

How dry I am

Abolishing alcohol on campus won't stop abuse



DANIEL MUNKSGAARD is a sophomore English and philosophy major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Our university's sense of ethics could be putting us all in danger.

Recent moves to enforce policies involving drinking in the dorms are yet another attempt to enforce the highly moral, doesn't-it-look-nice-on-paper dry campus policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. And despite the fact that many students laughed at the new regulations, they are starting to have something of an effect.

Instead of getting plastered safely in their dorm rooms, students

are now venturing even more to the many off-campus parties to do so.

And this is a good thing?

Student abuse of alcohol is a problem. At UNL, 43 percent of students abuse alcohol. Catch that word: abuse. This is not a healthy thing, this is not a good thing. This is something we all agree on.

But we're not getting anywhere by forcing it off campus. Certainly, we may cut down on certain students' overall alcohol intake, but it actually makes the abuse problem worse. The "drink while you've got it" mentality often will kick in, and students will end up getting a great deal more snookered during these occasional binge sessions.

This has two results:

For one, students who drink in this fashion are much more likely to abuse alcohol. We have a problem in our society of differentiating between use and abuse. While a dry campus policy can bring down student use of alcohol, it can actually increase the number of students who abuse alcohol. A good example is a country like France, where alcohol is consumed in much

greater amounts than in the United States, but is actually abused less.

And two, now that we've got a bunch of bombed students off campus, how are we supposed to get them back? Especially if, say, the police bust the party and tell everyone to go home? Lincoln is an incredibly car-dependent town, and UNL is no different. A "close-to-campus" apartment is often well more than a mile away, and even students who live on campus usually have a car. So these off-campus parties can often be way off campus, which means we've got a large number of intoxicated students driving back.

It doesn't matter if the majority of students don't drive while drunk. Even if, as Linda Major pointed out in her editorial on Monday, 75 percent of students don't drive under the influence, that still leaves 25 percent who do. That's too large of a risk to the safety of other drivers. A risk that our dry campus policy is only perpetuating.

This is not to say that the university has to create a wet campus to solve the problem. Such a solution

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probably wouldn't be too popular politically, and would be a fairly risky experiment. But if we're going to have a dry campus, we have to be willing to accept the problems that it creates, and be willing to do something to solve them.

One excellent idea I heard was to create a nighttime shuttle service that covered the closer off-campus apartments. It wouldn't even have to operate every night; just game nights and other popular party times. It's by no means a complete solution, and it might be rather costly, but it would be a step in the right direction.

We cannot try to regulate drinking behavior among students with-

out looking at the effects that such regulation causes. By saying, "At least it doesn't happen on UNL property," the administration is skirting the issue and trying to wash its hands.

We need to remember that there is nothing inherently bad about alcohol. In fact, moderate alcohol consumption (here defined as a drink or two a day), particularly in the case of red wine, can actually offer certain health benefits.

In moderate amounts, it can help us relax. In moderate amounts, it's perfectly natural.

Abuse is the problem. Drunken driving is the problem. And we're only making it worse.

Business as usual

A day in the life of Steve Willey



STEVE WILLEY is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Initially, I wanted to use my column this week to expose numerous fund-raising misdeeds by President Clinton and Vice President Gore.

For more than a month, I had pored over thousands of pages of written documents and viewed countless hours of videotapes preparing for this story. And as a result of my investigation, I had uncovered some shocking and amazing facts — facts that would have grabbed the White House by the throat and choked it to the floor.

I probably could have sold my story to every newspaper in the world. It was the type of story that would have made Bob Woodward (one of the journalists who broke Watergate) exclaim, "I've accomplished nothing in my career in journalism! Steve's story has robbed me of my glory! By the way, Deep Throat was really my pet basset hound!"

I even had a source who was willing to admit that President Clinton — desperate for foreign campaign contributions — committed "lewd" acts with first cat Socks. A White House aid was going to go on record saying Clinton performed these acts in front of Chinese dignitaries who wanted to see "just what their money could buy."

And how much did they pay Clinton? Well, I'm sad to say that our president bucked for much less than you might think, namely \$13 and a half-eaten Butterfinger candy bar.

Yep, it would have been a great column, but you won't see it this week. Since I failed to submit a column last week, I feel it is more important that I address my absence.

Therefore the Clinton story is, for the time being, on hold. This topic is far more pressing.

For you see, in the three years that I have written for the DN, I have never failed to submit a column — that is, until last Friday. I wish I could tell you I was involved in some humorous event that kept me from writing my column last week.

I wish, for example, that I could say that I spent last week standing in front of the State Capitol protesting my inability to get a date by randomly slapping strangers on the back of the neck. But I can't.

Truth is, I was just busy.

That's it.

I was just plain ol' busy. Homework, school projects and work had consumed too much of my time. And for that, I would like to apologize heartily.

But I am truly thankful for one thing: I know I've got a sympathetic audience in you folks. College students are probably the only ones who truly understand what it means to be really busy. I've got so many things going on in my life that I have to pencil "take a dump" into my daily planner. Those of us who work a full-time job while taking 16 hours of classes at UNL have no misgivings about how hard the "real world" will be.

Personally, I can't wait to be done with school. The real world will be a cakewalk compared to what I'm doing now. But don't just take my word about how busy my life has been. Allow me to walk you through one of my better days last week. After reading this, I have no doubts that everyone will completely understand why I missed my column. Here, for your understanding, is a day in the life of Steve Willey.

3:30 a.m. Unable to sleep because of a racing mind, I get out of bed and make myself a mayonnaise sandwich.

4:30 a.m. After consuming seven mayo sandwiches and the better part of a jar of honey, I arrive at Super Saver — in only my underwear — to purchase more mayonnaise.

