

OPINION PACKAGES

Our VIEW

Hotel Lincoln Benefits to downtown outweigh inconveniences

The city of Lincoln has a suite deal on the table.

After years of debating and negotiating with several prospective developers — including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln — Mayor Mike Johanns announced last Thursday that Block 35 may soon be transformed from a 250-space parking lot to a 250-room Embassy Suites Hotel.

The plan, which must be approved by the City Council before being finalized, would provide a much-needed shot in the arm for downtown Lincoln. Businesses, the university and the community could benefit from replacing the lot between 10th and 11th streets and P and Q streets with a bustling, upscale hotel.

And while some decry the removal of 250 precious parking spaces while the site is under construction, the long-term benefits easily outweigh the short-term inconvenience.

The simple fact of the matter is the development would add more than just an economic boost by bringing in convention-goer dollars. The hotel would enrich the area, revitalizing what is close to a commercial dead zone between the Lied Center for the Performing Arts and the Lincoln Journal Star.

Considerations in constructing the hotel include an attractive design, possibly providing a first-floor marketplace with shops and restaurants and adding much-needed meeting space for conventions.

And for all those commuters out there, the plan would most likely include an underground garage to replace the parking spaces the hotel would consume.

This, of course, is just speculation for now. Even if the City Council had approved the plans for the structure yesterday, construction on the hotel may not even begin until 1998 — a year later than its original projected starting date.

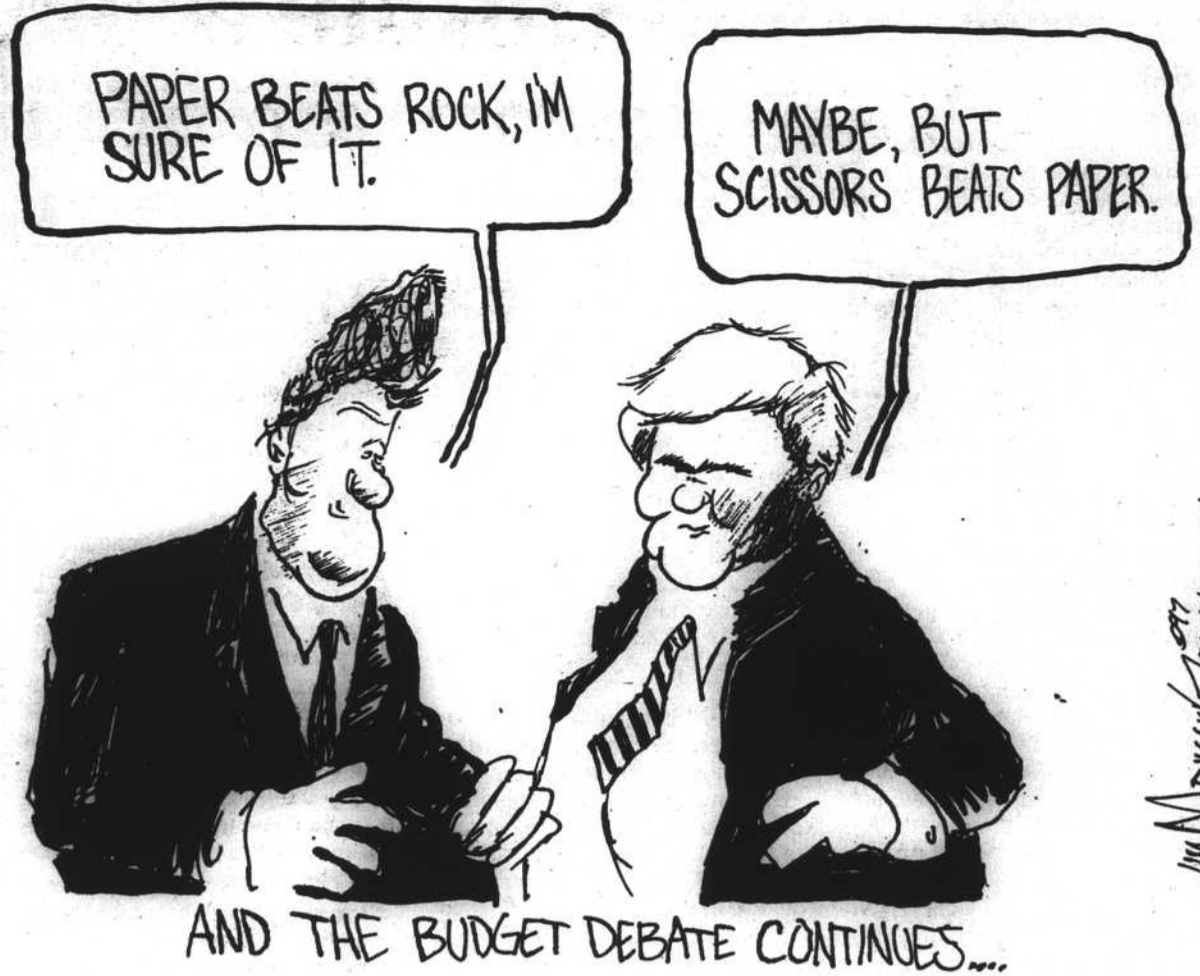
Between now and then, the need for such a structure could increase a hundred-fold. As many businesses slowly inch their way toward the edges of town, downtown Lincoln may lose more and more customers, eventually reaching the levels of destitution and economic ruin other, larger cities' downtown areas have fallen to.

