is not the case with us. Our chickens are very much our pets, much like people who have cats and dogs. The only difference is that our pet chickens also have many benefits that come along with raising them. Our pets are a very important part of our family. They have names: Penny, Bubbles, and Fluff. They are well cared for and contained in our back yard in a big cage, similar to a dog being in a dog kennel. We don't allow them wander freely, like livestock on a farm. They are raised in a clean and healthy environment. They are fed and cleaned up after, as one would after a dog or a cat. Chickens are very safe pets to have. There are no risks associated with having them. In fact, our family has learned that there are actually many benefits to having chickens as pets. Even more important than the fact that they make good pets, they also promote green living. In a world where we are making efforts to be more health conscious for the well being of generations to come, it is more important for people to be educated about living green. This is an important value that we instill in our family daily. We have made great efforts in establishing this lifestyle in our home.

For instance, our chickens' droppings are very high in nitrates, which is a very useful natural fertilizer in gardens, as opposed to using chemicals and pesticides. Their eggs are eaten by us during our family breakfasts, and afterwards, their shells are then recycled back into their feed. The water they drink comes from the rain barrels found around our yard. Just like any pet, and us for that matter, chickens need exercise to stay healthy. When our chickens are exercising, they are very closely monitored, and are appreciated for the fine jobs they do to contribute to the family's well-being. By this, we mean they are a very good source of pest control. They eat ants, worms, and other bugs found in the yard. They get their daily dose of greens (grass) to aid them in their digestion, and they

also aid in our lawn care by eating our weeds. They also utilize this time to take dust baths, which are very important to help keep them clean and odor free.

Many people may be concerned about whether or not noise is associated with our pets. First off, it's important to know that we have females (hens). It's the males (roosters) that have a tendency to get loud. Our girls make soft, contented clucking sounds, especially after laying eggs. They easily settle down, way easier than a person trying to hush their barking dog. They don't make noise in the morning, as the males do (cock-a-doodle-do!) and they are fast asleep as soon as the sun goes down.

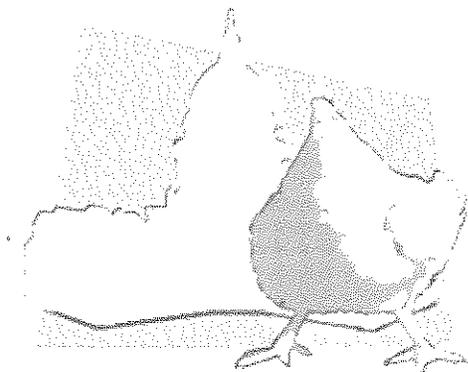
People may also be concerned with chickens attracting other pests and rodents. Let me re-emphasize that these girls are our pets that are well cared for and cleaned up after. There isn't excess food lying around, because we ration their feedings, similar to what you would with cats and dogs. By comparison, having a bird feeder would probably attract more pests and rodents versus having our pet chickens that are being properly cared for.

In a nutshell, these chickens are our pets. They are an important part of our family. They have names, they're loved and well cared for, and they are cleaned up after, like one would after any cat or dog. We would like to see our city, Menasha, follow our sister city (Neenah's) ordinance in becoming a more eco-friendly city. Amending this ordinance will have no fiscal impact on the city. It WILL allow our 11 and 13 year old children to keep their pets. More importantly, it WILL allow us as parents to make our kids, as well as our neighbor kids, more conscious of their environment. It will allow us to educate and expose them to a more green lifestyle. Please examine this ordinance, and allow our family to keep our pets. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Paulik". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Dan Paulik Family



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No, a hen will lay eggs regardless--they just won't be fertile eggs. They still have the same nutritional value as fertilized eggs. Most of the eggs you buy in the store are unfertilized.

A White Wyandotte hen in her nesting box, waits for some privacy before laying her egg.



Smell?

That will depend on the caretaker. Just like any other pet or animal, they need care--cleaning out the dirty bedding in the coop, keeping it dry and having a clean/dry area of sand or dirt for the birds to take dust baths in. These practices will all help to keep your birds happy, healthy and odor free.

Attract Rodents?

It is food that attracts rodents, not the birds. If you have wild bird feeders in your back yard, you run the same risk. Keep all feed in metal garbage cans, with secure lids. Feed birds in small doses, so as not to have a large amount of food left over. If you feed your birds scraps/ protein, make sure it is eaten and not left in the bedding.

Noise?

Ask any child "What does a rooster say?" and they will throw their head back and give you all they've got! But the hens, they are a different story. They usually make a soft, contented clucking sound--until they lay an egg. Then they get very excited and proud and will squawk for a few moments and then settle back down. They do not make a ruckus in the morning like their male counterparts and they are fast asleep in their coop by the time the sun goes down. Unlike the neighborhood dogs or cats!

Madison Regulations

Up to 4 domestic fowl allowed per single-family dwelling

No Roosters

No Slaughtering

Poultry shall be kept within a secure enclosure and not allowed to run free

Enclosures shall be located no closer than 25' from nearest neighbors residence

A \$10 permit* is required (per household), to be renewed annually

*send permit fee to: City Treasurer, 210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. 268-4771

Read the City of Madison ordinances (type in "chickens" in the search box)

New legislation has been passed regarding premises registration. What does this mean? It means that registrations will be required for anyone housing livestock, including poultry, regardless of number of animals as of November 1st, 2005. You can get more information at <http://www.wild.org> For any questions, please contact Marcus Gordon, DVM, Homeland Security Veterinarian, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health at: 608-224-4904 or marcus.gordon@datcp.state.wi.us

Christine Heinrichs of Madison, Wisconsin, has written a book on Raising Chickens. She has allowed us to share her chapter on legal and zoning issues, with chickens. To read, go to: "[Chapter 14 Legal Aspects](#)"

How to Get An Ordinance for Backyard Chickens

Elizabeth Delaquessa March 19, 2009

One of the disadvantages of our increasingly urbanized society is our disconnectedness from nature. The farm and field are considered separate, alien; even primitive. Concrete is rapidly replacing prairies, a walk in the woods is a novelty and the sight and sound of chickens scratching in the dirt is forgotten.

Or not.

Madison, Wisconsin is part of the increasing number of cities around the country that have passed ordinances allowing people to keep chickens in their backyards. If you are interested in keeping backyard chickens but your city doesn't allow it, or has no ordinance regarding backyard poultry whatsoever, there are things you can do to change the law. And if trying to get an ordinance passed for backyard chickens seems impossible, and you have no idea where to start, know that there ARE things you can do. Here are some tips for getting started.

① start small

You aren't going to get anywhere by marching right to the city council building. Start by talking to neighbors and letting them know of your plans. If people are skeptical or critical of the idea of chickens, this is an opportunity to educate them and peacefully resolve any conflicts that could arise later. In Madison, Alicia Rheel and Bryan Whiting, who became key figures in the city's backyard chicken movement, addressed their neighborhood organization and wrote an article for the neighborhood newspaper. Most neighborhoods have organizations and councils, so at the next neighborhood meeting, bring up your plans for backyard chickens. Again, this gives you a chance to get feedback from others and to answer questions.

② Organize the Movement

Be as organized as possible. You won't get far if you do this on your own. There will

be city officials who have never heard of a backyard chicken ordinance, so its up to you to do the research and gather your facts. Although Alicia Rheal contacted former Madison alderman Matt Sloan, who was supportive of the movement, it was the city residents who did most of the organization and research. It doesn't hurt to contact city officials to see what their opinions are, but know that you and other city residents will be doing most of the work. So get together and start brainstorming! Hopefully you got some positive feedback from neighbors or other people around the city who also want chickens. Get everyone together and form a group. Start a blog to keep in touch, and hold meetings. Think about what you need to do to present a strong argument for backyard chickens to city officials. Is your city more conservative or liberal? Do you have a sense of what city residents in general would think of backyard chickens? What might the city council think of this? Consider these questions to determine the best way to present this movement to your city.

③ Do your research

The research you do will keep your backyard chicken movement afloat. Find out everything you can about domestic chickens and raising them in cities. Research everything you can find about questions and concerns people may have, such as disease, pests, noise and smell. You know hens are pretty quiet animals, that roosters are the ones that make noise. But not everyone knows that! And a coop that is kept clean and tidy will not be a hotbed for disease and avian bird flu. Madison residents got in contact with the University of Wisconsin-Madison health department, and got together with Mark Cook of the UW poultry extension. Mark Cook was supportive of the backyard chicken movement and even wrote a letter to the city, sharing his expertise on domestic poultry. Even if you don't have the support of an expert in the field, at least get the facts from them. This will be useful when you are presenting all this to the city. The more information you can get from experts and trusted sources, the stronger your argument will be.

