

U.S. exporting death

Food, not tobacco can be sold overseas

In the last week, two interesting facts have been revealed about the tobacco industry in the United States.

First, the majority of research done by the industry has been reported falsely. Second, the federal government will spend \$3.5 million dollars this year to promote the U.S. tobacco industry overseas.

A judge in New Jersey has said that over the past 40 years, the tobacco industry deliberately misled the American public into believing that smoking was safe. Now, the United States Department of Agriculture is giving that same industry money to advertise overseas.

U.S. District Court Judge H. Lee Sarokin went so far as to call the industry's vow to disclose its research findings "nothing but a public relations ploy — a fraud — to deflect the growing evidence against the industry."

That lie now is being marketed overseas through agriculture department grants.

Representatives of the tobacco industry claim that promoting the export of tobacco is just like promoting the export of any other agricultural product.

But exporting tobacco creates health problems, while exporting other farm commodities can solve health problems.

Spending \$3.5 million to promote a deadly habit worldwide is ridiculous. America must feed the world instead of kill it.

Smoking in the United States has dropped 32 percent in the last 22 years, and many communities are enacting strict anti-smoking laws. Yet the U.S. government finds no shame in spending millions to get foreigners hooked.

Tobacco is a killer. Money spent on its promotion could be much better spent, for example, subsidizing other farm products to export to countries that cannot afford to buy the food they need.

With all the problems in the world, the last thing other countries need are American products that create more.

Rep. Peter H. Kostmayer, D-Pa., said of the tobacco advertising program: "I think it is exporting death. It's not a wasteful program, it's a deadly program."

Death is not something the world needs more of, especially from a country that knows better.

Nations slow to share power

I am writing in response to the column published in the DN on Feb. 3 ("Bush's military cuts not enough"). The United States, the Soviet (dis)Union, Britain, France and Germany can build nuclear weapons — a serious threat to world peace! But if Islamic nations build or become capable of developing nuclear weapons, that is not digested by super powers. This stinks.

I am sure Israel, the largest recipient of US aid, had nuclear weapons a long time ago. That's why the London Times wrote that Israel is capable of building as many as 200 nuclear

weapons. There is no doubt that the mainstream ultra-conservative right wing countries have already started to flex their muscles to capitalize on Soviet weakness. Why shouldn't they. Isn't it the survival of the fittest? The thing is these superpowers are so used to deciding the fate of Third World nations that they couldn't swallow the rise or any major achievement of either Islamic or non-Islamic nations.

Arshad Altaf Shaikh
junior
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Whites not necessarily racist

In response to Chris Halligan ("Half-truths form white identity," DN, Feb. 7), I'm white and proud of it. I have to be proud of it because there's nothing I can do about it.

Also, I'm sick and tired of people trying to make me feel guilty for being white. Or feel guilty of being a racist just because I'm white.

I'm not a racist. I never held a slave, killed an Indian or put down the women's movement.

I've traced my family history back

to when they came to the United States in 1870. None of my ancestors ever held slaves, killed Indians or put down the women's movement.

So if you, Chris, want to let someone tell you you're a racist just because you're white, fine. But don't try to convince me — I'm not guilty, and proud.

Scott Ruff
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LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

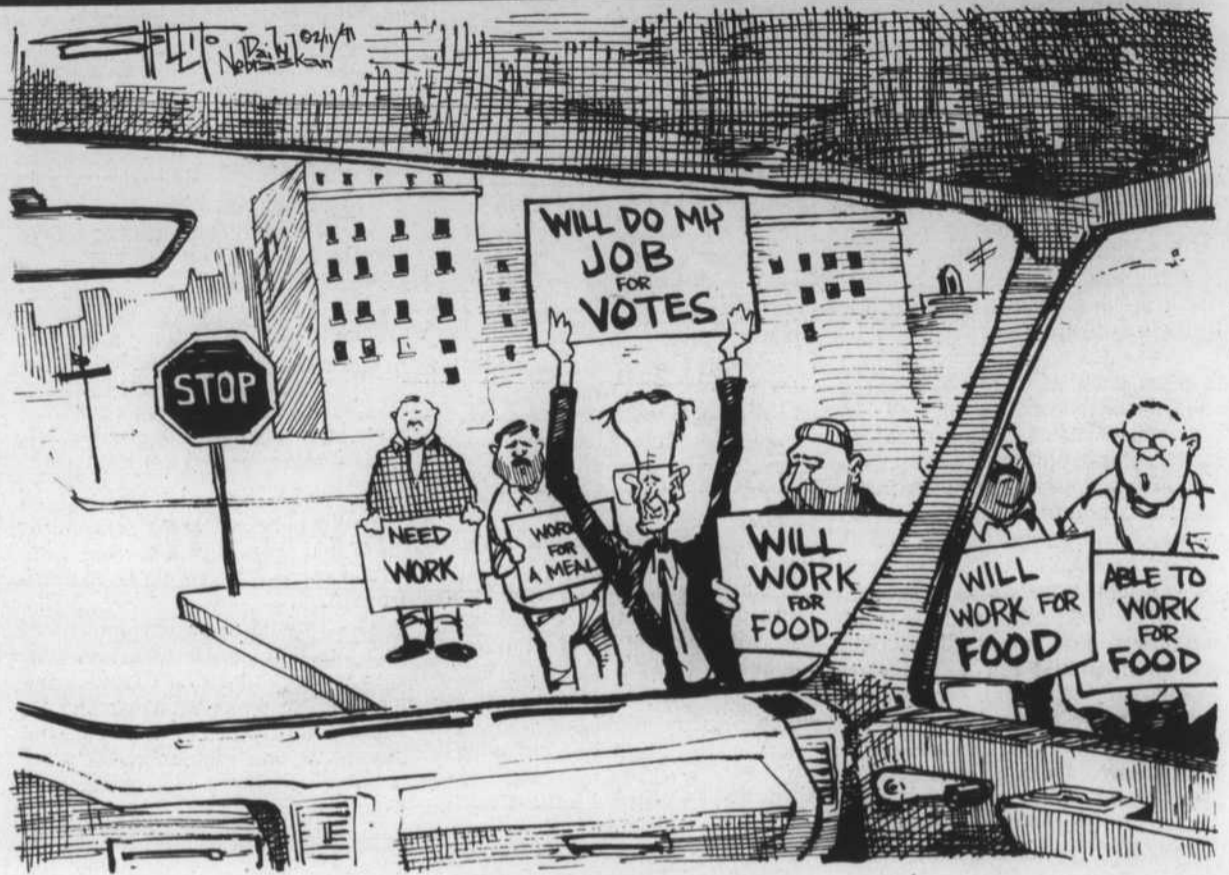
Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available. The Daily Nebraskan retains the right to edit or reject all material submitted.