5:00 a.m. Finally able to forget the next day's demands, I crawl back into bed.

5:15 a.m. Cell phone rings. My

boss — who lives in Omaha — is unable to find his slippers. Since it's cold outside, he offers to pay me to drive up and get his paper, which is resting in the driveway, for him.

5:30 a.m. Sorely needing money to pay a backlog of court fines, I head to Omaha.

6:30 a.m. Two minutes away from my boss's home, I get a call from him, and he informs me that he was wearing his slippers the whole time, and I can go back to bed.

6:37 a.m. Stop at run-down gas station outside of Omaha and write boss's phone number and the phrase, "For a good time call ..." on men's room wall.

7:37 a.m. Arrive back in Lincoln, shower, study and leave for class.

8:30 a.m. Arrive at communications class.

8:31 a.m. Notice that none of my classmates look familiar.

8:32 a.m. Find out that I am sitting in a 300-level French class. Professor cusses at me in French, and says how appalled she is that this late in the semester I'm unaware of where my communications class meets.

9:30 a.m. Skip philosophy class because, after a brief look in my planner, I see that I am scheduled to "take a dump" that hour.

10:30 a.m. Arrive at work, begin selling appliances.

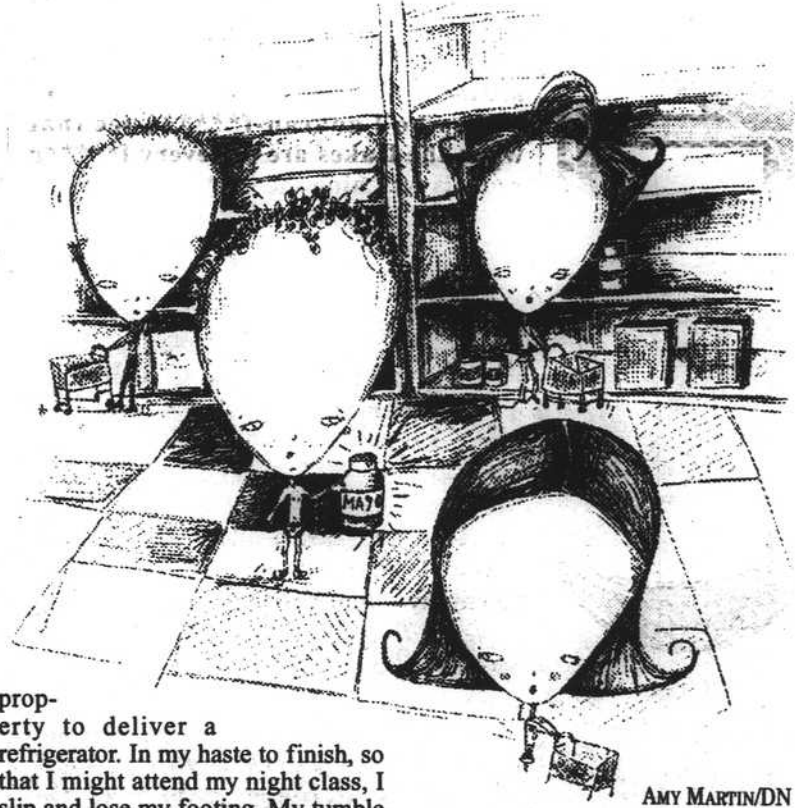
2:00 p.m. Still selling. Some strange man keeps calling back wanting to know if I would be interested in buying a sofa that, if left outside during the winter months, could also double as a chest freezer.

3:00 p.m. Installing a dishwasher at a new home. While putting in the dishwasher, I fail to realize the electricity is still, as we say in the appliance industry, "on," which means it is capable of giving me a permanent afro that resembles Don King's.

3:07 p.m. As luck would have it, several hundred thousand volts of electric current pulse through my body.

3:15 p.m. As I am still convulsing on the kitchen floor, alarmed home owners attempt to saturate the flames that have sprouted in my hair by throwing water on the power supply.

6:00 p.m. After finally getting the dishwasher put in, I arrive at a rental



AMY MARTIN/DN

property to deliver a refrigerator. In my haste to finish, so that I might attend my night class, I slip and lose my footing. My tumble causes me to unintentionally release my grasp on a 700-pound refrigerator, which falls down three flights of steps and lands uncomfortably on an elderly woman and her poodle. I sneak down to the gruesome scene and place a cunningly-forged invoice from a competing appliance store inside the door of the refrigerator.

8:00 p.m. Overwhelmed for the day, I arrive late to my night class and sneak to the back.

8:45 p.m. Notice my econ professor is speaking French.

8:50 p.m. Professor notices me, says she can't believe I'd have the audacity to come back to the same room and throws an overhead projector in my general direction, only it doesn't quite get to me because I'm way in the back and the overhead hits squarely on the shins of a non-traditional student.

8:55 p.m. Leave class.

9:00 p.m. After a quick mayonnaise sandwich at home, I tackle the mounds of paperwork I have from work and school.

11:57 p.m. Cellular phone rings. Boss says he's got too much to do in

Omaha tomorrow.

He wants me to meet him at the warehouse in order to pick up the appliances and haul them back to Lincoln for deliveries next day.

12:58 a.m. Leave for Omaha. Stop briefly at gas station to write some words down on the men's room wall.

So there you have just a typical day in the life of Steve. I hope it helps you understand where I'm coming from and why I missed my column last week. I just tried to do the best with what I had and, unfortunately, my column had to suffer.

It's sort of like the two end pieces on a loaf of bread: Nobody wants them, but sometimes you still got to use 'em to make a sandwich so that you might eat and forget to do your column on time. (Whatever that means.)

Or maybe I just need to keep more bread in the cupboard. That way, I can concentrate on those Pulitzer Prize-winning columns — such as our president making out with a feline, for example.