

OPINION PACKAGES

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Quotes OF THE WEEK

"These flies are the worst I've seen anywhere."
Doris Sargent of Mobile, Ala., about the insect problem at the state fair this year

"They gave me a little respect, but I would rather give up the numbers for the win."
Louisiana Tech wide receiver Troy Edwards, on his treatment during the Nebraska game

"I'll put them right up in front of your eyeball! I've got a duck with three legs, a lizard with two heads and a half chicken, half turkey that's alive, man!"
State fair sideshow animal handler "Lefty," about his "pets"

"Ten to 15 years ago everyone would run and slink away if the police showed up at a party. Now people refuse to leave, and conflict results."
Lincoln Police Chief Tom Casady, about their efforts to cut down on underage drinking

"We don't live an easy life. We just live day by day, knowing the sun will rise the next morning."
Julie Turner, talking about her life before she was accepted into the Habitat for Humanity program

"Until you experience it for the first time - meeting the family, building the house - there's no way to describe the benefits. There really are no tangible benefits but rather emotional ties lasting a lifetime."
Jason Dubs, president of the UNL chapter of Habitat for Humanity, on the rewards of the program

"How many people my age are putting themselves through college doing log rolling and just basically having fun all summer? You can't beat that."
J.R. Salzman, 19, of Hayward, Wis., about his summer job as a lumberjack

"This is the beginning of the end of this painful period in the university's history."
UNL Chancellor James Moeser, resolving to return American Indian remains

"The proposal by the Union Board is blatantly discriminatory. There can be no way of enforcing how Community Service Officers will check student IDs."
ASUN Senator Kara Slaughter, during the two-hour discussion that led to ASUN's opposing a piece of legislation that would exclude non-students from the Nebraska Union

"If you don't like what you hear at any particular moment, wait five minutes and we usually play something completely different."
Rhett McClure, senior broadcasting major, and one of four music directors at KRNU, about their format and airplay tendencies

Mook's VIEW



DN LETTERS

"Of age?"

On Sept. 2, Graham Johnson, a DN columnist, expressed his opinions about the age law on drinking in the United States. He said, "Because of modern prohibition, an important component of maturation - the internalization of responsible alcohol consumption - is dangerously delayed in this country. Instead of having youths socialized early with an understanding of alcohol, socialization is postponed, delaying this process significantly by five to 10 years."

When I first came to the United States, I was 20 years old. I went to a welcome party at UNL. I was excited. It was my first party in the country of "the free and the brave." I was shocked when I was told there was no alcohol at the party. I looked around at the fancy decorations. I noticed a whole bunch of people jumping around. No one had alcohol. It reminded me of my 13th birthday party.

I said to my friend, "Let's get out of here and go to a bar and have a drink." My friend said, "We can't 'cause you have to be 21 years old to be able to purchase alcohol." I felt deeply insulted.

"What do you mean? I am old enough to work. I am old enough to have a kid and a family. I am old enough to vote. I am old enough to drive. But I am not old enough to have a glass of wine? Is this a joke?"

Then how do the underage American youth spend the most confused times of their lives? Well, it didn't take me too long to find out. Go to Blockbuster, rent a tape and GET HIGH!

I was surprised to find out how accessible marijuana was, and how popular it was around minors. More surprisingly, most of my minor friends (American) only had their principles in place - no drinking until they are of legal age - because it was specifically illegal for them to drink.

But the drug law was for everybody. Therefore, it wasn't specifically targeting their age group, and they didn't carry much guilt when they were using drugs. Another factor was that marijuana was easier to find than alcohol. When the government was trying to prevent the youth from one

kind of drug, it was pushing them to use another kind of a drug.

Well then, how does this work in other countries which have a younger age limit for alcohol? Am I more mature than an average 22-year-old American girl is? I met with alcohol when I was 16. I started going to the bars when I was 18. By the time I was 19, I already had enough bad drinking experiences. I learned how to drink in moderation at the age of 19. By the time I was 20, I learned that the bars were not the places to find a boyfriend.

When I was 21, I was mature enough to look for only good music and good company in a bar. Drinking and exposing myself to other sexes would not satisfy me anymore, and I searched for different directions to fulfill my life and satisfy my desires. Maybe that's why I am spending a potential drinking night at home, by myself, writing this letter to the DN at the age of 22.

This kind of explains why most bars in Lincoln (a college town) are more like dating services. This explains why most 21-year-olds and older college students are rolling on the streets, highly intoxicated and making fools out of themselves on the weekends. They didn't have enough time to LEARN how to drink.

If a country is not brave enough to allow the youth adult responsibilities, how are they going to produce responsible adults?

Ayca Ariyoruk
junior
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You're not in Europe anymore, Toto ...

I have only been a student here at UNL for two weeks, but I am quickly developing a profound distaste for the Europhile pseudo-urbane columns in the Daily Nebraskan authored by Graham Evan Johnson. His column published in the Sept. 2 issue of the DN is a prime example.

In his column, Johnson takes issue with the age-based prohibition of alcohol consumption on this campus, as well as, apparently, anywhere else in the world. Johnson notes that,

in his opinion, ending age-based prohibition of alcohol would encourage responsible drinking among youth because it would make them feel that they were "adults." He also claimed that if age-based prohibition were abolished it would "initiate a much stronger role of the parent/guardian in the youth's life."

As someone who has worked with alcoholic children, parents and geriatrics, as well as someone who hopefully understands social history (History Ph.D. student), I can tell Mr. Johnson that his views are incredibly naive, to say the least.

Johnson notes that European nations experience much less in the way of alcohol-related problems because of the way their cultures view alcohol. We have a different culture than Europe. Simply changing the age for permissible alcohol consumption will do little more than increase the amount of alcohol individuals who currently fall under this age now consume. Instituting campus beer gardens, as Johnson suggests, will do nothing to curtail the problems of binge drinking, alcoholism and addiction.

American culture will have to be fundamentally changed at many, many levels before alcohol is considered blasé and is no longer a drug of abuse and addiction.

Eliminating age-based prohibitions, before fundamental beliefs about alcohol are addressed will lead to disaster. Johnson's use of European models to prove his points is also somewhat tenuous. Switzerland distributes free needles to heroin addicts, while the Netherlands legalizes prostitution, large-scale pornography operations and certain types of drug use.

I don't think it would be advisable to endorse either of these policies in an effort to reduce VDs on campus or I.V. drug abuse, but using Johnson's reasoning, this would seem to be the course he would advocate.

In the future, I hope Mr. Johnson can impress me less with his affinity for all things European and more with his editorial ability.

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history

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