

Stricter laws needed for drunken drivers

When 51 per cent of all fatal car accidents in the state last year were alcohol related, something needs to be done.

The Nebraska Legislature's Judiciary Committee heard testimony Monday concerning Omaha Sen. Patrick Venditte's bill about drunken driving laws. Venditte says that current laws are ineffective. Statistics seem to support this charge.

Drunken drivers probably will be a problem that can never be erased totally.

If 51 per cent of the fatal accidents involve drunken drivers, perhaps the current programs are not working. Currently judges can sentence offenders to alcohol counseling programs as an alternative to jail terms.

Walter Giles, a Lincoln alcoholism programs coordinator, testified that 148 per cent of those convicted on drunken driving charges and sentenced to jail terms repeat their crime. However, he said only three per cent of those who complete the alcoholism program repeat their crime.

Because a person drives home drunk does not mean he or she is an alcoholic although Giles' arguments seem to be based on that theory.

Venditte's bill proposes stricter laws for the state to enforce against the drunken driver. Stricter laws are needed.

The mandatory sentences proposed by Venditte's bill leave a judge little discretion in sentencing individuals. An acceptable compromise would be to let a judge make the decision in the first offense of whether to sentence the driver to a jail term or to the alcohol program, but in successive offenses follow the mandatory jail terms and license suspension provisions in Venditte's bill.

opinion



Arthur Hoppe

The wages of sin are cheaper

The hitherto idyllic relationship between Liz Trebbing and Woofie Cranswell has been subjected to severe strains recently by President Carter.

Liz and Woofie, who had come to Washington to join the new Administration, met at the Inaugural. It was love at first sight and they set up housekeeping in a small apartment on Capitol Hill to make ends and whatnot meet.

A couple of weeks ago Woofie came home from his job as an environmental impact reporter at the Department of Housing and Urban Development with a strange look on his face. "The President wants us to get married," he said.

"By getting married?" asked Liz happily. "No, by continuing to live in sin," said Woofie. "But that's only \$77.17 a month and I think marriage is worth every penny of that."

"Oh, Woofie!" said Liz. Woofie shrugged. "He just showed up in the cafeteria and said he hoped all of us living in sin would get married. But, gosh, Liz, while I'd like to make you and him happy, we just can't afford that extra \$92.25 a month."

"Is it really that much, Woofie?" Liz asked. "Yeah, I worked it out again," Woofie said. "We each make \$15,000 a year, right? And we each get a \$2,400 deduction. So we'll each owe, \$2,583 in taxes for a total of \$5,166. Check? Now if we got married, we'd have a joint income of \$30,000, a joint deduction of \$2,800 and a joint tax bill of \$6,273 - or \$1,107 a year more than we're paying together now. You really think marriage is worth \$92.25 a month?"

Higher bracket
"No, I guess not," said Liz with a sigh. "Well, maybe when we're in a higher bracket it'll all work out." The young couple stayed up half the night making plans. Disaster struck the following day. The House Ways and Means Committee restored the deduction for living in sin to \$2,400, but did approve the increase to \$3,000 for married couples.

"Now it'll cost us \$1,034 to get married," said Woofie, clicking off his calculator with a frown. "That's \$86.16 a month, Liz! Gee, I don't know..."

"I wouldn't marry you if you were blind and over 65!" shouted Liz. And with that, she ran off with a C.P.A. When it comes to living in sin, she says, pick an expert.

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letters

Lake is too much

It has been brought to this board's attention that a small oversite on our part has occurred. It seems that the FAB overlooked the budget request of the Heterosexual Organization for Non-Kinky Intranational Elitist Students (H.O.N.K.I.E.S.). We must apologize.

After discussing the matter the board came to the realization that HONKIES were not a recognized student organization and do suggest that you begin the process to constitutionalize.

Concerning your budget, the board feels that most of your requests were legitimate. However, we will not be able to fund the 250 sq. mile lake. You see, in order to allocate \$5 billion for your project, fees on a per student basis would go from the present \$63.00 a semester to \$227,335.73. I'm not sure that UNL students are ready for that kind of increase.

We are sure that you will understand, but are always open to student input.

Jay Matzke
Fees Allocation Board member

innocent bystander

"How did he know about us?" asked Liz nervously.

There was a certain coolness between them however, all week. Then, a week later, Liz came home all excited from her job as an assistant quota allotter in the Department of Agriculture.

"Woofie! Woofie!" she cried. "Great news! President Carter told us he heard about our problem. So he's going to drop the single deduction to \$2,200 and raise the one for married couples to \$3,000."

"\$926 saved" "Just a minute," said Woofie, whipping out his calculator. "Let's see, 15,000 minus 2200 is ... By George, we'll save \$926!"

Theodore M. Bernstein

Misusing 'miss' so common, some don't notice it

A miss with a miss. Nope, this has nothing to do with femininity, but rather with a misuse of the word miss that is so common that most of us don't even notice it. Linda Graham Matri of Bloomington, Ind., writes that on several occasions she has heard sentences like this: "My wife, Anne, really misses not seeing you." A similar sentence that she heard an athlete say on TV was, "Of course, I miss not being in my home town." The relevant meaning of miss in these instances is to feel or regret the absence or loss of; it is not simply to regret. Therefore, the *nots* should be removed. Or maybe the *nots should be untied*.

but vicious gossips in this town said she killed him because they were not getting along." The reporter did not intend to say on his own that vicious gossips had made that allegation; he meant to say that those words about the gossips were still part of what the lawyer said. A single word, but an important one, is needed to make the sentence say what the writer intended. The conjunction that should appear after the word *but* to parallel the first that, which appears after *insisted*. A second that when two clauses have the same subject is not always necessary, but it is imperative in this instance.

Persons vs. people. The distinction made in common usage between persons and people has been taken up here before, but some readers obviously missed the discussion. Jean Potts of Pataskala, Ohio, is the latest of several who

have asked me about the two words. A general guide to their usage is to employ *people* for large uncounted groups and *persons* for an exact or small number. Example: "A great many people are uncertain about how

bernstein on words

to use those two words, but only seven persons took the trouble to write notes asking about the distinction."

Word oddities. The word *laze*, meaning to indulge in idleness, obviously derives from the word *lazy* and it sounds as if it was coined in recent years. Would you believe that the big Oxford dictionary has a citation of the word's use dating to 1592? Well, you'd better believe it.

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