

# Witnesses testify on drinking age bill

Sides were balanced in a debate Thursday in the Legislature's Miscellaneous Subjects Committee on whether to raise the legal drinking age to 21.

Of an estimated 150 persons, seven testified in favor of raising the limit in order to halt the rise in high school drinkers, and eight argued to retain the present law.

The bill, LB679, would raise the legal drinking age to 21 is passed by the Legislature. However, a special provision would exempt persons 19 or older at the time the bill becomes effective.

Grand Island Sen. Ralph Kelly, who introduced the bill, said the legislation would be the solution to the teenage drinking problem in Nebraska.

Most of Nebraska's neighbors have a drinking limit of 21, and some who don't are raising their limit.

"The pattern of the region is to stay with tradition, and we are asking to return to our tradition," he said.

However, some university students and bar owners testified for retaining the tradition of the present law. A member of ASUN Government Liaison Committee, Bob Gleason, said college students have been unjustifiably blamed for the rise in high school drinkers because university students have limited accessibility to persons under the age of 19. High school kids get liquor from peers, not older university students, he said.

"Please do not punish the 23,000 students at the university for acts perpetrated by others. Let us remain as law abiding adults, he said."

A senior from Kearney State College announced it was an insult to be accused as the one responsible for high school drinking. Susan Underhill demanded that Nebraska decide its own laws without referring to other states' legislation.

A Lincoln bar owner, Robb Cole, said 19-and-20-year-olds could handle the privilege of drinking. He said the problem was with 30-and-40-year-olds, especially on football Saturdays.

Opponents also argued that the bill could economically hurt students. Melanie

Bauman, a recent graduate of Kearney State College, said there would not be enough jobs available for 19-and-20-year-olds since they would no longer be allowed to serve liquor. Students would have to go elsewhere to find jobs and earn their way through school, she said.

Many in favor of the bill ignored the economics and considered the welfare of their children.

Mrs. Helen Patzel of the Women's Christian Temperance Union said it is a tragedy that a product is produced that destroys the conscience and brain of teenagers before the brain is even formed.

There is currently a great deal of drinking done by high school students, said Diane DeBacker, a high school senior from Kearney. She said the number of illegal drinkers would be reduced if the drinking age limit was raised.

"High school students would not have as easy access to 21-year-olds as 19-year-olds," she said.

And Evonne Sandoval of Lexington said the problems she sees and understands come from alcohol. Society is to work for the good of the whole, Sandoval, 20, said.

"I am willing to give up my freedom to drink, so 14- and 15-year-olds won't be able to drink." At least there won't be illegal drinking at younger ages if the limit is raised, she said.

No action was taken on the bill.

## Dormitory food tested by officials

What was at first thought to be maggots in a batch of chili served at the Cather-Pound-Neihardt cafeteria earlier this week has turned out to be bean sprouts.

As soon as the Department of Environmental Health and Safety was notified of a foreign substance in the food, all the meat, beans and tomato products were removed from UNL food service lines, according to Dick McKinnon, assistant director of housing.

The chili samples were tested by the environmental health department with assistance from the Food and Drug Administration.

Environmental Health Director Ed Simpson said the samples were tested at the state department of agriculture.

The testers found that the substance thought to be insect larva was sprouted beans which were among the beans used in the chili, Simpson said. The same beans were used in minestrone soup, which also have been reported to the health department, he said.

McKinnon told representatives of the Residence Hall Assn. at their Thursday meeting that from now on all complaints about food should be taken to the complex food service manager. From there the food sample will be tested by the environmental health department. The results of the testing will be reported to the students, he said.

A statement released by the Office of University Housing says "In the normal process of preparing 5,000 meals three times a day, it is quite possible that foreign matter could appear in the food. Any questionable product will be presented to the Environmental Health Department for laboratory analysis. Full disclosure of the results will be shared with the students."

Cather-Pound-Neihardt had a similar incident in December in which a student found what he thought were maggots in a beef salad sandwich. McKinnon said samples of the meat never were tested because the food was thrown away.

The policy of saving food for testing was put into effect after many students complained, he said.

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## Creepy crawlers worm way into mealtime

By Mary Fastenau

The worm industry has cast its bait into the waters of public attention.

No longer are fish the only ones who include worms in their diet. Worms now are the subject of a national recipe contest.

Anyone can submit their favorite worm recipe to Continental Ecology Farms, Inc. of Omaha for its "Ver de Terre Earthworm Recipe Contest" according to Bill Knipscher, farm manager.

Knipscher says the recipe contest, co-sponsored by North American Bait Farms, Inc., has brought attention to the worm business.

He said this is the third year for the contest nationally, but it is a first for Nebraska. The contest will be April 24 at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Most contestants simply add worms to their favorite recipe and send it in, Knipscher said. The recipes will be used by home economists at UNO, then they will be judged. The winner will receive a \$50 prize.

Last year's winning recipe was quiche lorraine with worms, Knipscher said. A 10-year-old boy entered a recipe which called for placing a worm on a plate adding ketchup and taking a bite, he said. If it doesn't taste good, add a little more ketchup, the little boy said.

Although earthworms are scarce during these chilly January days, Knipscher said dried worms can be found in pet stores. But he doesn't recommend them because these worms are taken directly from the soil and "you never know what they've been through," Knipscher said.

The process for home earthworm drying is simple, according to Tina Thomas, national seminar director of Worm World in Denver.

First rinse the worms thoroughly. Then put them in boiling water for three minutes. Take the worms out, change the water and boil for three more minutes. Again change the water and boil three more minutes.

Place the worms on a cookie sheet and bake at 250 degrees for 30 minutes. When they are removed from the oven, their

texture is like chow mein noodles, Thomas said.

Next place them in a blender and grind them until they are about the consistency of wheat germ.

Thomas discourages the use of ordinary night crawlers because they may be bitter and rubbery.

Some recipes do not require that the worms be dried, she said. Worms may be sauteed in garlic butter or deep fried.

She said the best way to deep fry worms is to put them in batter and drop "the little squiggly things" into the hot grease. They flip themselves, she said.

Worms have a "crunchy, earthy flavor,"

she said. She compared their taste to bean sprouts, but added that sprouts are a "little sweeter."

Knipscher said worms are good on tossed salads in place of bacon bits. He said no one he knows eats raw worms.

The worm industry is not trying to change America's eating habits, Knipscher said.

The purpose of the contest is to inform the public of the benefits of earthworms, he said.

Interest in using worms for waste disposal is growing because worms will eat "anything organic from baby diapers to cardboard boxes."

See related story on page 6



### inside friday

Foreign film funding changed: Union Program Council gives foreign film series back to Sheldon theater. . . . . page 7

Magical mystery movie: J. Marc Mushkin reviews Orson Welles' new film, *F for Fake*. . . . . page 8

Gym suit traded for lawsuit: Nebraska gymnastics coach says he may sue high school activities association to change rules page 10