Unlikely, but still possible. A new hotel would give visitors a chance to stay close to many of the things that make Lincoln special. Imagine the reaction of visitors when they learn they will be close to two major performance centers, more than half the city's movie theaters, a half-dozen of the city's finest restaurants and dozens of shops, art galleries, businesses and offices and the state's largest university.

The Embassy Suites deal offers a bright scenario for all the parties involved. It would be difficult to find an agreement that would benefit the city and the university in such equal ways in such a short time.

And that should be worth losing a parking space for a few months.

Mehsling's VIEW



DN LETTERS

The Humanity

I am writing in response to Brad Pardee's "Making a Mountain," (DN, Friday) in which Mr. Pardee accuses Mr. Aguirre of responding in an inappropriate manner to a statement in the column "Have book, will read" by J.J. Harder (DN, Feb. 12).

I wish to state that I am in total agreement with Mr. Aguirre's premise that the article contained a racial slur and age-ist remark, and that both were totally unnecessary.

Mr. Pardee asks what people who enter the country illegally should be called. An accurate term is "undocumented worker." Pardee states that "most of us have a problem with people who break the law."

Amazingly enough, "most of us" do not have a problem with the economic benefit that undocumented workers provide this country. And, no one refuses the over \$29 billion undocumented Mexican immigrants alone pay in taxes, which is far less than they receive in social benefits.

I will not discuss here the subject of why people from other countries enter the United States, the conditions and hardships they endure in doing so and the advantage others take of them.

Information on these facts can easily be found for those who wish to find them. Must we constantly separate and blame those who have had different life experiences from our own? Are they not within our common experience of humanity and deserve to be respected and treated as such?

If we must discuss what is "legal" and "illegal" in this situation, let's remember St. Teresa's words, "Hate the sin, not the sinner."

Even if one believes that undocumented border crossing is unjustified, the denial of education to undocumented children and xenophobic acts against them and their parents is not justified. Mr. Pardee strongly distinguishes "legal" and "illegal" immigration. Unless he is Native American, the distinction seems rather ironic.

Weston Crawford
Libraries



Necessarily So

Jessica Kennedy's column "24-7-365" (DN, Monday) on a parent's choice between career or child care shows her great concern for children's welfare, and for that I commend her. But it must be noted that working is not just a choice, but a necessity for most parents.

As it has been widely publicized lately, it takes two paychecks to handle the household expenses that used to be covered by one. A "home office" is a luxury that few parents needing steady pay and health insurance can afford, even if their talents could be utilized by such.

The suggestion that single parents could choose "one-on-one" care for a child is unfortunately far-fetched. Infant care for my daughter at the university's child-care facility was over \$75 a week and I can't even begin to think what a nanny would have cost.

What we do need are more and better child-care facilities, more child-care subsidies for the working poor, workplaces with flexible and family-friendly policies and more men sharing the work of raising children.

I do absolutely agree with Ms. Kennedy that children need lots of attention, caring and creative and intellectual stimulation, especially

from their parents and/or extended family. But it is possible to raise healthy, well-adjusted children and also work full time.

Victoria Kovar
Lincoln

Not Big Brother

Kevin Gregorius' letter in Tuesday's DN, "1984 in '97," expressing his opposition to allowing easier implementation of the death penalty for cop killers should not be allowed to go without challenge.

Gregorius writes that this is another symbol of "the stranglehold of an ever growing police state upon our democratic society." What he fails to mention is that the LB in LB422 and LB744 stands for legislative bill. This means that these bills are being proposed by our democratic society, not being imposed upon it.

The men and women who have sworn to protect our society deserve our respect, not our scorn. Our law enforcement officers have volunteered their lives toward protecting ours. The killing of a cop is an affront to all we stand for as a society, and thus we have decided it should be met with the ultimate penalty.

Gregorius argues that these bills value a cop's life more highly than others. While he says this is bad, I believe that it is the only way of showing our disgust at the killing of a person who is trying to protect society. Those who kill cops strike out against our entire society and deserve to be met with in the harshest way possible.

Gregorius argues that passage of these bills will lead to a police state. I argue that failing to pass these bills is merely another step on our trip to a lawless, anarchical society.

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