

opinion/editorial



Liquor proposal watered down in controversy

Sen. Ralph Kelly's charge that the liquor industry's influence kept his drinking age bill from consideration by the full Legislature probably is not entirely groundless. Liquor industry lobbyists are busy in practically every state in the Union.

But whether that lobby is totally responsible is debatable. For believe it or not, there are many legislators who are of the opinion that most 19- and 20-year-olds are responsible, adult human beings.

The charge that teenagers get their liquor from 19- and 20-year-olds also has some truth to it. But there is an excellent chance that 21- and 22-year-olds are buying it for them too. And 23- and 24-year olds. There is no foolproof method of drawing a fair and equitable line.

Sen. Kelly's figures showing that since 1972, when the drinking age was lowered to 19, annual consumption of liquor in Nebraska has risen from 32 gallons per person to a whopping 139 gallons per person demands closer scrutiny. The consumption of liquor per person per year has gone up everywhere, not because more youngsters are drinking but because adults are drinking more. A 32-gallon to a 139-gallon increase per person represents an increase of over 400 percent. That's just incredibly hard to believe.

It would seem that Sen. Kelly's proposal would have more support the next time around because other states have raised their drinking ages. It is hoped that the Legislature will not be swayed to vote a higher drinking age on the basis of that trend. Just because others do it, doesn't mean it's right. Any "Introduction to Logic" student can tell you that's a fallacious appeal to common practice.

Chambers, OU 'puncture' UNL football

By Randy Essex

Judging from letters to the editor of this publication and comments heard around campus, many students would prefer that Omaha's Ernie Chambers served the state as an NU regent rather than as a state senator.

legislature

"I'd also like to be sure the academic programs they are in are qualified to prepare them for something other than football."

Chambers was given an Oklahoma Sooner stocking cap recently because he likes the OU football program. But he likes the program only because "they puncture Nebraska's bubble."

Chambers is certain NU football is overemphasized, and he believes the players are treated like commodities.

"I suppose football is overemphasized everywhere," Chambers says.

Chambers says the players are victims—especially if

they are injured and cannot play football after college. He would like to see a program instituted to help players adjust to life off the field.

Those comments and attitudes may not be in harmony with student opinion, but related subjects seem to be.

Chambers says he can't agree with the NU Board of Regents action to expand Memorial Stadium and raise Tom Osborne's salary.

"I could go along with it if the academic programs were improving an equal amount and the improvements in the athletic department seemed to be going hand-in-hand with academic improvements," Chambers said.

Chambers said he also is concerned about the number of non-accredited people instructing students and deciding grades.

Chambers said there is value in the teaching assistant concept, but it doesn't always work.

Chambers added that "this Legislature" will never pass anything that appears to be "anti-football," even if the measure was designed to improve the academic quality or assist football players in their adjustment to "life without their numbers."

He added that the public usually hears his comments that he is glad the Huskers have dropped a game, but the reasoning behind it is seldom mentioned in the press.

Maine winters teach children to bundle up and cuss

"Boy, it's cold," my friend said one frosty morning last week as he kicked his stubborn '61 Rambler for the 127th time. The Rambler, who had no intention of starting until April, stared back balefully.

I reckoned it was that time again and I dutifully began my "If you think this is cold, you should have grown up in Maine" speech. I've been giving it annually for eons.

If you think this is cold, you should have grown up in Maine. Out-of-state tourists are often struck by the four-letter-word vocabulary of young children in that state. By the time a Maine child reaches the age of seven, he or she knows more dirty words than a Navy chief petty officer with 30 years in grade. Those winters do it to them.

pete mason

One of the best ways a Maine child learns how to cuss is to wait for the school bus in 30-below weather.

My mother used to bundle my sisters and myself in every piece of clothing we owned. When she was done we looked like walking haberdasheries with eyes. Then she would take us out to the corner, one at a time, and set us in the knee-high snow.

We would stand there, huddled tightly together, until the school bus arrived. When the bus stopped at the corner the driver would get out and pick us up, together, in one armload and put us on the bus. Then he would cut us apart with an acetylene torch.

When our jaws thawed out and feeling came back to our toes and fingers, we'd begin to cuss. It's hard to imagine the sound of 80 children cussing in chorus on a crowded school bus. You have to be there.

When I was 11 some friends and I went tobogganing at Westgustaug Hill.

We were always very careful when walking with all those clothes on because if you fell over you stayed there until the first thaw.



It was impossible for anyone to bend down to help you up. It's very common, in Maine in January, to see scores of little kids lying on their sides in the snow, struggling to right themselves, like upside-down turtles.

It was impossible for us to bend our knees so we sort of just fell onto our toboggans, one on top of the other, and sped down the hill. At the bottom of the hill lies Route 9, a busy country road. The only way to stop from sliding across the road and into the wheels of the many logging trucks that pass by on their way to the pulp mill in Portland is to hit one of the large pine trees at the edge of the highway.

It never worried us that we would hit those trees at over 40 because our many clothes cushioned the impact. We would crash into a tree, fly several feet into the air and come down in the snow where we would struggle to right ourselves until a kindly trucker stopped and put us on our feet.

When the sun began to set in the west we trudged home with snow down our backs, up our sleeves, in our boots and in our mittens. We reached one of our houses, my friend Leon's, and stomped into the kitchen where his mother was preparing supper.

"Gee, Mom, we had a great time tobogganing," Leon said as he whipped off his stocking cap. Something flew into the air and into the cat's dish by the stove. It was Leon's left ear.

Leon's mother did a dramatic pirouette and landed in an unconscious heap on the floor. Leon started cussing. The cat started licking its lips.

A doctor was summoned and the ear was sewn back on. It took him about an hour to do it because he couldn't stop laughing. The incident so impressed me that for years afterwards I taped my ears to my head so in case one of them broke off I wouldn't lose it in the snow.

If you think this is cold...