

Daily Nebraskan University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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What others think

Student's blackmailed for more visitation

Everyone knows what 24-hour visitation means in the residence halls — boys and girls can study together more. But that's not it. Overnight visitation means sex.

But more important, it means being an adult. Resident Services has taken a positive step forward in realizing college students are adults by "allowing" dorm dwellers to vote on "expanded visitation."

But Resident Services is blackmailing students in a Civics for Sex deal. In order to vote on expanded visitation, Resident Services is requiring students to participate in dorm forums. In the real world of American democracy, citizens can vote on issues or candidates without knowing a darn thing about anything. That's the way it should be.

Students realize 24-hour visitation can cause problems. It could mean less privacy or even more sexual violence by allowing the male greater access to his prey.

The Volante University of South Dakota Vermillion, S.D.

A top administrator's recent request to eliminate balloon releases at on-campus functions is not, as some balloon-lovers have claimed, full of hot air.

Steve Garban, senior vice president for finance and operations, has a rationale that the abandoned hulls of popped balloons find their way into the stomachs of animals, seabirds and marine life. The indigestible latex then turns to a sticky substance that sticks to the inside of animals' stomachs, resulting in death.

The Daily Collegian Penn State University State College, Pa.

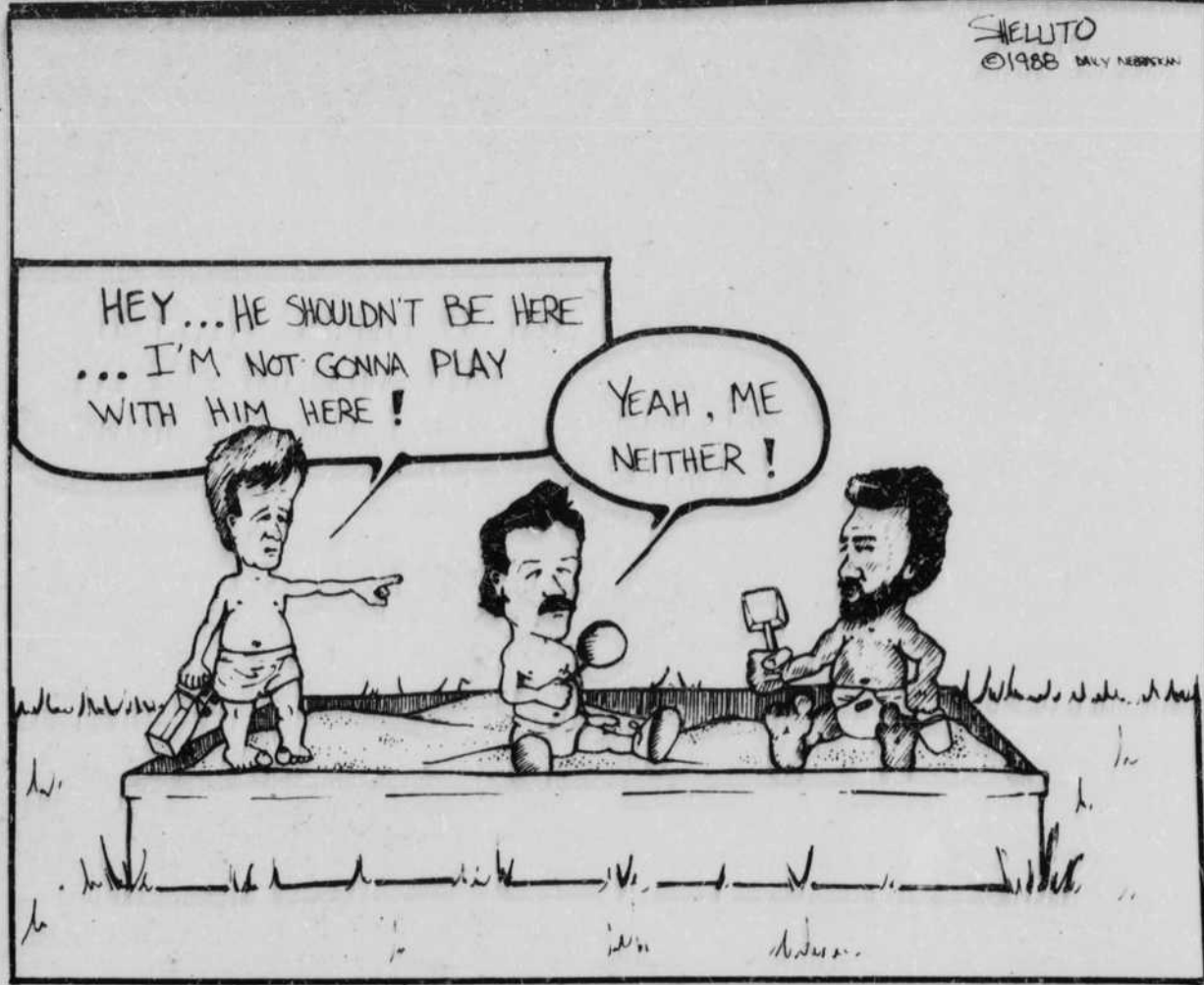
The opening ceremony for the Summer Olympics went off in Seoul, South Korea, on Friday almost without a hitch. While some radical students made trouble during the torch parade, in general it seemed like a good start for what so far has been the least-troubled Olympics in 20 years.

