

OPINION PACES

Our VIEW

Archway arguments

Plans for structure cemented in absurdity

The Gateway to the West it's not. Ever since former Gov. Frank Morrison announced his intentions to build a \$40 million archway over Interstate 80 near Kearney, government agencies, architectural firms and Nebraska citizens alike have done little but scoff at the idea. And with what seems to be good reason.

The Great Platte River Road Archway, as it is officially called, will be a 320-foot long span of steel, limestone and wood over one of the nation's longest stretches of pavement. Proponents of the archway — most of whom are Morrison's friends — all think the 14-story structure would beautify a rather desolate and just plain boring segment of the state.

To Morrison's credit, some positive sentiments have filtered in from commuters and motorists who regularly travel the flat expanse of concrete known as Interstate 80. Gaudy or not, the archway would leave something for drivers to look forward to.

And to quell any hot-under-the-collar taxpayers, Morrison has been willing to raise the money for the project with the help of a foundation headed by himself. Morrison plans to raise \$35 million for the project, completing it by July 4, 1999.

Just in time for one of the biggest money-making holidays of the year, of course.

But is a poor man's version of the St. Louis Gateway Arch, anchored by sculptures of an American Indian and a cowboy-like trailblazer, really what central Nebraska needs to spice things up? There are other elements to consider when deciding on a beautification project of this size, however.

The monument will be in the center of what is affectionately known as "Tornado Alley," a section of the state notorious for its hazardous weather conditions year-round. Imagine a 100-foot segment of steel and stone crashing down on the interstate. So much for beautification then.

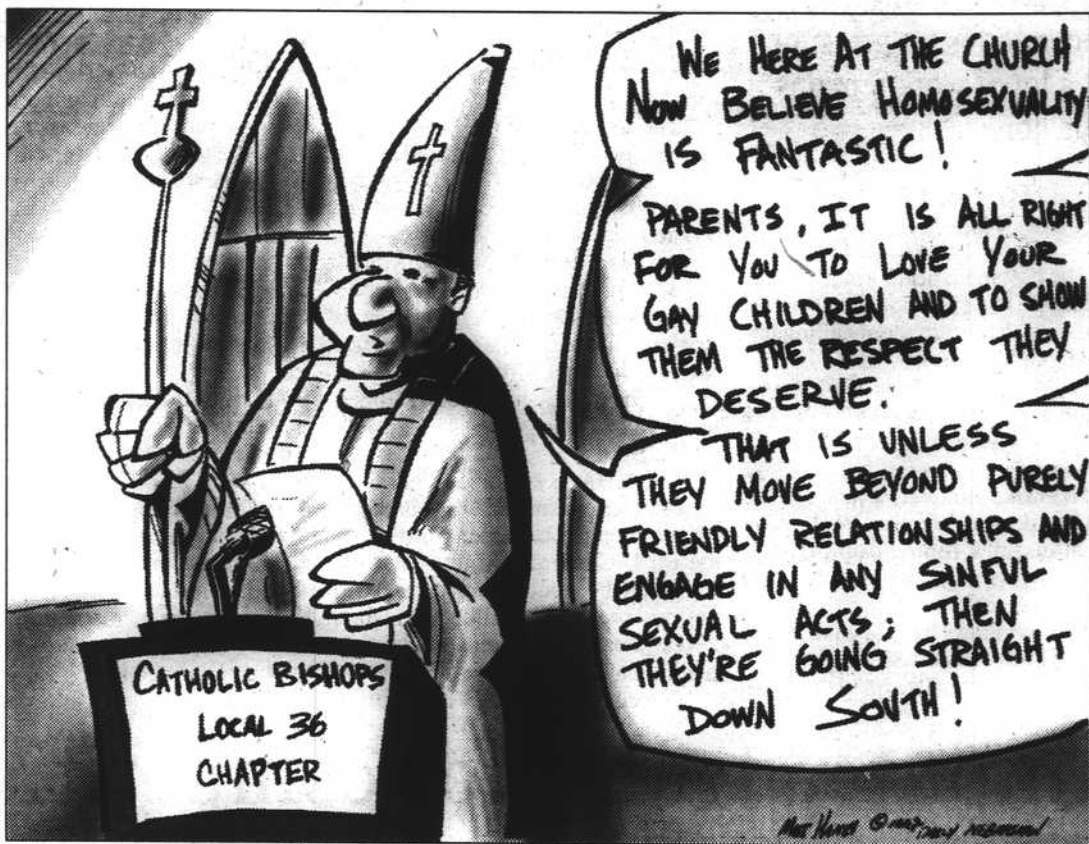
Also, when it snows in the pancake-flat Platte Valley, drifts tend to appear against anything taller than 3 feet high. What would drifts be like against a structure standing more than 140 feet high?

