

# OPINION

Thursday, July 13, 1995

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Daily  
**Nebraskan**

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University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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EDITORIAL

## Bam!

### Fireworks proposal should fizzle out

One week ago today, The Lincoln Star ran a story on the idea of a statewide ban on anything other than display fireworks.

The idea was brought up by Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady in response to the flagrant violations of Lincoln's ban of explosive fireworks. Specifically, firecrackers that are legal in nearby Nebraska towns that were being brought in to the Capital City.

Noncompliance with Lincoln's fireworks ordinance is not just younger citizens, but the parents of these youngsters as well. Also, the number of violations was quite high, and the police met with great difficulty trying to enforce the ban on such a wide-spread area.

One important note: this was only an idea that was brought up by Casady. There has been no action since then to follow this through.

However, the idea has been planted and until next July, we won't know what will grow from this.

Let's hope the idea finds dead soil, and goes no further.

On Independence Day, the day on which we celebrate our rights, we may have yet another right taken away from us with this possibility.

The root cause for this notion to be brought up can be summed up in one word: irresponsibility.

Fireworks are legal to fire off during certain hours of the day on July 3 and 4 in the city of Lincoln.

Yet many, many citizens in Lincoln don't seem to understand this, and don't have any common sense, either.

Any use of fireworks — explosive or otherwise — requires responsible supervision during that time. A talk before letting the kids loose for the day in a fireworks tent with a \$20 bill and a lighter is not the answer.

A watchful eye from a responsible adult could keep accidents from happening and the illegal fireworks from being used.

All that a statewide ban would accomplish would be more people leaving the state to buy illegal fireworks, thereby causing tension between police and fireworks-traffickers.

A statewide ban is not the answer; a statewide requirement of common sense and responsibility would be nice, but impossible to enforce.



## This Bud's for you, Mom

This past Fourth of July, I did something I have never done before (besides celebrating the 219th birthday of the good ole US of A).

I drank a beer in front of my mom. Yeah, I know. For some of you, that's no big deal. Some people have been trading shots with their parents since they learned how to walk.

But you have to understand my mother. The only alcohol she consumes is the weekly (and weakly) communion wine.

And I haven't seen my dad drink a beer in over 10 years.

We had a huge family reunion with relatives I didn't even know existed at my parents' house in the loveable dunghope of Grand Island.

That was my setting on Independence Day.

It's true, I'm almost 24 and I've been living on my own for over five years. So, I've tipped back a couple (dozen, hundred) on the weekends.

And it's not like I didn't drink when I was at home (I just never got caught — except once, but I'll get to that).

I started drinking when I was in the 8th grade. My parents were out of town and my older sister was having a rockin' shindig with a bunch of her college friends.

They thought it would be neat to make fuzzy navels for my friends and I. "Let's see what the stupid little junior high geeks do when they're drunk."

About all I did was lose consciousness.

But I had fun.

This was how I discovered the joys of alcohol.

From then on I would drink every chance I got, which were few and far between. So I had to make the most of each chance.

Unfortunately, my mom had this



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insane rule that I had to check in with them every time I came home — no matter how late it was.

This rule almost led to her discovering my drinking problem more than once.

On one memorable occasion, I had gone to the graduation party of a friend's sister.

For some strange reason, she had decided to get a buttload of wine coolers for the party.

For some even stranger reason, I got drunk on wine coolers.

Now, it takes a lot of wine coolers to get inebriated. I remember having at least a dozen before I faded out (I was later told that I went around finishing off other people's half-empty bottles).

Around two o'clock in the morning, when I had barely a glimmer of sober thought left in me, my mom called. She was wondering when I was coming home.

I freaked out. Luckily, a friend of mine (much more coherent than I) drove me to a convenience store for some Gatorade and Big Red and then took me home.

I don't remember it, but I sat up and talked to my mom for about half an hour and convinced her that I hadn't been drinking. I don't know how I did it, but it turned out to be all for naught.

Two years later, after another graduation party, she discovered that

I had been drinking for several years (those graduation parties will be the death of me yet).

I was only 19 and I had gone with some other friends to a bunch of parties for the graduating class a year younger than us.

Again, I blacked out. I remember being at my friend Greg's house and then calling my friend Dave (who was supposed to meet us) at 3 or 4 in the morning.

I remember it because I was swearing at him and calling him names (I've got a real potty mouth when I've been drinking).

I also remember it because he told me not to cuss because he thought the answering machine had turned on and his parents were listening.

And I'll never forget it because the answering machine was on, because his parents were listening, because I told Dave that his parents could perform fellatio on me (in a much more colorful phrasing) and because Dave's dad worked with my mom.

Needless to say, my mom was waiting for me when I got home and she wasn't going to be convinced of anything this time.

It's not like I've ever punched anyone while I was drunk, or stolen anything, or broken any windows. But there was still this uneasy feeling when I cracked open a can of Bud Light and offered my parents one.

She didn't say anything and I didn't say anything.

I'm not a big beer advocate and I'll agree that a lot of our society's problems are caused by alcohol.

But it sure felt good being treated as an adult — for one of the first times in my life.

Strauch is a graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the editor of the Daily Nebraskan.

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., P.O. Box 880448, Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448, weekdays during the academic year (except holidays); weekly during the summer session.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Tim Hedegaard, 472-2588.

Subscription price is \$50 for one year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

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