

Rock bottom

Alcohol leads people to new depths



JIM VANCE is a senior physical and health education major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Being a health major, I took a health class on alcohol and substance abuse. It was a minicourse, which taught a lot about alcohol, drugs and life. The teacher was even a recovering alcoholic. He had a speaker come in one time by the name of Otto.

Otto told us about how he hit rock bottom with alcohol. He said something like, "I realized I hit rock bottom when alcohol caused me to miss church." He looked around the room at puzzled stares of those who had spent plenty of time sobering up Sunday mornings at the expense of church. He continued, "Probably not such a big deal to all of you, but it's a little bit different when you're the minister."

With the substance abuse problems in my family growing up, I could relate. Although I use alcohol on occasion, I rarely ever desire a drink. I stay away from it in times of high stress, and if I have more than two drinks in two hours, someone else drives me home. I am trying to be sure not to hit rock bottom.

I recently found another person who has hit rock bottom like Otto — Jeffrey Ireland. I do not know the man, nor could I recognize him if he stood before me, but he is an important person from which to learn something.

Jeffrey Ireland knows about death. Jeffrey had a young 17-month-old son who died tragically and innocently in February, when his girlfriend threw the child into the couch across the room, fracturing his skull.

This was the bottom for Ireland, but he wasn't done digging deep. On the evening of Saturday, March 14, Ireland turned his troubles to alcohol. Out drinking to forget and run away from his problems, he got behind the wheel.

Jeffrey Ireland knows about death. He killed Laura Cockson. I did not know her, but she seemed to be a beautiful young woman with a bright future, loving family and friends and a serious boyfriend.

Why, Jeffrey? Do you know why you did this?

You did it because you are like most of the college students cruising the Lincoln bar scene. Naive enough to think alcohol will relieve all your problems, and just plain stupid and ignorant enough to think you can drive after having some drinks. Well, I hope it was worth it.

"(Jeffrey,) I hope you do something positive with your life. You know a lot about death. It's time to start learning about life."

No, I don't. As you know, Jeffrey, the loss of a loved one is crippling. I hope it hurts. I hope it hurts badly for a long time. I hope you go to jail. But most of all, I hope you turn your life around.

I hope you do something positive with your life. You know a lot about death. It's time to start learning about life.

Tell people how you screwed up. Tell them what to expect when they go to Iggy's with some friends and then drive home after a few. Tell them how they will have to live with the guilt. Tell them how it will be when they have to come face to face with the family of the person they kill. Tell them how it feels to lose a loved one.

Tell them about death, Jeffrey. Teach them about life. Save someone's life.



MARK ZMARZLY is a senior English and speech communications major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

In reading William Shakespeare's "Anthony and Cleopatra" I was rather concerned with the portrayal of Cleopatra in Act 3. "Anthony closely watched as Cleopatra strolled down the beach in a hot pink thong."

This is how one of my class assignments turned out this week. One moment I was carefully reading Shakespeare for dramatic plot sequences and character questions, the next moment I was picturing Cleopatra in a string bikini. That's right kiddies, spring break is only one day away.

A week off of school. Say those five words over very slowly and bask in the glory of that statement.

This week off may not be all that fun for a lot of you students out there. Some of you will be working a 60-hour week to save some money for school. Some of you will be working on that psychology paper you put off all semester. Some of you will be checking into a Harris Lab study and be fed morphine and vodka. Some of us, will be heading for Florida, Texas, Colorado or Mexico.

On Friday I, along with 100,000 of my closest friends, will assault Panama City, Florida. I will leave the snow and corn of Nebraska for the sand and sun of a college-break oasis. Am I going to have a lot of fun? Yes. Do I feel bad about the friends I'm leaving behind? Hell no.

Ever since I figured out that Cinemax plays dirty movies after midnight, I have been well acquainted with the concept of college spring break. I was 13, and I was educated by a film called "Spring Break Sex-a-thon '89" or something to that effect. I saw college kids having fun in the sand, and I wanted to be there. Of course, I was 13 and wanted to be anywhere older women were.

Earlier this semester I read an article in the Daily Nebraskan regarding spring break. The author didn't seem to grasp the concept of going on spring break to a place like Florida. I also have heard a lot of negative feelings expressed across this campus about spring break trips and the people who go on them. I would like to take this opportunity to point out a couple of obvious advantages that these people seem to have overlooked.

Give me a break

Millions of students can't be wrong

■ Florida is warm. While Nebraska is affectionately referred to as "Hell," it's not quite as hot.

■ Leaving Nebraska for any period of time is a good thing. It's called expanding your horizons, without drugs.

■ Road trips are a bonding experience. Eat chicken-on-a-stick in Mississippi together. Nothing says, "you're my true friend" like a fried piece of poultry on a popsicle stick.

■ At no other time in your life will you be able to take a week off of reality and go somewhere to party for seven straight days.