④ Educate and address

Educating the public about backyard chickens is a good way to gain support, or at least dispel preconceptions people may have about having chickens in backyards. People may be opposed to backyard chickens purely from ignorance, or from negative past experiences. Hold a public meeting about backyard chickens for people to come and learn, or write an article for a local paper with the "myths and facts" of urban poultry. As well as teaching citizens about backyard chickens, it is also good to educate city officials. You can put together all your research into an organized portfolio, or write a detailed report, and send it to the city government. This is also a good time to go to city council meetings and other local government events that city residents can attend and present their causes to the mayor, alderpersons or councilpersons. This gives lawmakers a chance to see what you're after, and even if you have not gained any support from a sympathetic official, you will show them that you are serious about what you are doing.

⑤ Be respectful

This goes hand in hand with tip four. People will not be impressed if you take on a know-it-all, holier-than-thou attitude. Be respectful when presenting your case at all times, be it to the neighbors at the neighborhood meeting or the mayor at the city council meeting. 'A lot has to do with attitude', says Alicia Rheal. If you have a bad attitude, people won't be as enthusiastic about supporting your backyard chicken movement. In addition to being respectful it's also important to be realistic. Though the city officials will be the ones who write up the official ordinance, you can brainstorm possible ordinance logistics with other people involved in the chicken movement. But keep it within reason. If you go to the city council and suggest an ordinance allowing up to eight chickens per home, lawmakers will be skeptical and less likely to even consider an ordinance. Propose ground rules that won't cause too much controversy. Keep it within three to five chickens per backyard, and absolutely no roosters or slaughtering in the city.

⑥ Don't give up

Your quest for a backyard chicken ordinance may be more or less challenging depending on your city. Pre-existing laws for backyard poultry vary, as do the viewpoints of lawmakers. Once you have done all your research, organization and education, it's up to the city officials to make the final decision. There is a lot of luck involved as well. Sometimes you just have to be in the right place at the right time. One city official may be completely supportive of an ordinance for chickens, the next may be absolutely opposed to the idea. If the city whips up an ordinance and then votes against it, it will feel like the end of the world. The city may have turned it down this time, but you haven't done all that work for nothing. Analyze the situation and try again. Make it known that you aren't going to give up. Keep educating citizens and lawmakers, and continue building support for

your cause. You can do it. You will get there.

Avian flu?

Ron Kean, UW Extension Poultry Guy, has given us information on this topic:

There has been a great deal of news about avian influenza recently. Stories have ranged from doomsday predictions to those who say it is all being overblown. So, should you be concerned, as a poultry owner or just as a human being?

Yes, you should be concerned. Will something happen? Let's hope not, but it could be very bad.

Currently, there is an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Asia and Eastern Europe. This influenza virus, which is of H5N1 type, is highly pathogenic to most domestic birds, that is, it kills many of those that become infected. It has also infected some people, and has killed about half of those who are known to be infected. (H and N types refer to the specific strain. There are several different types of avian influenza, and they are identified by these H and N components. For more information on this, see web sites below.)

It is likely being spread by migratory birds, which can carry the virus without showing symptoms. Fortunately, this virus is currently not present in the United States.

Concern for poultry

If the virus comes to the U.S., it likely will be devastating to the commercial poultry industry and hobbyists alike. It might get here in migratory birds flying in, in birds smuggled in, or in bird manure on someone's shoes, etc. The virus can remain stable for fairly long periods in the environment.

The standard method for dealing with an outbreak like this is to depopulate all birds within a certain range of an outbreak. So, if it's found on a farm in Wisconsin, for example, all birds within some distance of that farm would be euthanized. If things are caught in time, and the virus does not spread, that would be great. Unfortunately, this virus spreads easily from bird to bird. Outbreaks in the past have taken some time and the destruction of many birds before they were eliminated. There is also the temptation to hide birds or take them from the area, and this greatly increases the risk of spreading the disease. As an example, an outbreak in Mexico in 1992 took more than 3 years to eradicate.

Costs

Export markets would immediately be closed so sales would decrease drastically. Depending on the location of the outbreak, many birds might have to be depopulated. Rare breeds and varieties might be lost. Time and money spent euthanizing and destroying the birds also adds up quickly. While you can't be infected with avian influenza from eating properly cooked eggs or poultry products, many people would stop buying these products out of fear. It would be very, very expensive for the poultry industry.