Most people watching the games during the next two weeks will probably notice signs that there are problems within the host country. Images of protesters rioting in the streets over various issues will occasionally flicker across the screen.

When the nation first bid for the games in 1981, it was ruled by a repressive dictatorship which was not much better than the Communist north in respect to civil liberties.

But following massive nationwide demonstrations in 1986 and 1987, the ruling party bowed to popular demand and agreed to free elections. As a result, South Korea is now looking more and more like a democracy, with the presidency controlled by one party and the legislature controlled by the opposition parties.

The Daily Iowan University of Iowa Iowa City, Iowa



Teen-ager restrictions discussed

Should licenses be suspended for drug or alcohol violators?

Recently proposed legislation that would require suspension of teen-agers' drivers licenses for alcohol or drug violations needs some rethinking.

The legislation, sponsored by senators Withem, Hefner and Landis, is well-researched and based on good intentions, but says a little too much.

At first, I was skeptical of the idea of singling out a specific segment of the population on the basis of age. I wondered if it's even constitutional?

It is, according to the Nebraska Attorney General Robert Spire.

Last December, Withem requested the attorney general's opinion on whether a legislative bill, similar to this year's proposal, was constitutional. Spire responded that it was, citing a U.S. Supreme Court decision.

"It (equal protection of the law) does not foreclose government from classifying persons or from differentiating one class from another when enacting legislation," the attorney general quotes.

But why is this certain segment of the population, those ages 13 to 19, the group to be singled out?

Information received from Withem's office and the Nebraska Crime Commission convinced me that it might be good to focus on this particular segment.

An article entitled "Teen-age Drinking," from Withem's office, cites evidence that the adolescent is more vulnerable to the mental and physical effects of alcohol and drugs.

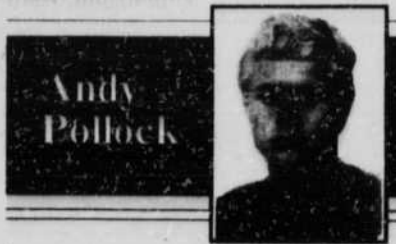
For instance, the peak brain growth occurs during middle and late adolescence. Drinking may disrupt this growth, causing "volatile mood swings," anxiety, confusion and aggression, the article states. Alcohol consumption also damages the liver, stomach and intestines, especially in young people.

The article, published by the National Parent's Resource Institute for Drug Education Inc., also reports that adolescents become alcoholics more quickly than adults. Teens may become alcoholic in six months to three years; adults usually become alcoholic in 10 to 15 years. Over one-third of the nation's alcoholics are minors, the report adds.