Spring break is not a free-for-all orgy, unless they've changed the theme this year and haven't informed me yet. It is not a bunch of "frat boys" and sorority girls drinking 'till they throw up and having unprotected sex on the beach. Yes, spring break is a big party that lasts a week, but it is not what others would like to portray it as.

To avoid a long debate, let's assume all of the rumors about spring break are true. Everyone down there will be drunk from the moment they wake up 'till the moment they go to bed (pass out). Most of the people down there have no morals, so casual sex will be more readily available than at a Bill Clinton fund-raiser. Students down there will act like total idiots and probably hurt themselves.

If this were true why would college students, our future leaders, engage in this tradition? Wouldn't this environment attract a different element of people? Panama City would be the high school dropout spring break destination of choice.

Spring break is a true college tradition that you just have to experience to truly know. It's waking up at 9 a.m. and watching the sun rise over the ocean from your balcony. It's meeting the guys from Georgia in Room 309 and the gals from Ohio in 311. It's hitching a ride up the main street from other college kids. It's seeing some really bizarre things that you never thought possible; decorum prohibits me listing them. It's being able to cut loose and

have fun with your friends.

Spring break is controlled insanity. The cops in Panama City, as well as in other traditional destinations, are very observant and are there to "protect and serve." The bar owners are not determined to make money by serving every minor on the premises. The students seem to have some sense of control, judging from the fact that these cities continue to invite us down there.

I love stereotypes. As a "frat boy," I've heard my fair share. I wouldn't stoop so low as to tell those students who harbor ill feelings toward spring breakers that they need to stop watching reruns of "Saved by the Bell" and get a life. That is something that I wouldn't do. I would invite all students to experience spring break before they form a judgment about it.

You may think that I am the poster boy for everything that is wrong with spring break, the college experience and society in general. I happen to think that I am every-

thing that is right about spring break, the college experience and society in general.



MATT HANEY/DN

Guest
VIEW

Keeping the faith

Proud to be at UNL

BILL MCLAUGHLIN is a chemistry instructor at UNL.

A good friend once advised me that life is an interesting journey. Perhaps my recent journey is similar to Alice in Wonderland (Bill in Universityland?) — it gets "curiouser and curiouser." I am also reminded of the words sung by the great rock philosopher Mick Jagger, "You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes, you just might find ... you get what you need."

The past two weeks on campus have pointed out so many things to all of us who have been listening. Does anyone still think that students on this campus fit under the typical Generation X profile of being apathetic or uninterested in a quality education?

I have been so personally rewarded and touched by the sincere efforts that students in my chemistry classes have undertaken. They came to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln because it could be part of their journey. They were convinced that it would be a way of achieving part of their dreams. I am humbled to think they feel I could share in their plan.

How did they react when they heard they may lose part of their important goals? They organized and sought wise council from interested people. They were polite, even respectful, of the university processes available to them. They contacted their elected student government. The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska listened and took immediate action, within the means available to it. Again, polite and sincere people acting on their beliefs. The issue did not go away.

Some wonder why it was even an issue. Letters and e-mail to university officials were other avenues open to students. As supported interest began to grow, the public media became interested in the "news." What was this news?

Students on the campus beyond chemistry classes realized that the real issue was quality education for undergraduates. Not one of the students questioned the importance of discovering new knowledge within the research agendas of various departments. In fact, the chemistry department has achieved some outstanding results with the research it does. It is to be commended for that.

The question that would not go away was why can't Nebraska have both high quality education for undergraduates and be a place where new knowledge is discovered? My gratitude, and I hope the gratitude of all faculty members and administration, goes to those dedicated students who saw an injustice and refused to just let it happen.

We should be proud that our students have learned to determine which issues are important and that they have learned how to express their beliefs in acceptable methods. They rallied and organized a petition drive sponsored by the Residence Hall Association and ASUN. The honors college took on the challenge.

A unity across campus developed that kept the focus on ways to achieve the best education while at UNL. The issue has never really been me. It has been honestly seeking the means to put an emphasis on giving this university the reputation it is publicly seeking.

My compliments initially go to the Daily Nebraskan. Our national popular press has been criticized for clouding serious issues with sensationalism and shoddy reporting. Our campus newspaper has been fair and has reported the issues with clarity and a balance of all opinions. It has stayed with this important issue because it listened to what students were saying.

The Lincoln print media, television and radio reports also have reported this issue with the importance it deserves and has placed UNL students in a very positive light.

Parents all over the state should be proud that their sons and daughters are learning how to organize and how to be involved in positive change and are still getting a quality education. They have learned that a good university, which UNL is, is more than a place where you learn. It is a WAY that you learn.

I have been fortunate to teach here. I hope a way to continue can be found. A common theme in teaching is that when you teach you learn. I have been fortunate to have learned much from my students.

I want to add that to learn is to grow. To all who have been involved, from students, to faculty colleagues, to friends, to parents, to the general public, I want to express my sincerest THANK YOU. You have encouraged me to continue to be a true believer of the power, importance and personal rewards available to the partnership between teachers and learners.