Concern for Humans

Currently, most of the people who have been diagnosed with this influenza (in Asia) have had direct contact with poultry. In many cases, the people were either sleeping in the same building as the birds, or living in very close proximity. The virus doesn't seem to be easily transmitted from one human to another, if at all. A big problem with the avian influenza virus, however, is that it can mutate very easily. The concern is that it will mutate into a contagious virus in humans. If that happens, then it can, and most likely will, spread throughout the world very quickly. This is what happened in 1918, when there was a global outbreak. That outbreak killed an estimated 40 to 50 million people. Even with an improved health care system, there is still the potential for a huge loss of life world-wide.

What is our government doing, you may ask? Currently in the U.S., flocks are being monitored for signs of avian influenza. Customs and immigration officials are watching closely for anyone attempting to smuggle birds into the country, or for anyone who has recently been in contact with poultry in countries with known outbreaks. Vaccines for the birds could be developed, but they aren't available at this time, and since this virus mutates so often, any vaccine that is made now might not be protective in the future. It would also take quite some time to produce enough vaccines to combat a widespread outbreak.

So, should you as a poultry grower, be concerned? The answer is yes, although I

wouldn't suggest you panic or get rid of your birds because of this. Good biosecurity measures are important to protect your flock. Don't allow your birds to mingle with wild birds. Don't borrow other people's equipment. Clean your shoes and clothes if you have contact with other people's birds. If you purchase birds, or if you bring your own birds home after a show or swap meet, keep those birds isolated from your regular flock for at least 2 weeks, while watching for any signs of illness in the quarantined birds. Tend to your home flock before taking care of the new or returning birds.

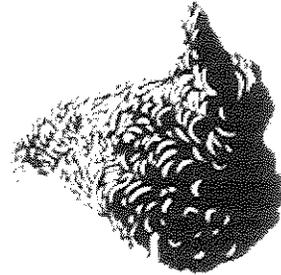
Common-sense principles are very important to help prevent the spread of this disease as well as other poultry diseases, and should always be followed. The potential for a serious AI problem just emphasizes the importance of biosecurity.

Again, it's important to note that one cannot be infected with AI by eating cooked poultry products or eggs.

For more information, visit the websites of the [WHO](#) and the [CDC](#).

Eggs ?

A typical hen will start to lay eggs at about 6 months of age. The eggs will start out small, then get increasingly larger. During the first year of laying, the hen (if she is a good egg producer) will lay one egg, almost every day. The birds will then go through a "molt" in the late fall/ winter months and stop laying. Then they will start again in the early spring. You can encourage egg laying through the colder months by keeping a light on, inside the chicken coop. As the birds get older, they will start to lay fewer and fewer eggs. I had a chicken that was at least 5 years old, and she would give me 1 or 2 really big eggs a week.



life span

Well I guess that depends on who you talk to--Most farmers who are in the egg producing business will say 2 years. Those who are in the meat producing business will say 6 months--Those who keep birds as pets (with names) or who are not interested in maximum production of eggs, will find that chickens can live up to 8 or 10 years. It is your choice whether you want to keep a bird that long, and if not, there are local farmers willing to take in older birds (or there is always the "stew pot").

Space

Poultry Coops can fit into just about any size backyard. For 4 hens, a 3'x4' Coop plus a "run" (a place for them to scratch around) that is roughly 3'x8' is more than adequate. Most commercial birds are placed in cages (6-8 to a cage) where they can not turn around. You, on the other hand, will have very happy birds. "Chicken Tractors" are another option. They are portable coops that can be moved over the yard or garden plots, to give birds fresh bugs and greens--this also is a great way to mow the lawn!

Garden

Chicken manure is high in nitrogen, so it is considered "hot". It will need to be composted before putting it directly onto your garden. once it has broken down, it then becomes perfect food for the garden.

A *Polypnemus* moth rests on the outside of the coop. Good thing! If it were on the inside, it would make a tasty snack for one of the hens.



