

opinion/editorial

Regents' timing shows disregard for students

Scheduling discussion of important student-related issues at NU Board of Regents meetings can be described in a variety of ways most appropriately as interesting, ironic and insulting.

The regents will hear reports on several topics of concern to university students at their meeting Saturday, which just happens to be the first day of UNL's spring break. On the regental agenda for this month's meeting are recommendations to limit class enrollments, discussion of proposals to cut classes after the first few class meetings if not enough students register, and a progress report on the university's Five-Year Plan.

Granted, if students are concerned about these issues they are free to forfeit the opportunity to get away from campus for a week.

However, it isn't really fair to penalize students by making them change plans during the late March hiatus because they may want to take an

active part in their education. After all, spring break is a much-deserved and badly needed change of pace, whether a student decides to go on vacation or to stay at home to work on term papers or class projects.

Besides, not all students have the option of staying in Lincoln during spring break. The majority of students who live in UNL residence halls must find off-campus accommodations during the break. For most, that probably means returning to their homes wherever those may be.

This is just another example of the continual disregard for students displayed by the regents. And it doesn't just happen during the spring. Many critical decisions directly affecting university students also are made during the summer months when most students have left the area.

The regents should consider the students when they decide when to discuss important matters

such as those on the agenda for Saturday, even if that means changing meeting dates.

That really isn't asking too much since the university exists for the students. Doesn't it?

Break brings sanity

All right everybody. Go ahead. You deserve it. At long last students can lean back, kick off their shoes and breathe a sigh of relief. Spring break, that often dreamed about week of retreat from the daily drudgery and grind of classes and studying, is finally here.

Whoever invented this week of anticipated glory and refreshing break from the routine should be heralded as a genius from the lofty heights of all academia. Nothing can be more beneficial for a student than having a week to try in varying degrees of desperation—to regain at least some measure of sanity.

And sanity will become very important for that final push culminating in May when term paper due dates arrive and final examinations commence.

Enjoy it while you can everybody because you deserved it and boy are you going to need your strength!

Sunstroke traded for happy hour

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Ask any number of the quarter-million college students why they've descended on Florida's white-sand beaches for spring break, and they'll probably say "the sunshine." But it's hard to believe that's the only reason.

One need only walk down the main strip here as early as 3 p.m. to find as many kinds drinking in the bars as sunbathing on the beach. Indeed, the bars do their utmost to keep the vacationers from suffering sunstroke.

Dozens of pubs begin their happy hour early, offering rock-bottom prices for pitchers of beer and specialty drinks. Some watering holes lure their first customers of the day with free kegs.

Others sponsor various contests between different campuses, fraternities and sororities; winners usually receive—you guessed it—drinks on the house.

Even the major beer companies are involved. Celebrities from the popular "Lite Beer" television commercials are emceeding afternoon poolside activities at 16 hotels here and in Daytona. Former football stars Ray Nitschke and Buck Buchanan and baseball notables "Boog" Powell and Marv Throneberry hold tugs of war, pose for photos with students and hand out "Famous Lite Beer Drinker" buttons.

"You've got a concentration of young beer drinkers all in one place," said Ben Banta, who is running the Miller Brewing Co.'s publicity campaign for Florida this month. "They're just at the age when they're deciding their own taste preferences."

It's no surprise that by dinnertime many of these young Americans are stumbling out into Atlantic Avenue, clogging traffic and thinking the evening's just begun.

cently from 18 to 19), watch for fights and keep the dizzy kids from getting run over.

By the last call at 1 a.m., many a disoriented reveler has already passed out on the beach or returned to a hotel room feeling nauseous.

Spring break in Florida is for many a first test of good sense and good times away from school or home. For far too many, it is also a rude awakening to the dangers of alcohol.

shearer

Most of America's casual drinkers don't know that alcohol is a very powerful poison, a toxic which not only blurs one's vision but kills liver cells, rips apart the stomach lining and eats away the brain tissue.

And in men, it stops production of testosterone. Alcohol's effect on the body is prodigious but still considered somewhat mysterious by the medical profession.

"Heavy drinkers can have enormous livers," said one doctor. "Theirs are too hard and too fleshy. The poison builds in the blood and the liver can't handle it. And then it's all over."

Many parents may have been relieved to hear that today's more conservative teenagers are smoking less

pot than their older brothers and sisters. But they should also know that alcoholism among teenagers has reached epidemic proportions in this country.

Doctors say that between 15 and 20 percent of all teenagers are "heavy risk" drinkers. Not surprisingly, the "six-pack syndrome" among those under 20 leads to lower grades and increased auto fatalities.

To counter these trends, legislatures have raised the drinking age in nearly two dozen states since 1973. Nevertheless, the law has never been able to separate people from goods of mass consumption.

Can anything be done to prevent future collegians from hitting the beaches here simply to indulge in mindless alcoholic excess?

