

opinion/editorial

Students may lose more than liquor license holders

The most visible opponent of Ralph Kelly's drinking age bills has been the Committee to Defeat LBs-221 and 350, a lobbying organization led by Robert Cole Jr, owner of two Lincoln bars.

A full-page ad, purchased by Cole, appeared in the Jan. 4 edition of the Daily Nebraskan.

It is safe to assume that most bar

owners oppose Kelly's bills. They have a vested interest in seeing them killed. Cole's two bars, Horsefeathers and the Waterhole, are patronized mainly by college students most of whom are 19 and 20.

When bar owners spearhead drives to keep drinking ages down, often the real arguments supporting these drives are lost. Many people simply don't read past the names of

the organizers of the drive. The common opinion seems to be, "Of course they don't want the drinking age raised. They'd lose money."

What gets lost is the fact that there are a lot of responsible 19- and 20-year-olds who are going to lose their drinking privileges if Kelly's bill passes. It can be argued that these people have more to lose than the li-

quor license holders.

It would be wise of these people, who make up the biggest part of the student population in Lincoln, to take some action themselves, instead of letting Lincoln's bar owners carry the full load. It's quite possible their voices will carry a bit more credibility than a group of people who stand to lose a few points in the profit column.

Smokers, your vice is out of vogue

By Arthur Hoppe

The Surgeon General keeps coming out with reports saying cigarettes will kill you. At the same time, more and more Americans each year knock off smoking. There is, however, no direct relationship whatsoever between these two phenomena.

The sole reason that Americans smoked two billion fewer cigarettes last year is that smoking is no longer fashionable.

It has taken several decades for smoking to go out of vogue. The transmogrification was so gradual, few were aware it was taking place. I would thus like to record for posterity as best I can exactly how it all happened.

innocent bystander

When I was a lad, Smoking was *de rigueur*. Humphrey Bogart smoked, Betty Grable smoked, F.D.R. smoked, Mrs. Grundy smoked. Everybody who was anybody puffed away like locomotives. And when Lucky Strike green went to war, our hearts swelled with pride at the patriotic sacrifices being made to lick the Axis menace.

Few nonsmokers

Oh, there were always a few around who didn't smoke—hypochondriacs, health nuts, cowards—not the sort you'd invite to fun parties. And when you offered these lackluster souls a cigarette, they would invariably say, "I'm sorry; I don't smoke." They knew their failing was something to apologize for. Rightly so.

It's difficult to date with precision when renouncing smoking became socially tolerated, if not approved. I recall a lady I knew quitting in 1957 because she was too thin and wished to gain weight. This excuse was generally accepted as an extenuating circumstance.

The first Surgeon General's report in January of 1964 was, of course, a turning point. But it should be remembered that only a very few highly intelligent, extremely rational people quit at that time. The rest of us displayed that fierce American independence of spirit, our common cry being, "If I want to kill myself, that's my business!" And hostesses continued to place little vases of cigarettes on the table so their guests could kill themselves.

On the defensive

Those disappeared by 1971. What had happened was that more people had quit to prove they were highly intelligent and extremely rational. Those of us who were left had gone on the defensive. "I'm no quitter," we'd say with a little burst of hollow laughter.

By 1974, ashtrays had vanished as well. If you were bold enough, you could request one from your hostess

sotto voce. It was like asking her where the bathroom was—not impolite exactly, just somewhat embarrassing.

The following year, the hordes from GASP and a host of other anti-smoking organizations were in full cry, complaining that we were not only killing ourselves (and good riddance), but we were killing them, too. By now, buses had banned us, airlines had segregated us and not hostess could find a match in the house.

Reformed

"You mean YOU are still smoking?" they would say with incredulity, indicating they hadn't realized until that moment what an idiot you were.

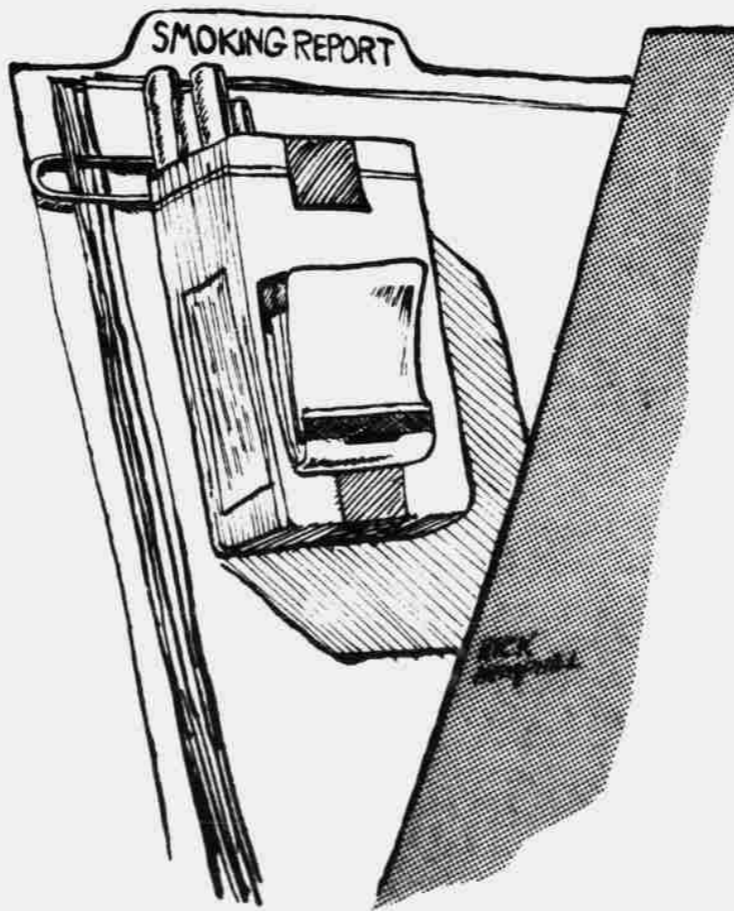
That's when I quit.

In certain circles, smoking may still be stylish—among ghetto teen-agers, for example, Hell's Angels or numbers runners. But in the middle class, it most definitely is not.

Pity the poor addict who deviously lights up in any group. We reformed sinners contemptuously look down upon him as stupid, irrational, weak-willed, anti-social slob—absolutely the last sort of person with whom you'd wish your children to associate.

And that's the sole reason more and more people are quitting cigarettes. For the truth of the matter is that we proud, free, independent-minded Americans don't give a damn if we kill ourselves—just as long as we look good doing it.

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letters to the editor

This is a note of correspondence designed to spur action, not simply to express a complaint or make mention of a problem area. It has been my observation that the wide number of letters to the editor printed in the Daily Nebraskan have only identified problem areas, not suggested methods to eliminate these problems.

I will in this letter identify problem areas and suggest a possible route of correcting these issues.

1. The recent NU Board of Regents decision to expand the Cornhusker stadium by 900 seats at the cost of \$575 a seat is ridiculous. The decision to raise Osborne's salary in the proportion it was raised is ludicrous. The disregard of student opinion is inexcusable. Immediate action should be taken in order that further regent legislation will not be so inane.

2. State Senator Kelly's recently proposed legislation in the Unicameral to raise the drinking age from 19 to 21

has no statistical or logical foundation to support it. The proposed legislation is only a ploy designed to regiment the youngest members of the voting Nebraska into the mainstream of conservative ideology. In place of this bill, Senator Kelly should have proposed the complete legalization of the sale of, the possession of and the use of marijuana.

3. The Lincoln Police Department has a policy towards university students that is one of an animalistic, aggressive nature. It has been my examination that officers of the Lincoln City Police are fast-tempered, ill-mannered suppressors of freedom. Through personal contact with various officers of the Lincoln police, I can state confidently that this police force is not an enforcer of Nebraska laws but an instigator of chaos.

Continued on Page 5

Dear Sen. Kelly, why stop at 21?

By Michael Gibson

Dear State Sen. Kelly:

I don't drink. I don't smoke. I don't even fool around with women (although if you know anyone interested in solving that problem for me, have her give me a call). But that's not why I want to thank you for introducing a bill that would raise Nebraska's drinking age from 19 to 21.

You see, I just don't understand why normally sane students go to wild parties and bars and proceed to kill all those brain cells by getting roaring drunk. Don't they know only adults are supposed to do that?

And believe me, senator, UNL students are not adults. The NU Board of Regents (our parents away from home) have declared that to be true, literally and figuratively. We can't endanger our innocent minds with political speakers, can't control our own tax dollars, a la student fees, and we don't even merit a single vote on the board which totally controls our education.

Children

So let my fellow students point out that we're old enough to drink because we're old enough to vote, sign contracts, and die for our country. Actually, we don't even have the power to bring our mothers up to our rooms in Harper before 10 o'clock in the morning.

But even more fascinating than your perception of students' maturity is your analysis of alcohol consumption statistics. You contend that since 1972, when the drinking age was lowered, per capita consumption of liquor in Nebraska went from 32 gallons a year to 139 gallons.

I know you're right, senator, in blaming that increase solely on the thousands of 17- and 18-year-olds in our state, for who else could be responsible? Certainly not the hundreds of thousands of Nebraskans over 21.

Advantages

And look at the advantages your bill provides. By theoretically reducing consumption, it would reduce the brewers' revenue, and thus the amount of money they have for media blitzes. Perhaps then you and your colleagues would get around to approving a bottle bill.

Furthermore, the bill would get all those 20-year-olds who want to drink out of the bars and into their cars, reducing the number of bar fights, if not alcohol-related auto accidents.

It would also save a lot of students' time. Those UNL students now working as waiters and waitresses in restaurants serving alcohol would no longer have to work, but could rely on unemployment insurance.

But most importantly, you contend that raising the drinking age would make it easier to enforce UNL's alcohol policies, which you thus apparently support.

A modest proposal

May I make a suggestion, sir? Why not raise Nebraska's drinking age to what it is on the UNL campus—roughly 150. I make my proposal in all seriousness, for its advantages far outshine those of your bill.

First, not only would it prevent 19-year-olds from buying liquor for minors, it would stop everyone else from buying for them, too. Of course, all those people who don't buy beer for minors would suffer, but that didn't bother you for your bill offers that punishment for 19 and 20-year-olds.

Just as dead

More importantly, if you're concerned about reducing drunken driving deaths for teen-agers, this bill would reduce alcohol-related accidents for everyone. And believe it or not, senator, if I get hit by a 45-year-old drunk driver, I'll be just as dead as if I had been hit by a 20-year-old.

So if you're interested in my novel idea, sir, don't hesitate to give me a call and we can talk about it over lunch.

And, if it's still legal, I might even buy you a drink.