Readers also are welcome to submit material as guest opinions. Whether material should run as a letter or guest opinion is left to the editor's discretion.

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Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted.

Submit material to the Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448.



BRIAN ALLEN

Legal drinking age hypocritical

On June 4, 1988, I was unceremoniously kicked out of a Lincoln bar while attempting to celebrate my 18th birthday with a little underage drinking.

My older brother had assured me that anyone could drink in this particular establishment. Either I didn't fit into the broad category of anyone or he was wrong.

I was in Lincoln with my brother instead of at home with my parents, as most recent high school graduates would have been. Two days later, I was to report to the Military Entrance Processing Facility in Omaha, prior to my departure to Fort Jackson, S.C., for Army basic training.

The 21-year-old drinking age is hypocritical and bogus. I was kicked out of the bar because the citizens of this country, through their representative government, had decided that as an 18-year-old I was not yet mature enough to make intelligent decisions about my consumption of alcohol.

Yet this same body of citizens has decided that 18-year-olds are mature enough to defend their country in the armed forces, either voluntarily or through the draft.

The same people who are not considered responsible or competent enough to control their consumption of alcohol, evidently are competent and responsible enough to vote, be tried as adults, enter into legal contracts and be sent into battle.

Thousands of 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds were sent to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait for operations Desert Shield and Storm to kill or be killed for a government and its citizens who don't even trust them to have a beer.

These soldiers liberated an entire country and defeated the fourth-largest standing army in the world, and when they came home, they still couldn't even get into a bar.

While these people all enlisted in the armed services voluntarily and are personally responsible for ending up in combat, it also is true that most of them (the men) could have been drafted. Every U.S. male citizen must register for the draft by his 18th birthday, yet he can't legally drink for three more years.

As part of my job in the Army



Right now, anyone between the ages of 18 and 21 is subject to all the liabilities of adulthood and none of the benefits.

Army and failed to report for basic training. Again, I would have been given the harsher adult treatment.

Right now, anyone between the ages of 18 and 21 is subject to all the liabilities of adulthood and none of the benefits.

Few minors are stopped from drinking by the 21-year-old drinking age. I know it never put much of a strain on my consumption back in my untamed youth. Buyers always were plentiful, and I usually could find a party with a keg.

If no party could be found, my buddies and I would do what minors still are doing everywhere. We'd get a trunk full of beer and go cruising — definitely a dangerous proposition.

Other than adding a sense of adventure to drinking and thereby encouraging me to drink more often, the only thing the 21-year-old drinking age did was prevent me from drinking in a bar, which was probably the safest place I could have been.

At least in a bar, the bartender may cut off heavy drinkers eventually, and someone at least semi-sober usually is willing to drive the drunkest patrons home. This was not the case at most of the underage parties I went to.

Some people may think it would be equally fair to raise the draft age to 21 and not drop the drinking age, and they would be partially right. But to achieve true fairness in the system, we would also have to raise the age of legal adulthood to 21.

Because most people begin to live their own lives on about their 18th birthday, it would be very difficult and counterproductive to raise the age of legal adulthood. Thousands of people would not be able to take out loans without co-signers or engage in business dealings, would be tried as minors instead of adults and would not be able to vote.

As a matter of equity, it would not matter if the ages of legal adulthood, draft and drinking were 18, 21 or even 31 — as long as they were the same. As a matter of practicality, 18 is the only age which will suffice.

Allen is a senior mechanical engineering major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Staff editorials represent the official policy of the Spring 1992 Daily Nebraskan. Policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. Its members are: Jana Pedersen, editor; Alan Phelps, opinion page editor; Kara Wells, managing editor; Roger Price, wire editor; Wendy Navratil, copy desk chief; Brian Shellito, cartoonist; Jeremy Fitzpatrick, senior reporter.

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