

# editorials

## World of dreams should end; it's time to vote about alcohol

Ah, dreams. It's fun to fantasize sometimes. Just sit there and think about the way things could be. You can imagine a perfect world.

But fantasies usually do not survive long when people are wide awake. They fade as the light of reality shines through the darkness of dreams.

Unfortunately, at least one fantasy continues to be perpetrated: the prohibition of alcohol on campus.

In Thursday's Daily Nebraskan, UNL Housing Director Doug Zatechka compared enforcement of alcohol rules to enforcement of the 55 mile per hour speed limit. The regulations have a tendency to limit some drinking, but are being broken every day, administrators note.

For years, the entire campus has realized this—except the regulations. In fact, members of the NU Board of Regents who oppose alcohol on campus realize it. But they still vote (or at least they did in 1976) to prohibit alcohol.

The question is: if they realize what is going on, why isn't some action taken?

Those who oppose alcohol on campus probably want to see the rules enforced. Rules without enforcement are ridiculous unless there is an ulterior purpose to the rule.

But we agree with administrators. It is impossible to catch and deal with all violators. Now that the legal age is 19, how can you stop an adult student from drinking in his own room?

Further, the idea behind the prohibition is outdated. Some regents still hope to play parents to 22,000 students. Unfortunately, it doesn't work. Those damn kids are no longer kids, according to the law.

University administrators favored liberalizing the policy in 1976. However the regents, except Omaha Regent Kermit Hansen, voted to maintain the prohibition.

When questioned, some regents will tell you they simply represent the views of their constituents. They may be right.

Many citizens, for one reason or another, don't want alcohol on campus. Unfortunately they don't realize what is going on and they indicate a lack of respect for students.

The regents, closer to the university than their constituents, should display their knowledge and recognize the situation with a vote to allow alcohol on campus.

The arguments are old, but the issue still pops up every two years or so.

It's about time for another look at the issue by the regents. Its also about time the entire board recognized the rights of the adults who go to this university. And it's about time some university policies left the dream world.



letter to the editor

### Parking meeting

The Parking Advisory Board is meeting Monday at 2:30 p.m. in the (Nebraska) City Union. You may think the board will be insensitive to faculty, staff, and students and their parking problems, but as a new member I think this year's board will be different.

Most importantly, the Parking Advisory Board will give anyone a chance to speak at the beginning of each meeting. If you have a complaint or suggestion on parking at UNL, come voice your opinion.

The board has also asked John Duve (UNL parking and traffic coordinator) to present at each monthly board meeting his suggested proposals on lot improvements, construction, and classification changes. With this information, students, faculty and staff will have a chance to affect parking policies on campus before they happen.

But to do this we need to speak out and Monday at 2:30 is our next chance. We all pay for parking, so let's take the time to influence how our money's spent.

Bill Skoneki

## Peril of being politically sexy: Indians face backlash

WASHINGTON—A few seasons back, the American Indian was politically sexy. All manner of liberals wrung their hands over the plight of Native Americans—their new, chic label.

Now, however, property-owning whites, including liberals, are on the warpath against Indians, charging that they claim too much white-man land and threaten the stability of the republic.

There is a peril in being politically fashionable. Once the American Indians got stirred up in the activist '60s, there were excesses of rhetoric and legal action. Now there is an angry, organized backlash. Yet, real problems remain, whether Indians are up or down in the public estimate.

### nick thimmesch



In the bagful of problems which afflict the overgoverned, overregulated American Indian, housing rates are among the worst. For openers, two-thirds of Indians on reservations live in houses without running water and half without indoor toilets.

Indians suffer far more infant mortality, intestinal disorders, respiratory and middle-ear infections than the rest of the United States and bad housing is a major factor in their disease problems.

"We all know about the deteriorated housing and overcrowding," says Paiute Roland M. Chico, Indian specialist at the Housing Assistance Council, Inc., a nonprofit corporation. "But what really kills us is dealing with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It takes 18 months of paper work for an Indian housing proposal to go through. Republican or Democratic administrations, they're all the same."

Since 1969, HUD pledged it would build 55,000 homes for Indians, but only 22,000 were delivered. For all the romantic attention to Indians, there are only little more than 1 million in the United States, (half live on reser-

ations), and a five-year program to build even 50,000 units would improve the situation.

Chico's office and other Indian-interest groups, like the National Congress of American Indians, have heard countless promises from federal agencies and have fought through mountains of government documents on Indian housing. Afterwards, they see the same old bad housing.

#### Small number

"When a big problem concerns only a relatively small number of people, like American Indians, the bureaucrats tend to put it aside," Chico says.

An ordinary non-Indian these days has trouble enough buying or building a house, with all those applications for loans and permits, title search and closing statements. But the reservation Indian, supposedly a close-to-the-earth fellow, becomes victim to a bureaucratic nightmare when he needs housing.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, HUD, the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service which makes sure houses aren't built on archeological specimens, like, maybe, ancient Indian adobes, the Department of Transportation—all can get in on the act. The chart showing the flow of decisions looks like a Rube Goldberg cartoon.

Moreover, even after voicing great concerns for Indians, the government doesn't seem to know how they live. When tribal councils propose building adobe, sandstone or log homes, as they have for centuries, HUD often responds with forbidding stacks of regulations.

#### Land has meaning

When Indians ask to live on their own land, since land has special meaning to them, HUD often talks of the virtues of "cluster" housing. "All that spells bureaucrat,"



laments Chico.

Indian housing costs much more than non-Indian. Some possible explanations: lending agencies know they can't foreclose on Indian land; administrative costs sometimes equal construction costs; heavy input by lawyers and consultants.

Even when the housing is built, Indians run into more government trouble. The impoverished ones often can't keep up with payments, or HUD stops grants because of "administrative incapability." Indians complain that HUD never provided the training they needed to be housing administrators.

#### No decision-makers

Still, HUD has only 65 Indians among its 15,000 employees, and only two are in offices where they can help make decisions. There isn't a single Indian at the top of the fat HUD bureaucracy, and the Indians emphatically have let Secretary Patricia Harris know this.

The Indians are as unhappy with Mrs. Harris as they were with her predecessors, though she has declared, in the best bureaucratic federalesque, how HUD has a commitment to decent, safe, sanitary housing, etc. etc. Indians still don't believe her.

When an old-style Irish-American would get exasperated (before he moved to the suburbs and acted like a Presbyterian), he would vent himself by crying, "Oh, blame it on Murphy!"

It seems that when Secretary Harris gets exasperated in public, she often says, in effect, "Blame it on Nixon!" Honest Indians know that doesn't build houses, adobes or log cabins for them.

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