Eat

They will eat just about anything! There are commercial poultry foods available at local feed stores, or you can make your own mix. People feed chickens corn, oats, wheat, rye, soy, fresh greens from the garden (weeds as well), table scraps (they love spaghetti!), worms and other bugs. The local grocery stores and markets often have vegetable scraps available. Variety is the key to good health, just like us!

winter

They can live quite happily, through the coldest winter, if they have an insulated coop or a light inside their coop. The smaller the coop, the easier it is for them to keep it warm. Birds can get frostbite. Birds with large combs tend to be more susceptible. Also, some breeds are just hardier than others.

freezing water

Cherrie Nolden has several suggestions:

(I'm sure other people have other good ideas but these are all things we have used successfully)

get a small heated dog dish

use a bird bath heater in a dish

use a tough rubber 2qt feed pan. Stomp the ice out twice a day or put the bird bath heater in it

make your own small heater base with some heat tape and an old pot

wrap heating tape around the lid of a metal water font

shine a heat lamp on the water container

The key to safe chickens is a sturdy, impenetrable coop. Raccoons should be more of a concern, they are such clever, determined critters. .Make sure the structure is secure (enclosed top, fencing buried below ground under the sides, secure latches on doors or other entryways), keep all birds locked in at night, letting them out into the run or "tractor" only during the day. My cats have always been interested in the birds, but with a healthy respect for them--Dogs will chase the birds, if they are left to roam. If you let your birds out, please keep them under supervision at all times.

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TRENDS & INNOVATIONS

Material folds itself into shapes

Harvard and MIT scientists have developed a material that folds itself into origami-like shapes. The material is a sheet of triangular tiles, each embedded with motorized switches and flexible electronics. With funding from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the scientists also made "stickers" laced with circuitry that prompted the material to fold. While the material formed a plane and a boat, it is a first step toward making everyday objects programmable.

Organ substitute may aid diabetics

Implants containing insulin-producing cells could be used as a replacement for the pancreas to treat type 1 diabetes. San Diego startup ViaCyte designed the implant using insulin-producing cells derived from embryonic stem cells. In type 1 diabetes, the immune system attacks insulin-producing cells of the pancreas, forcing patients to rely on injections of insulin. The implant was shown to be effective in treating mice. ViaCyte will next test it on larger animals that have more complex immune systems.

■ **Adding a yeast gene** to tomatoes can increase their shelf life by up to a week, Purdue Univ. researchers have found. The gene increases production of a compound that slows aging and decay. Ripe tomatoes with the gene lasted about eight days longer before showing signs of shriveling. Decay and rot symptoms associated with fungi were delayed by about three days.

■ **Manure generates** higher economic returns than chemical fertilizers like anhydrous ammonia, according to an agricultural economist at Texas A&M Univ. While crop yields don't differ, using animal waste as fertilizer cuts down on waste management costs and does not produce soil acidification associated with chemical fertilizers.

■ **The world's largest telescope**, under construction in the Antarctic, won't be used to study the stars, but the Earth's depths. The IceCube telescope consists of thousands of digital optical modules and sensors. The telescope will be inserted into melted ice near the South Pole. Scientists will be looking to detect neutrinos that can help them better understand the origins of cosmic rays and other scientific mysteries, such as dark matter.



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Neighbors' two chickens ruffle feathers in town

By Mike Anton
Los Angeles Times

BISHOP, Calif. — Two redheads got the feathers flying. Lucy and Goose were just tending to their business of clucking, laying eggs and pecking up bugs in Laura Smith's backyard.

"They're like vacuum cleaners," Smith said. "There isn't a bug or a spider out here."

But not everyone was enamored of the industrious exterminators. A neighbor of Smith's in the J Diamond mobile home park complained to city officials, pointing to a 1966 ordinance that prohibits "any poultry or animal yard" within 100 feet of a residence. Smith replied that the ordinance applied to commercial chicken yards, not pets.

"I know some people will say, 'This is just about a few silly chickens,'" Smith said. "But there's a lot more to it. It's about our basic freedoms. It's about being told what you can and cannot do. ... We're a rural community. ... What's the big deal about having a couple of chickens in Bishop?"

The big deal is that Smith is a City Council member. Her refusal to get rid of Lucy and Goose based on her interpretation of the law struck some as an abuse of power. Others, mostly chicken owners who worried that their coops' days might be numbered, backed Smith.

In January, the City Council took up the issue. At a nearby public hearing, the boss of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, which all but colonized Bishop and the

Owens Valley to siphon its water, was explaining the agency's plans for the area.

Nevertheless, chickens drew one of the biggest City Council audiences in memory.

