CURRENT

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Abortion: time for a change?

By MARY GLYNN
Current Staff Writer

Women's groups and political organizations throughout the country have recently attacked Missouri's abortion laws. Since 1967, seventeen states have reformed their abortion statutes; many Missouri citizens feel it is time to repeal the law enacted in this state in 1835 which prohibits termination of pregnancy except in cases where a mother's life is endangered.

Representative DeVerne Calloway, sponsor of House Bill 1470, hopes to reform abortion law. The bill would permit an abortion to be performed by licensed doctors in licensed hospitals in cases of a "non-viable" fetus - one that is no self-sustaining. Neither the patient, nor the doctor of hospital would be required to participate in an abortion against their wishes.

Although abortion has been an important issue since 1967, it is an ancient concept in medical operations. Even early philosophers were involved in abortion debate. Plate favored abortions for women over 40 years of age, and Aristotle felt that socio-economic reasons justified abortion.

In the United States, laws prohibiting abortion were enacted in the 1820's and '30's. At the same time these laws were passed, other laws were presented to Congress that would prohibit all major surgery because it usually resulted in death. This was before the use of sterilized surgical instruments and antibiotics. Abortion laws were enacted largely for the medical safety of women and to help populate the sparsely settled states.

These laws remained largely unchallenged until 1967 when the American Law Institute, a body whose purpose is to enact model legislation in the area of the law, proposed a "model" reform for abortion laws. The **ALI** Abortion Statutes would permit an abortion to be performed: 1) if the pregnancy risked the mental or physical health of the mother, 2) if there was a risk that the child would

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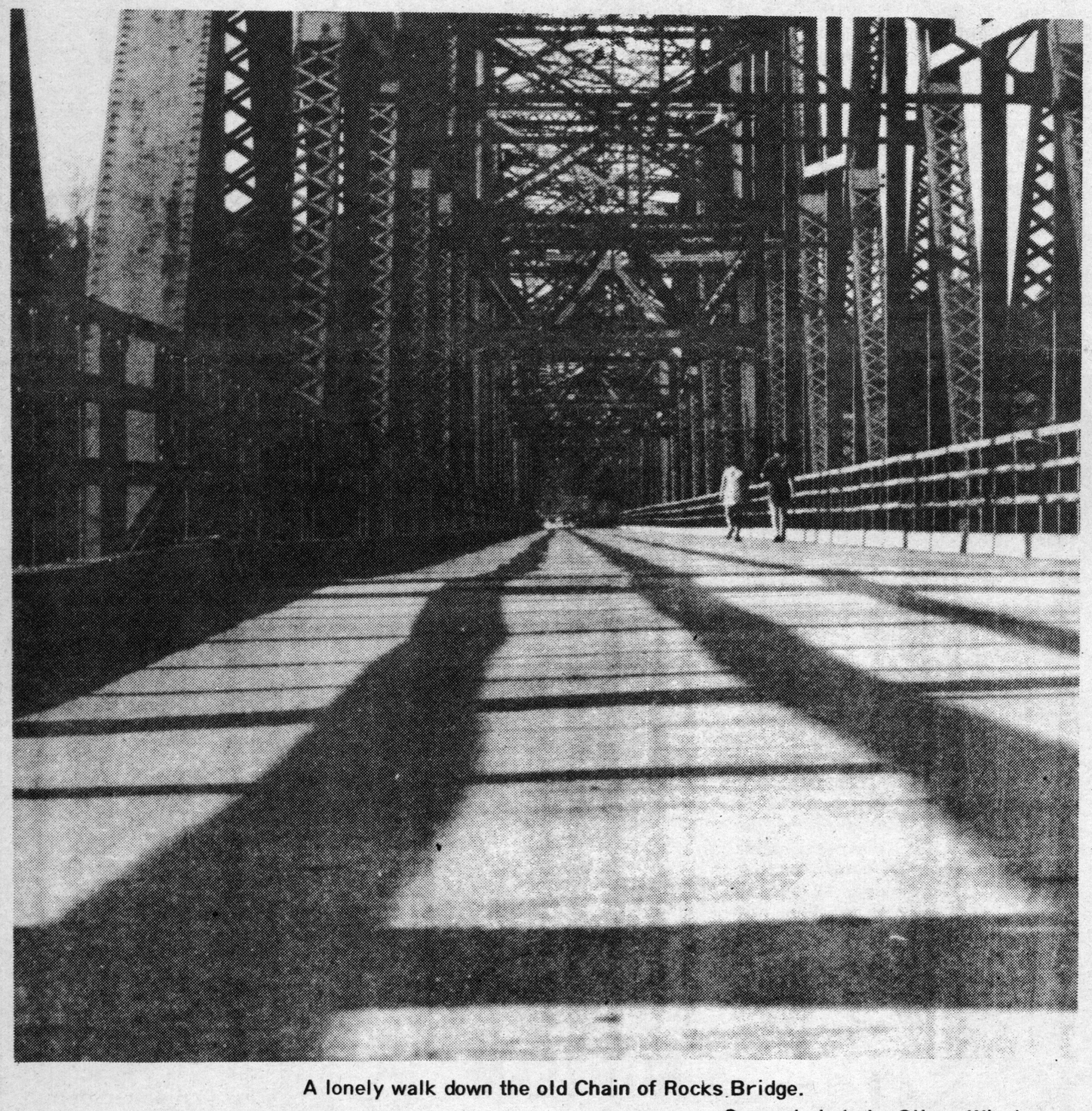

