

Letters

Alcohol policy denies students legal rights

Having followed the Daily Nebraskan's one-sided coverage of the "alcohol on campus" debate the last few weeks, I have noted that one issue has not been addressed: the right of the individual over 21 to drink in his or her place of residence.

The privilege to consume alcohol in one's home should not be awarded based on where an individual resides. If where citizens live determines what rights and privileges they are entitled to, then it would be quite legitimate to withdraw the privilege to drink in their home from all residents of north Lincoln. That doesn't seem the same? Well, it comes down to your attitude or prejudice against students on this issue.

Alcohol has no place in an educational or classroom environment and therefore should not be allowed on the campus at large. However, residence halls and Greek residences are not, and

should not be, purely academic areas. These places are homes for many adult students, their private place of residence. What they do behind their doors is nobody's concern but their own so long as they do not infringe upon the rights of others.

The laws and attitudes concerning alcohol in this country need some serious re-evaluation. The problems that result from alcohol misuse — DWI, personal abuse, and crime — all stem from too much legislation in the wrong areas and not enough education and enforcement. We have too many laws that are useless and laughable, such as the current drinking age. This law is supposed to keep young adults from driving while intoxicated. This type of preventative lawmaking has no place in our country. If a person is guilty of DWI, they should be dealt with swiftly and severely. If they are not guilty of an

offense, they should not be punished because of a statistical analysis of their age group.

Opening up young adults' legal access to alcohol, enforcing DWI laws, and promoting "bus-trip" parties would seem to be a logical and enforceable solution. But concern for alcohol abuse and safety on the road has been neglected in the pursuit of a scapegoat.

A message of "Drink . . . but do it responsibly," ought to be conveyed to young adults, rather than a command of "Thou shalt not drink." One thing is for sure: the current laws and university policies for dealing with alcohol and its related problems are not working. Students are driving drunk and suffering from alcohol abuse as much as they ever have.

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Nip keeps North on its (frozen) toes

ROYKO from Page 4

this time of year to get the paper and feel that crisp, cold nip in the morning air.

"Yes, and to feel the cold rivulets of rain dribbling down our necks as we huddle at the bus stop or commuter stations. Now, that really wakes me up in the morning."

And remember, soon we'll be seeing that first, fresh layer of pure white snow.

"Sure, then we get another layer of snow, and another. And soon we will hear the familiar sound of tires spinning in the deep slush, transmissions howling, and we'll see the hunched figures of men and women heaving and grunting as they try to push their vehicles from the curb."

Don't forget the wonderful winter activities. Skating on a glistening, frozen lagoon. The vigor of cross-country skiing. The thrill of a toboggan run. A long hike across a snow-covered meadow.

"Oh, yes, great fun. But don't you forget many others, easily as popular. Waiting for your brother-in-law to drive over to your alley with jumper cables so you can get your dead battery started. The challenge of scraping away the crud with numbed hands to find the positive and minus terminals so you don't blow yourself up. The thrill of peering through the streaks of salt and road glop on your windshield into the blinding headlights of an oncoming truck. The adrenaline pouring when you swing around a corner, only to find

yourself on a broad patch of ice and your vehicle begins doing figure eights. No, you're right. They don't have this in the warm climes."

I'm glad you recognize that. You know, in our part of the country there are distinct sounds of the winter season. I'm sure you've been awakened by the early morning sound of shovels scraping pavement, as people perform the neighborly ritual of cleaning their walks of snow so that others may pass unhindered. It's the sort of unselfish act that brings people together. Another blessing of our climate.

"Uh-huh. And then there is the wail of the siren as the paramedics carry off aging shovelers who popped an artery or broke a hip bone. They really miss those kicks in Miami."

"Yes, and in addition to the ruddy complexions, there are the vividly colored cold sores, the exotic touch of blue-black on the ear lobes as frostbite sets in, and the self-awareness that is brought on by those stabbing chest pains."

But let us not forget spring. Eventually the snow melts and we undergo the dramatic reawakening of nature. Birds returning. The buds peeping through the good earth. The first balmy breezes.

"Sure. The melting snow revealing the hulks of abandoned cars, the accumulated winter droppings of several million dogs, and here and there the remains of an unmourmed wino."

Spring. Soon we will tiptoe through the tulips, so to speak.

"More likely, we'll tiptoe through the mud so we can get in our cars."

Well, we're at the airport. Where did you say you were going?

"Hawaii."

Poor devils. They live with such sameness, such monotony.

"I'll pass along your condolences to the first orchid I meet."

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Royko is a Pulitzer prize-winning columnist for the Chicago Tribune.



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