

OPINION PACES

Our VIEW

Please plow

Idle cleanup crews leave commuters cold

Tuesday night, several inches of snow blanketed the city of Lincoln while its residents slept.

Apparently, the city's snowplow and sand truck operators were asleep, as well.

If this were any other city, even a city as close as Omaha, snowplows and sand trucks would have been working around the clock the minute the first flake hit the street early in the evening. Sand already would have covered many of the arterial roads anyway, since freezing rain had been falling from the early morning into the late afternoon.

If this were any other city, the streets would have been clear and relatively clean, allowing for smooth and practically trouble-free driving around most businesses and many residential areas.

If this were any other city, plows would not have sat idle through the night as winter's old ivory troublemaker piled into drifts up to knee height.

But this is Lincoln.

The sight of an orange truck sanding the street or a plow clearing an intersection is new to its residents. To see a city worker plowing a street before 9 a.m. is a rarity.

Lincoln officials seem to think this city has a traffic base large enough to simply mash down and melt the white terror into a passable form, in effect clearing the streets so plows don't have to.

Guess what: It doesn't.

What happens is the meager number of cars that are capable of skimming over the barely passable roads mash the snow down enough to create a rather thick layer of slick, icy road scum.

At 4 a.m., that's OK, since a driver's likelihood of slamming into another car are slim to none. But chaos ensues when the rest of Lincoln's drivers then attempt a mad dash over the ice cap, which obscures the white lines dividing the lanes, crosswalks and turn lanes.

The citizens of this fair city are left to fend for themselves in traffic, and quite frankly, Lincoln drivers aren't the most courteous people. A 10-minute drive easily turns into a half hour during nights like this last one.

Since it's now too late to do anything about this minor blizzard, Lincoln officials should give serious thought to calling out the trucks a little earlier next time.

And if the trucks were out and mysteriously invisible at 4 a.m. Tuesday, maybe some tax dollars should go into new equipment and a class training these people how to clear the streets a tad better.

Maybe then Lincoln residents wouldn't feel like they've been left out in the cold.

Haney's VIEW



DN LETTERS

Cliff is wrong ...

I'm writing this letter in response to Cliff Hicks' column (Seeing is believing, Tuesday.) It would be nice if you would get the facts right before writing an article. The surveillance law has only been passed by one chamber of the government and the bill has two more hurdles to clear before coming to effect. The law is intended only for capital crimes and not for "spying on the people." Your column also gives the indication that any judge can authorize the surveillance. This is also incorrect because there is only a small group who have the power to approve surveillance measures.

I'm sure that it sounded better in your column to present Germany in the way that you did, but it is wrong and I find it irresponsible to submit an article that is incorrect.

Gregory C. Byelick
junior
graphic design

... abortion arguments

are wrong ...

My mother told me that she had two illegal abortions in the 1950s, before I was born. She also told me that she probably wouldn't have given birth to my sister or myself if she had kept those two earlier pregnancies. Those two aborted births were replaced by two later births.

We see anti-choice activists bawling crocodile tears over aborted fetuses, but who among them cries for the wanted child who would later have existed, but won't, because an abortion was forcibly prevented?

If we deny women the chance to give birth on a timetable that fits their readiness, then the children we impose upon them can force them down less opportune roads in life, and frequently perpetuate cycles of poverty.

Life does NOT begin at conception. Life has been continuous since humanity began. All sperm and eggs are alive and contain genetic codes unique to mankind. Conception is simply a mechanical combining of these, moving the process closer to the birth of a baby than before, which these days can be accomplished in a test tube.

It is BIRTH that counts in this discussion, and not anything that comes beforehand. Trying to save embryos or fetuses makes no more sense than trying to save the quintillion or more sperm and eggs that happen to exist at any given moment, worldwide.

Before Roe vs. Wade, abortions were performed in numbers comparable to today's, so the real issue is do we want them performed safely or under dangerous, clandestine conditions?

Charles Godwin
Davenport, Iowa

... the Huskers are strong ...

I thought it was great that they named Memorial Stadium's field Tom Osborne Field. And appropriate. However, I don't think the naming or renaming should have stopped there. I think they should rename Lincoln to Osborne. What would it hurt? What's the first thing you see when you come off the interstate into Lincoln? Memorial Stadium, three large billboards dedicated to the Huskers and the Big Red Shop. I think we're only kidding ourselves by calling this city Lincoln when clearly it should be renamed to Osborne.

On Husker Saturdays in the fall, Memorial Stadium becomes the third largest city in Nebraska. Why? Obviously it's because we're No. 1. The football players at Nebraska run the ball the best, kick the ball the best, and look at the Cornhuskers record ... that's because of the great hustle.

I'm not really sure who you talk to about changing the name of a city, but I think there are plenty of Husker fans to get the job done. I can't think of another city where you can get as much college football stuff as you can in Lincoln, Neb. I'm wearing my national championship sweatshirt right now, in fact. Why? Because it rules!

Jim Mehsling
UNL alumnus

... the chancellor is too far gone ...

While there have been plenty of candidates and potential candidates for being UNL's Sissy of the Year for 1997, the award this year goes to Chancellor James Moeser, for failing to create a campus community that embraces its queer members.

The chancellor failed to act to deal with the tensions and fears created by the hate chalkings back in September of 1997. He continues to fail to address issues of homophobia and heterosexism on this campus. For example, those responsible for the hate chalkings have never been identified nor punished for their actions.

The chancellor claims he is committed to recruiting the best and the brightest students and faculty for UNL. However, UNL's policies and climate regarding queer students, faculty and staff make it a very chilly environment to work within. Furthermore, UNL's climate with regard to lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and gay persons is well-known, especially when incidents like September's chalkings get national press.

There are issues that queer members of the campus community have, and have had for a long time, that continue to go unaddressed. The upwelling of hatred, as evidenced in the chalkings, was merely one example. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons still are not allowed to take part in ROTC programs. Same-sex couples are still not allowed to reside in married housing on campus. And the university is still dragging its feet on the issue of same-sex partner benefits. Any queer person considering becoming a student or a faculty member at UNL would look at other, more-welcoming options. And many bisexuals, transgendered persons, gay men and lesbians will seek more-welcoming campuses once they discover how UNL treats us.

As long as the chancellor allows UNL's climate to remain unwelcoming towards bisexual, lesbian, gay and transgendered persons, his commitment to recruiting quality faculty and students rings hollow in the queer academic community.

Robert W. Anderson
graduate student
English

... and cloning's the bomb.

Like most of the critics of human cloning, Josh Moening (Two wrongs, Wednesday) fails to make any coherent arguments against the idea. It seems most Americans have had a gut reaction to cloning without really thinking about the science. Yes, a clone would be genetically identical to the parent, but it would have a different life, different experiences and its own soul. He says we are attempting to play God, but we already do that every day with infertile couples. I object to Dr. Seed's plan because (of) the number of offspring lost before a live one is born, but if the technology is developed to clone safely, I would have no problem with it.

Laura Ortmann
junior

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