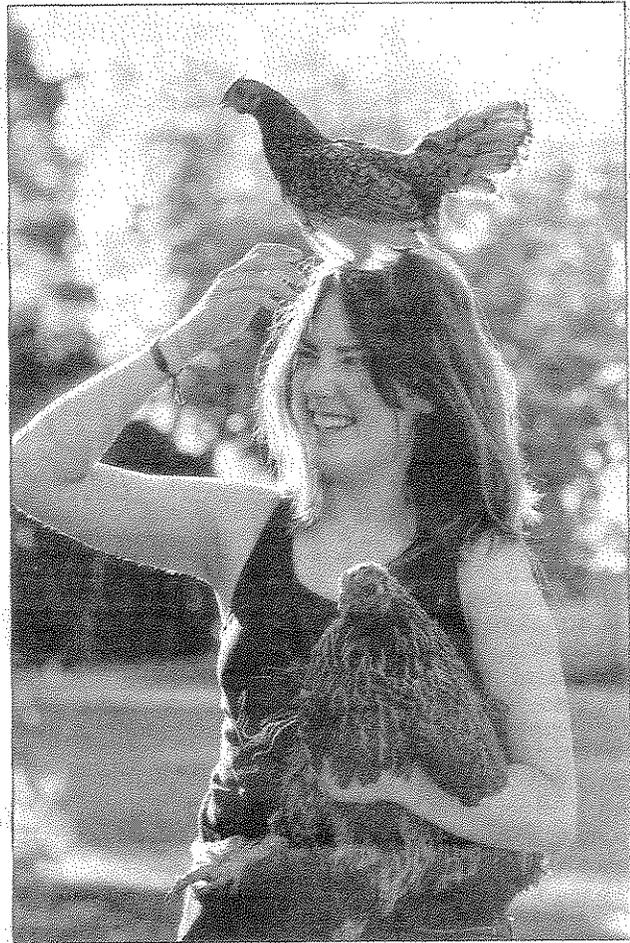
Bishop's birds have stirred an emotional debate that goes beyond domesticated poultry. It's caused this Eastern Sierra town of 3,600 to examine its identity: Is Bishop city or country? It's pitted natives against transplants derided as "flatlanders," and uncorked resentments rooted in the long-ago water grab.

"It caught me off-guard," said Mayor Jeff Griffiths, who recused himself from the matter because of a conflict of interest: His son once kept chickens for a 4-H project. "I can't go to the grocery store without people stopping me to ask about chickens. I ran an ultra-marathon and when I passed the aid stations, people asked: 'How's the chicken issue going?'"

No one knows how many chickens there are in Bishop. A century ago, the Owens Valley was fat with poultry and egg farms, and Bishop was the hub of the industry. Merchant G.H. Dusenbery built an egg ranch and packaging plant three miles west of town where 3,000 hens produced an average of 1,650 eggs a day.

"It's a foregone conclusion that as Owens Valley's new development progresses a host of hens will be sitting on top of the world and the eggs will be rolling everywhere," a 1928 story in the Los Angeles Times predicted.

Today, Bishop is a para-



Los Angeles Times photo by Gary Friedman

ALLISON HALLENBECK, 18, with "Peaches" on her head as she holds "Tut" in front of her Bishop, Calif., home June 24. The town of 3,600 residents is embroiled in an uproar over whether a 1966 ordinance forbids people from keeping chickens in their yards.

dox, both city and country. To the west, the Sierra looms like a cathedral. To the east, the Owens River runs thick through the dry landscape like an artery pumping blood through dead tissue.

Within Bishop's 2-square-mile city limits, it's a different story. Main Street is traffic-choked and homes in cozy neighborhoods sit on standard 50-by-100-foot urban lots. With only 2 percent of Inyo County privately owned — most of the rest is federal land — attitudes toward personal space are deeply ingrained.

"There are people who'd like to go back to the days when we had no sidewalks or gutters and no fences and you could see your neigh-

bor," said Frank Crom, 70, a former mayor and council member and a vocal opponent of chickens. "But times change. ... We're so jammed in together."

Generalizations are tricky, but the anti-chicker people tend to be older folk and natives concerned about noise, disease and property values.

As for the other side — younger people with children, or those who moved to Bishop looking for a fair echo of Thoreau's Walden — find the daily offering of fresh eggs to be transcendental — and delicious.

"A lot of people like myself feel we're a rural community," said Pete Watercott. "It's what I love about Bishop."