

OPINION PAPERS

Our VIEW

Operation protocol

Standards necessary if drug tests to work

In Norfolk last week, school district administrators revealed that few students had agreed to participate in their new parent-approved random drug testing program.

In fact, only 6 percent of Norfolk's 1,200 10th- through 12th-grade students were signed up for testing by their parents.

And Superintendent Randy Nelson told the *Omaha World-Herald* that he was somewhat disappointed by the low participation by parents.

“Under the Norfolk program, any student who tested positive once for drug use would be pulled from his or her extracurricular activities for a period. For a second offense, a student would be banned from all extracurricular activities.”

Why would any concerned parents sign their child up for such a program? So the child, if he or she uses drugs, could have even more free time to be tempted by drugs after testing positive?

In District 66, another school district planning parent-approved drug testing next month, parents signed up about 16 percent of students in middle and high schools. In that district, testing positive carries no school-based penalties. No school officials will get the results of the tests — only a child's concerned parents.

If, in fact, the random drug testing is being offered to help parents keep their children drug-free, not just create a “tough on drugs” facade for schools, District 66 has chosen a much better option.

If parents are truly concerned that their children may be using drugs, these parents need the resources to make sure their teens stay drug-free. A random drug test could help pressure those parents' children to stay away from drugs because of the threat of parental notification.

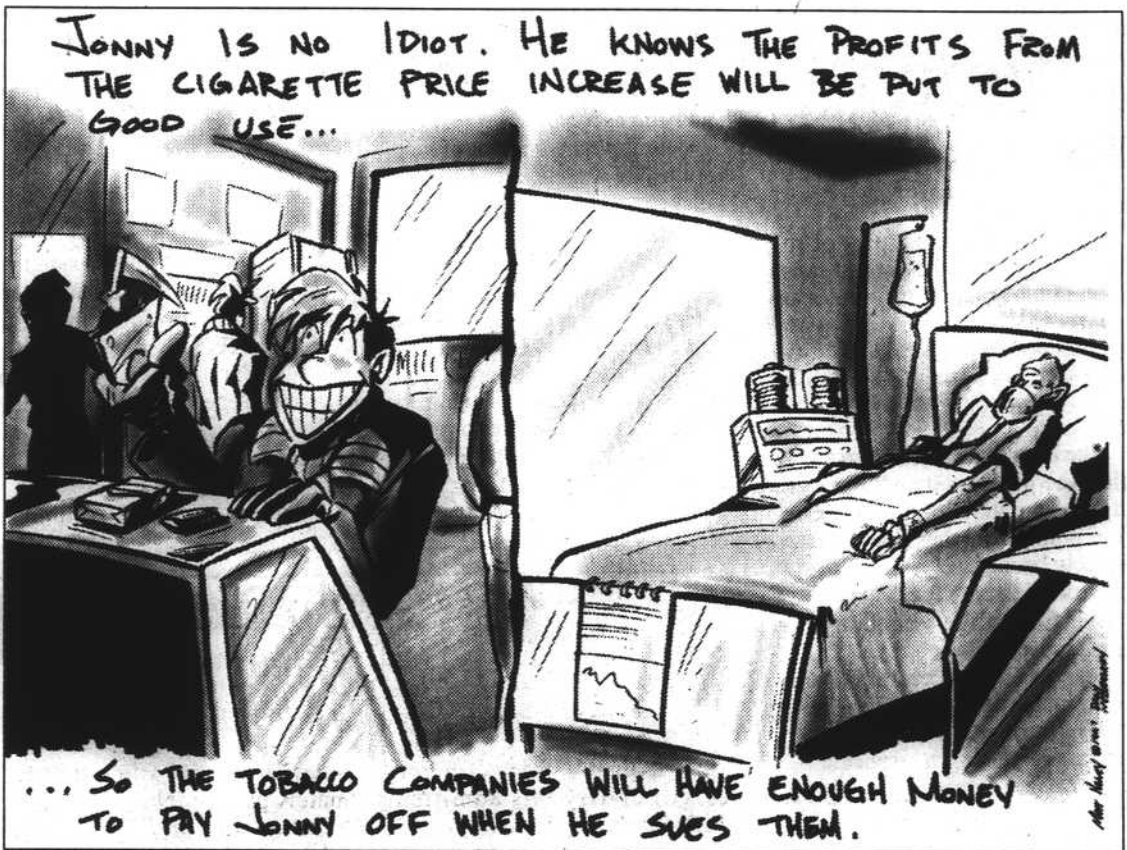
But a parent who believes his or her child may be using drugs knows that withdrawing the child from all constructive activities is not the answer to stopping drug use.