A lonely walk down the old Chain of Rocks Bridge.

Current photo by Oliver Wischmeyer

Danforth blasts "ineffective legislature"

The ineffectiveness of the Missouri Legislature is a tremendous obstacle to progress in this state, according to Missouri Attorney General John Danforth.

"The State Legislature has consistently obstructed good law enforcement and has fought improvement in the criminal justice system," he told an audience in the Business-Education building last Thursday.

Invited by the Administration of Justice program and covered by the major television stations, Danforth lectured for about thirty minutes before entertaining questions from the audience.

The purpose of his entire presentation was to air his opinion of the state legislature.

"Time after time," Danforth lamented, "I have read newspaper articles reporting attacks made by members of the legislature against our courts.

"Often these attacks are unwarranted and destructive. Yet when the same legislators have the opportunity to do something about the crime problem, they adopt a hands-off attitude when the General Assembly is in session."

Danforth presented what he considered to be six major failures of the legislature.

1) Missouri is only one of three states without a statewide public defender system.

2) The legislature has failed to establish a Missouri Bureau of Investigation.

3) The legislature has failed to pass a witness immunity bill, 4) a pre-arraignment code, 5) or a statute providing for the issuance of search warrants for the instrumentalities of crime.

6) Also on his list was a call for the enactment of the controversial felony conspiracy statute which has been under fire from some of the country's more radical lawyers such as William Kunstler.

In entertaining questions from the audience, both sides seemed not to want to retreat from their positions: Danforth, in that there were questions he could not answer, and the audience, in that there were questions they thought should be answered. Danforth made it plain that he could only speak for himself and his statements were in no way indicative of the position of his office.

Questions of consumer protection, criminal punishment vs. criminal rehabilitation, and the upcoming gubernatorial race were all questions that were presented to the Attorney General. Dodging the touchy questions, Danforth answered most of them in depth to the best of his ability.

Bookstore policies "fair", Dickerson asserts

By CARL HESS
Current Staff Writer

The UMSL Bookstore is constantly under fire from students, with its book return policies being particularly suspect. But George M. Dickerson, the Bookstore's General Manager, realizes this. He believes that he has followed a fair and economical policy for book returns, whether at the end of a semester or when a student returns a book without using it.

Dickerson reiterated the Bookstore's policy on return of used books, which states that the store will buy a used book from a student at 50% of its current list price, and resell it at 75%.

"If a student bought a book from us for, say, ten dollars, at the end of the semester he would buy the book back-- assuming it is going to be adopted again-- for five dollars, and we would sell it for $7.50, as a used book," he said. "Now on the other hand, if a student comes in and buys a used book from us, he would buy it for $7.50, and we would still rebuy that book for $5.00. So in effect, if a student buys a used book at $7.50, and sells it back to us, it has only cost him $2.50 to use that book."

Another point of controversy which directly affects the student is when he tried to return a book and is told that the book isn't going to be used next semester, and that they won't pay as much for the book as the student feels he is entitled to. Dickerson sympathizes with the student, but states that the matter is not entirely in his hands.

"We act as an agent for a wholesale book company in Chicago. They put out a manual which gives prices they are willing to pay for those books we can't use because we have no requests for them.

"These prices often are based on supply and demand--editions, how many copies they have on hand, and things of that sort. So the prices vary for a publication based on the demand for that book by them. Consequently, sometimes the price is presumably reasonable, and at other times it can be very unfair. But we have nothing to do with setting that price; ours is just a service

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