

OPINION PACKETS

Our VIEW

City needs bike lanes

Law-abiding citizens fear for their safety

Every day, thousands of bicyclists are faced with a troublesome choice: Ride in the streets and risk serious injury at the hands of careless drivers, or ride on the sidewalk and risk a citation from the Lincoln Police Department.

This dilemma is the result of a Lincoln ordinance that prohibits bicycles, skateboards and in-line skates on sidewalks in and around the downtown area. This no-wheel zone extends from Ninth to 16th streets and K to R streets, covering almost the entire area adjacent to the south side of City Campus. And if bicyclists are caught in violation of the ordinance, a \$26 fine is the usual result.

This ordinance is not new – it was passed in 1954 – but in the last few weeks, the LPD has stepped up enforcement of it at the request of downtown businesses.

And bicyclists – at least the ones who don't have an extra \$26 to spend – are stuck in the streets.

If the streets were as safe as the law intended, being street-bound wouldn't be a problem. But sometimes, the law isn't based in reality. In reality, Lincoln's streets are rife with motorists who make sharp turns, change lanes without looking, speed through yellow lights and honk maniacally at anyone who dares travel at a slower speed than them.

Dealing with such motorists is a life-endangering experience even when surrounded by a ton or so of steel. Imagine facing such a scene on a 20-pound aluminum frame.

Nearly everyone who rides his or her bike to and from class on a daily basis has a horror story or two regarding downtown traffic, especially if night classes are involved. And even the most careful drivers can occasionally miss the view of a bicyclist until it's too late.

Keeping bicyclists off the sidewalks is a move meant to protect pedestrians, and it is an understandable one. But now its time for the city of Lincoln to protect bicyclists, and it should do so by creating bike lanes on all downtown streets.

These lanes would give bicyclists a chance to ride safely, stay out of the way of overzealous motorists and keep off the sidewalks, all at the same time. By nature, most bicyclists don't want to break any laws; but until bike lanes are made available, bicyclists have to fight an urge to survive and avoid injury in order to remain law-abiding citizens.

Drivers won't change, the bikes-on-sidewalks ordinance probably won't change and the result of a motorist-bicyclist collision definitely won't change; so maybe it's time for Lincoln's streets to change.

If our lawmakers truly want to protect every citizen, it's the least they could do.

Haney's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Alternatives

Unfortunately, ours is a society that would rather restrict things from individuals or not talk about them than conduct life in an open, candid and understanding manner. The recent policy of alcohol on campus, specifically in the dormitory dwellings, is one of such restriction over responsibility. Unfortunately, there are many members of our society whose irresponsibility spoils the freedoms professed to all. Unfortunately, much of this irresponsible behavior is advertised as a 'cool' or 'status quo' personality.

If I were chancellor, my first order of business would be to promote responsible and enjoyable gatherings. In fact, I not only would only allow alcohol to be consumed on campus, but promote student gatherings in campus buildings and allow the students some responsible opportunities, such as throwing parties with music and drinking and without a time limit. These gatherings bring all the students together, regardless of their fields of study and social groups. It is much more fun, much easier to meet people and much safer than the "O-Street drunkest" that occurs every weekend.

I think parties like this could work here, but it would take a few opportunities to prove the example that not all university students are irresponsible, over-drinking, aggressive, short-tempered idiots. But until that happens, the rules the university has made, however restrictive and ridiculous, (attend alcohol classes after the second offense?) its rules must be obliged.

Graham Johnson
Graduate student
German

Art?

I will be graduating in December, so maybe it's too late for me, but I would like to get something off my chest that I believe will help the stu-



AARON STECKELBERG/DN

dents and the campus. For four years, I have seen what I believe to be wasteful spending by the university. Much of this spent on the so-called artwork throughout the campus. The most recent being that Torn Notebook, which to me is just an eyesore.

I have visited other university campuses and have seen the sculptures that they have. Almost all of them have some figure that seems to bring all the students together, much like our former Broyhill Fountain. I especially like the large sculptures of the school mascot and I believe that we as students, the ones who pay for these pieces of art, need to join together and vote on the next art project. I would suggest a large Herbie Husker – the old one, not the new one with the face of Bill Byrne – or perhaps a statue of Bob Devaney. These are symbols that every UNL student can relate to, not just the athletes or art students. No matter what the next piece of art on campus should be, I believe we, the students, should have some say as to where or on what our

money is being spent.

Trevor McFarland
Senior
Agriculture

Byrne would cry too

Steve's absolutely right. When you get back to the basics, the football team exists primarily for the students, the families, and the alumni. Of course, everyone in the general public loves Husker football. Yeah, students can get a little out of hand once in a while, we all did and don't deny it! Maybe even Byrne. ... But even he would have cried if someone took his seats away. Keep the student section in a priority spot where it belongs.

Mike Johnson '93
UNL alumnus

Quick fix?

It's too easy. The article "From this day forward" (DN, Monday) struck me because I myself am a divorcee. Churchill discusses the laws that exist in Louisiana. I don't think it's too easy to get divorced in today's society.

My divorce took less time for me than my wedding did. I went to a lawyer and discussed what actions needed to be taken (this took about 20 minutes) and then went to court (this took about 10 minutes). The process took roughly 20 minutes, which was far less than my wedding itself. People of my generation usually hunt for the quick fix and society has let divorce become a quick fix.

Divorce should not be taken lightly, and more requirements for divorce may be a good idea, but instead of looking at correcting or improving the end process (divorce), look more closely at the beginning process (marriage).

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