

OPINION PAGE

Our VIEW

Diversity legislation Liquor law change big step for tolerance

Could this be the next step toward separation of church and state?

Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns will ask the City Council today to introduce a new ordinance to allow sales of on- and off-sale alcohol on Sundays.

Four of seven council members, including Linda Wilson, Jeff Fortenberry, Jerry Shoecraft and Coleen Sang, told the *Lincoln Journal Star* Friday they would vote for the new ordinance.

Johann's request for a new ordinance came on Friday after Lancaster County District Judge Earl Witthoff ruled Thursday that the local ordinance allowing Sunday sales of alcohol in bars and restaurants but not in package stores was unconstitutional.

Mike Hughes, owner of Mike's O Street Drive-In, sued the city and claimed the ordinance unfairly treated on- and off-sales differently and therefore violated his right to equal protection under the law.

Witthoff threw out the ordinance and said it gave on-sale retailers an unfair competitive advantage.

The City Council now has until Sept. 24 to pass a new city alcohol ordinance or all sales of alcohol on Sunday will be prohibited within city limits. Until then, current laws governing alcohol sales in Lincoln will stand.

But, when, or if, Johanns' new ordinance passes, some Christian beliefs will no longer dictate city government policy.

Selling beer in Lincoln stores on Sundays has been illegal since 1957. Lincoln voted to allow only on-sale liquor sales on Sunday in 1984. Under state law, no city can sell alcohol on Sundays — the Christian Sabbath day — unless the city passes an ordinance allowing liquor sales.

This biased legislation is clearly wrong. In a city built on the beliefs of many faiths and religions, laws based on a singular belief blatantly overlook the values of many of its citizens.

Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath day, was never mentioned in the state law. Neither was any other religion's time to celebrate its faith.

Lincoln is a diverse city, proud of its growing stature as a cultural center of Nebraska. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln strides to increase the diversity of its campus and its students' acceptance of other cultures.

The state liquor law, founded on the beliefs of one religion, does not appreciate diversity.

But Lincoln's laws can.

One liquor law cannot change years of Christian-centered government programs.

But it can send an important message that all beliefs and lifestyles are accepted in Lincoln.

Haney's VIEW



It's in the air Opinion pages exude energy



JESSICA KENNEDY is a senior advertising and broadcasting major and the fall Daily Nebraskan opinion editor.

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Things are going to happen this year; walk around campus, talk to the students. You can feel the energy that shrouds campus. Sure, every fall brings renewed student excitement, but I think this year is special. For the upper-classmen, we've been through a lot in the last year ... diversity questions, gender-equity concerns and the never-ending battle between academics and athletics. And this year, the freshman class seems a little more focused, a little more controlled, a little more on top of things than in the past.

I'm feeling energetic and excited too. My status as a fifth-year senior hasn't embittered me. I am still psyched about the college experience and starting classes. In fact, I'm beginning one of the biggest adventures of my college career this fall. After three semesters as a staff columnist, I'm gearing up for a tour as the Daily Nebraskan opinion editor this fall.

This opportunity has got me seriously pumped! In my day-to-day life, I try to be an optimist by maintaining a positive attitude, seeing both sides

of an issue and listening. As editor I hope to incorporate those three tenants into the opinion section; a challenge that I'm looking forward to.

I see the opinion pages as a forum; a meeting and clashing of minds, personalities and passions.

To each student, every faculty member, all the professors and administrators: care enough to speak up when something concerns you, compliment when something pleases you and respond when something isn't played out right.

When you write to the Daily Nebraskan or stop down at our offices, I promise to greet you with a positive attitude and an open mind. I hope you extend the same courtesy to me. To borrow an old saying, "Don't shoot the messenger." Each semester the opinion editor is in the unique and interesting position of being at the center of campus opinions, attitudes and beliefs. I'm finding that my computer is the receptacle for every campus issue.

I think you're going to be intrigued with the opinions that will play across these pages every day for the next four months. In addition to the 10 daily columnists, I've hired nine other students to voice their opinions on everything from dating to religion to campus life. This semester, more than any other, should reflect the mood and experi-

ences of University Nebraska-Lincoln students.

But for me, this isn't enough! Although budgetary constraints prevent me from hiring every qualified writer and columnist, I strongly encourage anyone who has a solid idea, the motivation to write and the initiative to seek me out, to write a column. I want to hear it all — both sides of every issue and each perspective.

Finally, I'm here to listen. No one can claim to be informed or "in-tune" with their readers unless they listen. I firmly believe that in our age of rush-rush, people forget to listen. So I promise to listen what you have to say and to what you're concerned about. Some days I may have more time than others, but I'll always try.

Expect to open the paper every day and be challenged. You will read things that will make you happy, sad, angry and upset. There will be views represented that go against everything — and I mean everything — that you believe. But it's good for you. Getting too comfortable with your views and opinions will leave you weak and unprepared to deal with life's challenges.

So there's my soapbox for the semester.

For without debate, without conversations on uncomfortable topics, we are nothing.

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Unsigned editorials are the opinions of the Fall 1997 Daily Nebraskan. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, its employees, its student body or the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. A column is solely the opinion of its author. The Board of Regents serve as publisher of the Daily Nebraskan; policy is set by the Daily Nebraskan Editorial Board. The UNL Publications Board, established by the regents, supervises the production of the paper. According to policy set by the regents, responsibility for the editorial content of the newspaper lies solely in the hands of its student employees.

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P.S. Write Back



Send letters to: Daily Nebraskan, 34 Nebraska Union, 1400 "R" St., Lincoln, NE 68588, or fax to (402) 472-1761, or e-mail <letters@unlinfo.unl.edu>. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification