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Law could tap underage drinking

By Jan Calinger
Staff Reporter

Law enforcement officials will have an easier time tracing beer kegs purchased for parties with underage drinking because of a new Nebraska law, a state senator said.

Sen. Rex Haberman of Imperial, who introduced the legislation, said the law, passed by the Nebraska Legislature in June, created a more thorough system of registering beer kegs and their purchase.

Haberman said the legislation, also known as the Nebraska Liquor Control Act, was intended to reduce underage drinking.

"You hear about people talking about keggers, young people being intoxicated," he said. "You know someone's buying younger kids liquor, and some stores have hundreds of false ID's."

According to the law, sellers of kegs, classified as containers of at least five gallons, are required to record the date of the sale, the identification

number of the keg, the purchaser's name, address, picture ID number and signature. The forms bearing this information are to be kept at the liquor store for at least six months after the purchase.

The law further requires liquor stores to place Nebraska Liquor Control Commission identification labels on their kegs. These labels carry the information from the purchaser's form, along with the name of the retailer.

Tampering with these labels would be a Class III misdemeanor.

Commission director Frosty Chapman said an emergency clause in the law allowed it to take effect upon passage.

"The emergency clause forced us to get something going," he said.

The law also required the commission to establish rules specifying how the law would be implemented and enforced, Chapman said. The commission has issued temporary forms for liquor distributors to use until it can meet to design permanent ones.

Chapman said the commission had a good model on which to base the law. The Nebraska forms and legislation are similar to ones used in Washington, he said.

"Rather than reinvent the wheel, we used Washington's form as a model, knowing that when we get some experience, we'll change the information on the forms before it's over."

"The rules and regulations will specify and provide detail on how the law will operate. It's a power the Commission has. We have a whole set of rules and regulations."

Chapman said the commission had been hard at work coming up with Nebraska adaptations of the law.

The commission has proposed having special forms and identification tags required in the law, and also has suggested that keg purchasers sign a sworn statement saying they are of legal age to purchase alcohol and will not allow minors to consume it.

Chapman said a public hearing on the proposal would be Oct. 14.

Haberman said he believed the law

would effectively stop underage drinking if local authorities cooperate fully.

The restrictions on kegs and cost of cans will make buyers reluctant to share their beer with minors, he said. "To start buying case beer is too expensive," Chapman said. "And if someone wants to buy 10-15 cases of beer from a retailer, that should alert him something's going on."

Haberman said Douglas County law enforcement officials had already contacted the commission asking for names of stores that sold beer kegs found in illegal situations.

But some liquor store personnel dispute how effective the new law will be. Jeff Mapes, night manager of N Drive-In Package Liquor and Beer, 19th and N streets, said he believed keg sales would not be affected much.

"I don't think it's going to reduce the keg sales," he said. "I think people who purchase the kegs will understand they have a greater responsibility when they buy the keg."

ASUN fails to pass rule on DN personals

By Becky Becher
Staff Reporter

During the first ASUN meeting this school year senators of the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska debated a resolution suggesting a ban on anonymous personals and other anonymous advertisements in the Daily Nebraskan.

The resolution, which one senator said was intended to give students or organizations "harmed" by advertisements in the Daily Nebraskan a way to find out who placed the advertisement, failed 17-4.

The resolution said the Daily Nebraskan had printed "libelous advertisements that would put the paper in legal jeopardy."

It would have required the paper to keep on file the names of all advertisers.

These names then would have been made public.

Vice President Trent Steele said the resolution had been written during a time last school year when personals

directed at him were published every day for nine consecutive days.

Although Steele was disturbed by the personals, he said he had nothing to do with writing the resolution.

Arts and Sciences Senator Deb Silhacek said the main motivation behind the resolution was "to keep people from having negative things published about them."

ASUN President Keith Benes said he had hoped keeping advertisers names on record would have been a deterrent, keeping advertisements that hurt people out of the paper.

Silhacek said the resolution was meant to be a suggestion to the Daily Nebraskan, and if it had passed the paper would have been able to take it or leave it.

Arts and Science Senator Zachary Moore said he wanted to "put teeth into the resolution" by adding an amendment.

If the paper ignored ASUN's suggestion, Moore wanted the Committee For Fees Allocation to punish the Daily Nebraskan by refusing to raise the paper's funding for the next academic year.

