

Pioneer poohbah

Wednesday's hearing on the proposed glorious Pioneer Monument to span the scenic stretch of Interstate 80 next to the Greenwood (Greenwood?) interchange may just prove that Nebraska's pipe dream of becoming the Tourist Capital of the Midwest may soon be a reality.

Some people, enslaved by a blind ignorance, would not have this be the case however. Those arguing against the spectacular tribute to Nebraska ingenuity at the hearing were definitely of this ilk.

The major argument brought forth by those poohbahed pariahs of pessimism was that the monument was being proposed mainly for "commercial exploitation" rather than to honor Nebraska's pioneer heritage. Stuff and nonsense. Simply because all the land has been, quite coincidentally, bought by commercial developers is no reason to suggest that Mammon has his greedy claws in the project.

And even if he did, isn't it better to ask travelers, most of whom Nebraska will never see again, to pay their share to honor our pioneers, rather than carry the entire burden ourselves? Who would you rather fleece,

foreigners or friends? Who wouldn't be willing to pay 50 cents or \$1 for a spectacular elevator ride? And the proposed amusement park could only make it more apparent—there is no place to laugh like Nebraska.

The designers of the monument, who will control it for 30 years, certainly couldn't have anything but honoring pioneers in mind, could they? How much loot could a monument make in 30 years?

The charge that the monument is somehow "inappropriate" for honoring pioneers is equally ridiculous. What could be more appropriate than four plastic statues balanced upon a cross beam, supported by two elevators?

Those who say "the state speaks for itself" don't realize that's exactly what the state would be doing with the structure—a crass, assuming monument for a crass, assuming state.

It's almost laughable that some architecture students are claiming the giant rectangle would display the "bulldozer mentality of Nebraska architecture." Balderdash! Anyone who could so easily condemn Nebraska architecture has clearly never viewed the famous Pizza Hut or the State Fairgrounds Hog Barn. These self-declared architectural whiz kids don't even realize that for the monument to become a "super-billboard,"

the designer would have to add at least three rows of neon lights to the design.

Arguments for the project seem to make damn-site more sense. That the monument would be a "painless education" for children traveling with parents there can be little doubt. It should be a whole lot more interesting than a book on the Wonders of Nebraska, and a dandy place to relieve oneself as well.

The stature of Nebraska could only be heightened by such a structure. Imagine what they'll say in Times Square when they hear that Nebraska's building a 388-foot wide 240-foot tall monument. They'll have to scrape their jaws off the linoleum when they recover from the shocking realization that Nebraska's farmers can do more than drive tractors.

Last but not least, there is no way of telling where this idea may stop. With any luck, this may be greatly successful. This would pave the way for more monuments over major highways. With any luck, we could raise the funds for three more and make a matching set with "South", "East", and "North".

Or even better, branching out from the "super-billboard" theory, the next one could say "Eat at Joes" and the next "Geritol: More Iron Than a Pound of Calf's Liver." Imagine the possibilities.

Jim Gray

Sex roles—you can't keep a good myth down

You can't keep a good myth down, or at least that's what was running through my head when I read about the incident at Colorado's Eisenhower Tunnel. When Janet Bonnema, a woman engineer, marched into the tunnel to her new job all the male miners marched out in protest.

Some of the comments made were genuine classics. "I don't even like to see a woman go into a tourist mine," and "Even if a woman stockholder went into a mine, miners have been pulled out until the next morning." But the best dig of all, so to speak, came from the deputy commissioner of Colorado mines when he stated, "After all, when a woman goes underground, conditions are dangerous for the next six weeks."

Superstitions are not peculiar to Colorado miners, nor are myths about women. I had an encounter with the All-American, sweetness and light, little old lady, complete with black umbrella, hat pins and wire rim glasses, just the other day. It was a pretty myth-shattering experience.

I had noticed her as she was cautiously making her way up the steps to the Nebraska Union. She was obviously intent upon something in the briefcase she was carrying, so I opened the door for her as she passed me. Without breaking stride she murmured, "thank you, young man," and entered the Union. I must have seemed surprised for she looked up as I followed her in.

michele
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"Oh, how silly of me. I've grown so accustomed to all these young men who appear to think any female, particularly one my age, suddenly becomes helpless when she approaches any door, that I've given up protesting. Naturally, I don't resent consideration, I just resent being thought helpless. You're the first female to open a door for me in well-nigh two weeks. How interesting," and she started scribbling in a little notebook she had taken from her briefcase.

I probably looked a little confused, but I smiled at her and started on my way when she looked up from her notes and said, "I came to listen to that speaker from NOW, you know, the women's organization. Which room will she be in?"

I paused. "You're pretty early. She isn't supposed to speak until this afternoon."

"Well, then I guess I can just busy myself with keeping score right down here for awhile."

"Keeping score?" I repeated.



"Oh, yes," she smiled slyly. "It's great fun. You see, you read in all the papers about how liberated all the young people are these days. Well, I've been taking my own kind of survey the last few months trying to sort the myths from the facts, the chicks from the broads, in a manner of speaking. At first I started with the trivial things—opening doors, initiating conversations. Eventually I worked my way up to overhearing entire conversations. You know what I've discovered?"

"I bet I can guess, but go ahead."

"It really seems as if there isn't much thinking at all going on in many people's heads, that is," she qualified, "thinking about sexual roles; except for very traditional ones. Some women simply can't imagine themselves as anyone other than someone's sister, someone's girlfriend, or someone's wife."

"A lot of other women who consider themselves 'liberated' really do so only figuratively—they'd never go so far as to be economically independent, or

pursue a professional career that would be as important to them as the one their male counterparts make a lifetime pursuit of.

"And, the men, too many of them are looking for women who aren't dumb, but still aren't too bright, who are supportive, but not assertive, who are the most part passive, therefore not too competitive. It's really sad. Too many people are playing the same old games they were playing back in my day, 50 years ago. So much wasted potential!"

"There are women miners in Colorado," I interjected somewhat sloppily, trying to brighten her thoughts a little.

"Yes," she smiled ruefully. "But how many male child care workers are there, or nurses, or teachers or secretaries? How many would even like to be and most importantly why or why not?"

She snorted a little in disgust as she left me. I noticed someone opened the door for her as she went out.