What does the child do after being banned from all school-sanctioned activities? Engage in out-of-school activities. Drug use, for instance.

The district would provide a greater public service to parents and drug-using teens if it simply notified parents after a positive drug test, then armed them with the right drug-fighting resources, such as phone numbers of organizations or support groups that help teens end their drug habits.

Until then, Norfolk's program should be dropped.

Haney's VIEW



Damage control

Public too harsh on paparazzi criticism



LANE HICKENBOTTOM is a senior news-editorial major and a *Daily Nebraskan* photographer and columnist.

The death of Princess Diana was and remains a tragic occasion. The people of the world have lost one of their favorite dignitaries and are confused as to why this tragedy had to happen. As both a photographer and a common man, I think the general public should reconsider its ill-favored view on the paparazzi being investigated in her death.

Even before it was discovered that alcohol was a major player in the accident that killed Diana, her millionaire companion, Dodi Fayed, and their driver, I found it hard to lay all the blame on the seven paparazzi who were allegedly chasing the car. I think those photographers had a right to be there ... up until the moment the Diana's drunk driver broke the law again by allegedly driving over four times faster than the Paris tunnel's speed limit.

As a young photographer I have already had the opportunity to take several pictures of celebrities. As these opportunities presented themselves, I thought a lot about the issue of invasion of privacy. And in my mind, the justification to invade is overwhelming.

First, when you or anybody else steps into a public place, the public has a right to see you there. Therefore it is the right of a journalist — a recorder of daily events — to record the happening. Generally

“Princess Diana was not supposed to have a private life.”

though, the public doesn't care what time the average Jo walks her dog, therefore that information rarely gets published.

But the public always cares what huge celebrities are up to. The paparazzi fill a void that the public has. These freelancers shoot the pictures the photo agencies want them to shoot. Publications ask the agencies for certain photos. These are the pictures the public demands and pays for. They are obsessed with huge rock-star-like personalities and others in the public spotlight, such as the late Princess Diana. Don't believe me? Then why are you reading this right now?

If you are the type of person who believes that people such as Diana ought to have more privacy, then maybe you ought to take a look at yourself. Why are you reading this column about her? Have you been watching several hours of the nightly news to get the inside scoop? When you are at the checkout stand do you ever take a look at the headlines on the *National Enquirer* or *Star*? Ever buy a copy? Even if you can answer “no” to these questions, then you ought to know that you are in a minority. The reason why newspapers, the nightly news, magazines and tabloids are filled with the latest details of Diana's death is because people buy, watch and/or read it. If people want to follow the lives of celebrities then *somebody* has to photographically document them.

And who better to document than Diana, the Princess of Wales? Not only have people consumed every moment her life — more than most celebrities — but being in the public spotlight was the number one responsibility outlined in that job

description. As part of the British royalty, she really never had any parliamentary or executive power. The position of Princess of Wales is really nothing more than a figure head — somebody to be seen and heard, and nobody did it better than Princess Diana.

Princess Diana was not supposed to have a private life. She is the epitome of somebody whose life is to be public because of *who* she is, not in spite of it. The day that the British monarchy decides that it wants to be out of the public spotlight is the day that the British monarchy no longer has justification for its existence.

Diana knew this and was perhaps the first member of the British monarchy to use the press to her advantage. Early in her marriage with Prince Charles, Diana was able to grab the press's attention in order to gain influence. Only through the press's help in gaining popular support was Diana able to achieve all that she did. Diana was known as one of the few, if not the only, member of the British monarchy who directly saw to humanitarian efforts. Unlike others before her, she touched the hands of AIDS patients, starving children and land mine victims. The paparazzi were with her the entire way, boosting her public image, creating a princess the world grew to love. British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that “she was the people's princess, and that's how she will stay, how she will remain, in our hearts and in our memories forever.” Our memory of her has and will be relied on the press's coverage of her.

If you are upset because you think the paparazzi and the press destroyed her, consider what Diana would have been without them.

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