

Effectiveness of drinking age change questioned

By Jerry Fairbanks

Returning the drinking age to 21 as was provided for in LB221 before amendment, wouldn't change the amount or frequency of drinking in the future, just the location, according to several officials at UNL connected with the issue.

David DeCoster, dean of students, said he has studies indicating that raising the drinking age will not change the quantity that 19 and 20-year-olds drink. He said that somewhere between 90 percent and 95 percent of the people in that age group drink.

"It's almost a lifestyle for people that age group," he said.

DeCoster said that drinking would shift from public bars to private parties. He said he is concerned that drinking at UNL residence halls and Greek houses would increase.

DeCoster said he believes the focus of concern should be on education. He said the emphasis should be placed on the concept of responsible drinking, the pros and cons of drinking, the impact drinking has on other areas of a person's life and the academic and career effects of drinking.

Private parties

DeCoster's sentiments were echoed by Stan Goes,

manager of Horsefeathers and the Waterhole. He agreed that college students not old enough to go to bars would drink at private parties.

"They'll (minors) have someone purchasing their kegs and cases and have their apartment parties and woodsies," Goes said. "Just the same way I did when I was growing up."

Goes said that students would have to drive longer distances to get to parties, increasing the risk of alcohol-related traffic accidents.

He said that when the drinking age was 21, parties were more crowded than bars are now. He said that 17- and 18-year-olds were able to attend these parties with no trouble.

Goes said that enforcing a higher drinking age would be no more trouble than enforcing the present age limit, since ID's are checked at the door and police are called for identification checks.

However, at Michigan University in Ann Arbor where a state law raised the drinking age from 18 to 21 in December, 1978, enforcement has been lax.

"Basically it hasn't stopped anyone from drinking, although it has bothered some people," a Michigan student reporter said.

"If you want to get by, you know what bars to go to where you won't get carded. Most of them don't card tight," she said.

Package sales

She said the police are concentrating on stopping package liquor stores from selling to minors and the bars haven't felt much pressure to card.

Bud Cuca, ASUN president, said that more young people might break the law as a result of LB221.

"There will be more young people trying to get into bars who are under age," Cuca said.

Renee Wessels, ASUN senator, said that the law would force more alcohol into the dormitories.

"If people can't go four blocks away to a bar to drink, where will they drink but on campus?" she asked.

Wessels predicted that the UNL Housing office will also have problems enforcing the drinking codes.

Dorm regulations

Another side effect of the drinking bill would be more stringent enforcement of drinking regulations in UNL dorms, fraternities and sororities.

ASUN senator Brad Belt said that often times dormitory student assistants will find alcohol and just pour it into the sink instead of having charges pressed

against the violator. Because of the proposed law, more infractions might be reported, he said.

Belt also pointed out that student efforts to get alcohol served on campus could become much more difficult.

Enforcing the present drinking age is already a problem, according to an ASUN study by Mark Hirschfeld and Larry Novak. The study found that over half of the minors who obtain liquor from an older person get it from a person over 21.

Hirschfeld noted that the study of 1,681 junior and senior high school students throughout Nebraska showed that 91 percent of those questioned said they could still obtain alcohol even if the age was raised.

He expressed concern that many would drive across state lines to obtain alcohol. An increase in the number of UNL students driving to off-campus parties might raise the number of traffic accidents, he said.

However, Gail Gade, director of UNL campus police, said he doesn't think that a possible increase in driving to off-campus parties would mean a rise in alcohol-related traffic accidents.

"People know what their capacity is, and they act accordingly," Gade said. "I've been here for 10 years and I have faith in these people."

No special effort

Gade said that if the law made it illegal for 19- and 20-year-olds to have alcohol, his department wouldn't make a special effort to enforce the law on campus. He said the UNL police would enforce the law when they discovered violations, though.

How to handle violations of the drinking age worries Janet Freer, residence director of Schramm Hall. She said that possessing alcohol in the dorm violates housing policy now, but is unsure how to handle alcohol possession if it would also be breaking the law.

"We have minors drinking now, but we don't prosecute," she said.

Freer said that minors caught with alcohol now are handled by the housing authorities. If the age were raised, many of the same people would be breaking the law. She said that if it became a legal question, she is unsure of the position she and the rest of the housing staff should take.

Freer said the change in the law might lead to a deterioration of relations between residents and staff. She said that if the staff is expected to turn in minors caught with alcohol for prosecution, the residents would come to mistrust the staff and regard them as police.

Freer also said LB221 would force drinkers in the dorm to go farther undercover, making it more difficult to identify and help persons with drinking problems.

**Use
carpool
HOTLINE
2-3555
to share
the ride!**

BACKGAMMON TOURNAMENT

**Wednesday Feb. 6
7:30 pm**

- 1st, 2nd, 3rd Place Trophies
- No Entry Fee
- Single Elimination
- For further information or to register, call Lanny French at 474-9875.

Tuesday Feb. 12
Arm Wrestling Tournament

Thursday Feb. 14
Valentine's Day Special

Open 10 a.m. to 1 a.m. Daily, Including Sundays

JOHN DUTTON'S DEN

The Ultimate Dining, Drinking & Dancing Establishment
640 W. Van Dorn (On the way to Pioneers Park)

SUNTAN

Sale

\$25 20 Exposure
Membership

SAVE \$10 Regular Price \$35
Offer Ends Soon

**SUNTAN WORLD
TANNING CENTER**
1 BLOCK SOUTH OF CAMPUS
245 N. 13th
Lower Level—Gunny's Bldg.

HEALTH Our Special Lamps manufactured by Westinghouse produce Vitamin D which is essential to the proper formation of Bones in humans.

FASHION A suntan envelopes you in status, indicating that you're a person who goes where the fun is. You're an exciting person, you travel, your clothes look better against your tan, you feel better because you look better.

Suntan World features Computerized Skin Analysis. Trained technicians will assist you in establishing your personal tanning program. Stop in for a free visit.

VISA - MASTER CHARGE - CHECKS - CASH - Welcome

GIFT CERTIFICATES ARE AVAILABLE

Other locations now open: Kearney, Hastings, Greeley, CO
Opening soon: Grand Island, Omaha, Scottsbluff, Columbus, Denver

For franchise information contact: Suntan World Enterprises
P.O. Box 80904
Lincoln, NE 68501