Crickets plaguing Lincoln's buildings

By Mark Baldridge
Staff Reporter

Lincolnites are really being bugged.

What's bothering them? Crickets. Enormous numbers of crickets have been moving indoors since early this month. They're everywhere — underfoot, crowding doorways, invading homes and businesses all over town.

Why so many crickets — and why do they all want to come inside?

Leon Higley, assistant professor of entomology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said the first question was more difficult to answer.

"Usually, populations (of crickets) peak with dry weather," he said — just the opposite of what Nebraska has experienced this summer.

"Why populations of insects go up and down is a big question," he said. "It's something entomologists spend a lot of time trying to figure out."

But the question of why they all seem to be moving indoors is easier to answer, he said.

"Towards the fall many insects will move to over-wintering sites," he said. "It's a mechanism that allows the insects to survive the winter."

Though it might seem a little too warm for crickets to worry about fall just yet, Higley said that's not the case.

"Insects don't get fooled by temperature," he said. "The change is triggered by photoperiod."

Photoperiod is the measure of daylight in each 24-hour period.

Higley, who teaches a course on insects and their influence on society,

said crickets also were subject to ailments that could affect their behavior.

The crickets take in microscopic parasites that grow inside their bodies, he said. When the organisms reach adulthood they drive the cricket toward water, where they breed.

In buildings, crickets may go to toilets, where the fully grown worms "burst out of the cricket," he said.

Humans finding the parasites may believe they are suffering from some kind of infestation, as the worms swim around the toilet bowl, he said.

But the worms are strictly linked to crickets and are no threat to people, he said.

"It's one of the pinnacles of my entomological career — having someone come in ashen faced (from the bathroom) and being able to reassure them," he said.

College papers suffer string of thefts

By Chris Hain
Staff Reporter

There is a new form of protest hitting college campuses that student newspapers are finding hard to deal with.

On college campuses across the country student activists are stealing newspapers when they don't agree with articles in them. More than 15 student newspaper thefts have occurred on college campuses nationwide in 1993 and as many as 15,000 papers have been taken at one time.

Perhaps the biggest problem in dealing with the theft of student newspapers is that the matter hasn't been addressed in a court of law, said Mark Goodman, executive director of the Student Press Law Center. The center, in Washington, provides free legal advice and information to student papers and journalists.

"It's an issue that hasn't come up frequently enough," he said.

Goodman said another problem is that most student papers were free and many people didn't think that the taking of free newspapers was stealing.

But it was stealing, Goodman said. "They can still show the loss of papers that they paid to produce, and the presence of advertising," he said. The Daily Nebraskan, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's newspaper, has

"We'll just have to deal with each case on an individual basis."

—Fitzpatrick
Daily Nebraskan editor

had a small taste of newspaper theft in the past, but it has created no official policy regarding the matter.

A newspaper, though, could take several avenues to fight back, Goodman said, including both university and legal channels. Pressing formal charges probably would be the most effective deterrent, he said.

"I think people will sit up and take notice if they are charged with a criminal action," Goodman said.

The Daily Nebraskan has no specific policy to guide its reaction to a theft. The paper, though, could take legal action even though a precedent doesn't exist, Daily Nebraskan Editor Jeremy Fitzpatrick said.

"It has happened in the past here, and has happened recently around the country, and it probably is something we'll have to deal with in the future," he said.

"We'll just have to deal with each case on an individual basis."

John Wiltse, associate general

counsel for the University of Nebraska, said that if such thieves were identified, the issue could be addressed through local law enforcement.

"I think the police could handle it as a violation of state law," he said.

Shelley Stall, director of Student Legal Services at UNL, agreed that this form of protest could probably be prosecuted as a theft if a monetary value could be put on the stolen papers.

Stealing newspapers also could be considered a violation of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, she said.

"If you disagree with what someone says, does that mean you take away the medium for everybody to use?" Stall said.

UNL's newspaper thefts have been small-scale and have mainly occurred during student government elections when groups have thrown away papers that endorsed opposing parties, Fitzpatrick said.

The University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia recently had its own experience with this trend. In April, 14,000 copies of The Daily Pennsylvanian were stolen by students who objected to a conservative columnist's article.

Some of the students responsible for the theft were identified and have been undergoing judicial proceedings within the university.

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