Information from the Nebraska Crime Commission shows that in the last 10 years teens, ages 13 through 19, committed 25 percent of the state's drug violations. More than 21 percent of the state's alcohol viola-

tions were committed by people in the same age range.

Evidently, teen-agers are responsible for a disproportionate number of alcohol and drug crimes. They are also the hardest hit by the effects of these intoxicants.



Andy Pollock

Okay, I was wrong, the proposal correctly focuses on a segment of society that needs some guidance. But it still needs some work.

Michelle Waite, a legislative aide in Withem's office, said the proposal, which is similar to proposals that failed during the past two legislative sessions, is fashioned after a 1984 Oregon Law. In the first year following the enactment of the law, teen-liquor violations in Oregon decreased 12 percent and drug violations by teens dropped 22 percent. The law worked.

Or did it? Chris Eskridge, an associate professor of criminal justice at UNL, didn't think so.

"Harsher sentences and punishments," Eskridge said, "increase the reluctance to arrest and hand down sentences. And when the sentences are handed down, they tend to be made in a more biased fashion."

Take, for example, the death penalty.

This year's proposal requires mandatory suspension (past Nebraska proposals have only attempted to authorize suspension) of drivers licenses. Won't that make it tougher to avoid or reduce sentencing?

"No," said Eskridge. "There is no such thing as mandatory sentencing. Legislators can say what they want, but it won't happen."

He said negotiations between prosecuting and defense attorneys inevitably arise, and sentences are reduced or dropped.

Again, bias sneaks into the picture, where poorer people will be less capable of hiring these crafty attorneys.

Eskridge, however, doesn't think we should let the drinking problem run rampant — not when 25,000 people are killed on America's highways each year. He suggested grass-

roots pressure, like what's been done to combat cigarette smoking and its harmful effects.

But extensive "Just Say No" campaigns are at full steam across the country. And still, the problems persist.

Joel Lundak, the substance-abuse evaluator for the Lincoln Council on Alcoholism and Drugs, suggested a possible and appealing solution.

Lundak is in favor of the proposal, but not as written. He doesn't agree that suspension of the license should be mandatory. But, he said, if teens don't lose their licenses, they should be required to take a drug and alcohol evaluation and comply with its recommendations.

Lundak has hit the nail on the head.

Presently, teens must choose between a usually meager fine, plus court costs, or the latter choice mentioned above.

"Whoopee!" they say and sneak some money from their savings account, and mom and dad never know. And the problems still persist.

But not with Lundak's suggestion. Facing such a tough decision — no car, or a drug and alcohol evaluation — would undeniably make them think twice about what they're doing the next time they consider drinking or drugging.

Lundak said the importance of the harsher punishment rests in its success, not as simple punishment, but as a tool in changing dangerous behavior.

Again, I agree. But one problem lurks in my mind.

Not so long ago the "they" was "we." I still know the me I was between four and nine years ago. What will teen-agers think of this? They will be affected. Their voice must be heard.

I'll do my best, briefly. If I knew then what I know now about what alcohol could do to my brain and body, I would have cut way back. That's if I had consumed alcohol as a minor, of course.

The proposal makes sense. It needs some work, but it's worth a try.

Society needs to attempt to protect its young people from the harmful effects of alcohol and drugs. More importantly, society must explain these effects and why it is protecting teen-agers, not merely that the law requires doing so.

Pollock is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan editorial columnist.

Can Nebraska afford Karnes?

Sen. Dave Karnes has proven in his brief 18 months in office that he has no intention of adhering to the so-called federal spending cuts that he claims he supports.

In his brief term he has spent more money on travel expenses than all but three other members of the U.S. Senate, including those senators from Alaska and Hawaii. He has also spent

more per capita on senate mailings than any other senator and has the highest per capita payroll in the senate.

Can we as Nebraskans afford any more of Karnes' frugal spending?

McGraw Milhaven senior arts and sciences

editorial

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