Then there's the time and money that will be sunk into the project. Although no state money will be used for the construction or maintenance of the structure, structures for higher learning are crumbling left and right on this very campus. If Morrison really wants to help the state, he should put up the money to keep Richards Hall from sinking into the ground.

And after all the fighting over air rights and groundbreaking, after the arch is cemented into place two years from now, how long will it stand? Surely not as long as any sort of solid, inner-city community improvement project would.

Even though this state is small, it has its share of problems. And no amount of concrete and steel will fix them.

Haney's VIEW



Mum's the problem

Protecting Chelsea's privacy infringes upon others



KAY PRAUNER is a senior news-editorial major, the assistant copy desk chief and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

“(Oxford) should have been able to comment on Chelsea's arrival for the simple fact that she is — like it or not — a public figure.”

This week a student columnist was fired for using a profanity in one of his expositions.

His editor's decision to fire him was lauded by the university, and may have even set precedence for media actions across the nation.

But when Jesse Oxford of the Stanford Daily mentioned the “C-word,” that is, Chelsea Clinton and her debut on Stanford University's campus, he meant no harm. He merely alluded to the fact that her privacy was equally as important as the privacy of other university students when he mentioned two gripes about the Daily's rather opaque “no-Chelsea” policy: That the rule meant journalists “don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue” (or, in other words, don't do their jobs), and that both the university and the White House made such an outlandish display of Chelsea's arrival — complete with ma, pa and hundreds of security officials donning dark glasses and leering suspiciously at every student in sight — that the efforts to ensure her privacy had kept other students from their own privacy. Oxford's column included nothing offensive, nothing radical, nothing harmful, nothing libelous, nothing unfair.

Even so, Editor in Chief Carolyn

Sleeth said Oxford was in strict violation of her adamantly enforced “no-Chelsea” rule, and thus violated his duties as a weekly columnist.

Beneath this rule, Chelsea's name could be mentioned *only* if she were involved in what was deemed a “newsworthy event.” And, according to Sleeth, Chelsea's arrival did not fall under the “newsworthiness” category. So when Oxford refused to submit a rewrite, he was fired.

So how far, exactly, must this policy span? In an interview with ABC News, Oxford said, “The blanket policy that we will not cover (Chelsea) springs from a good motive, but this has been taken to a ... degree where you can't mention her name.”

Certainly, Oxford blatantly disregarded his editor's instructions; but he should have been able to comment on Chelsea's arrival for the simple fact that she is — like it or not — a public figure.

The entourage that surrounded Chelsea on moving-in day clearly pointed to her celebrity status, and this was exactly Oxford's point. No other Stanford student arrived with such flamboyance; no other student pulled up with a platoon of body guards.

Of course Bill and Hillary want their daughter to have as “normal” a college experience as any other young adult. And I'm sure the only child of the most powerful man in

the world wants nothing more than to have some shred of normalcy in her life. Having grown up the governor's daughter, Chelsea has never been out of the spotlight; yet this familiarity would never protect her from the glare. For even Chelsea's deliberation about which university to attend made the evening news for months.

But what average Stanford student could ignore the fact that a Secret Service agent sits in on Chelsea's Composition 101, or that men in dark glasses perpetually sit within earshot as she's having dinner with friends in the cafeteria?

Albeit through no fault of her own, when Chelsea arrived, she *did* disrupt the standard student's activities on Stanford's campus.

And similarly, through no fault of her own, Chelsea *is* a public figure, a status that under any circumstance should permit the media to cover her actions — so long as coverage of public figures remains one of the foremost tenets of the First Amendment.

As of right now, the media's privilege to cover public figures remains; and beneath this privilege, Jesse Oxford should have been allowed to remain as well.

And as for the Stanford Daily, protect Chelsea's privacy, please, but don't allow her presence to pervade the rights of other students or staff — for such actions will detract from their own “normal” university experiences.

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