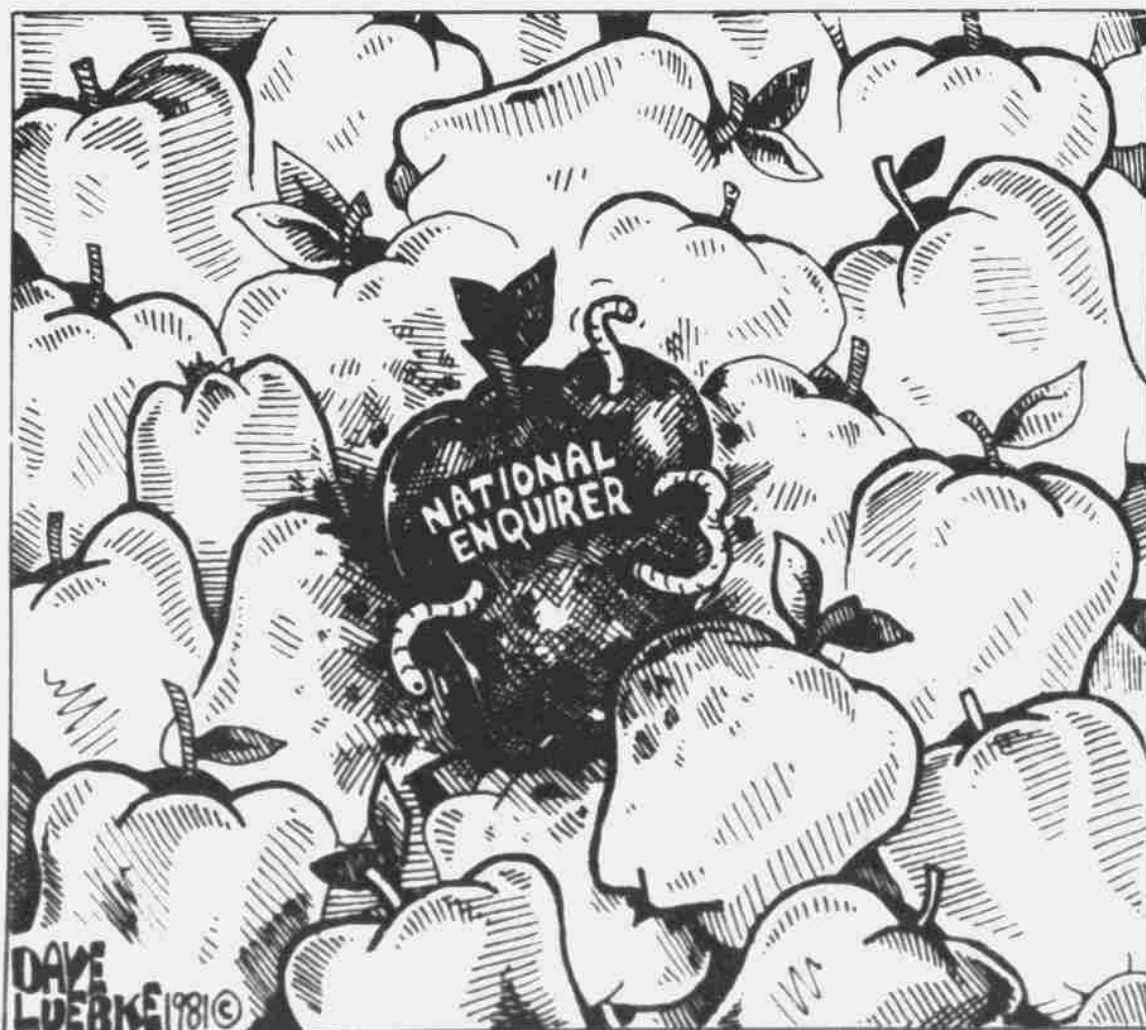
One solution may be to affix a health warning label on alcoholic beverage containers, as California Congressman George Brown has suggested.

"The industry spends \$700 million a year to soothe the public attitude that alcohol is part of the good life," said Dennis Hernandez, a Brown aide. "We're trying to break up the message a little with the notion that it can also harm your health."

As proposed by Brown, the warning label reads: "Using this product too fast may cause sickness or death; may impair driving ability; may create dependence or addiction, and during pregnancy may harm the unborn."

Enough said?

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One rotten apple . . .

Life with three 'critters' makes spring break great

Author Steve Lawhead once said, "Roommates are handy critters to have around."

Student Kent Warneke always says, "Roommates may be critters, but they sure aren't handy."

warneke

In fact, if there is one reason that I'm ecstatic that spring break starts soon, it's because I won't have to be subject to the stupid, disgusting, illicit and purely immoral activities of my roommate.

I should explain that I live in a fraternity and the members change rooms every semester. So at the end of last semester I sat down and made out a list of the five guys that for no reason would I want to

room with. Brotherhood is fine, but sanity is more important.

Out of my list of five, I was blessed with No. 1, two and four. I could have died. The only good thing was that I didn't get stuck with No. 3—a fat, relatively weird art major who snores.

But let me tell you, one, two and four are bad enough.

Roommate No. 1 is one of those bronzed sun gods from Omaha. He also just happens to be Catholic and is assured of a \$25,000 starting salary when he graduates, because his father is el richo. And then someone like me, who is really talented, won't even earn half that much. That's depressing.

Roommate No. 2 is a real loser. First off, he has got frizzy hair he won't cut. He also wears Vietnam radical coats, votes Democrat and listens to the Rolling Stones. What is worse is that he writes bad checks, even to collection agencies.

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