

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Call me daddy

Recent MIP bill beyond the rightful duty of the police

The Unicameral is at it again.

Earlier this month, Sen. Mark Quandahl of Omaha introduced the nefarious LB114, which would expand the application of laws governing minor in possession charges. The bill contains language that would treat minors who are merely near alcohol as if they were actually in possession of it, and it also allows the suspension of driver's licenses in cases where a person is convicted of MIP.

This bill is unconstitutionally vague and infringes upon minors' civil liberties.

The bill carries a pair of criteria: The minor must be in proximity of alcohol, and the minor must exhibit, through observation or testing, signs of having consumed alcohol.

The first criterion is much too vague and left to the discretion of the arresting officer. What does it mean to be in proximity? In sight of alcohol? In the same household? Does it count to be near unopened alcohol?

It makes no sense to take one's driver's license just because they may have consumed alcohol illegally. The punishment doesn't fit the crime—drinking illegally does not break any traffic law.

The second criterion also is vague and left to the officer. The officer's perception is taken as equally incriminating as an objective test. If a minor "appears" to have consumed alcohol (say, by being belligerent while being accosted by the officer), and if the minor happens to be "near" alcohol (say, walking from a party), the bill provides for that person to be charged with MIP.

This is worrisome because, at least in Lincoln, it is relatively routine for police officers to abuse the leeway the law gives them—just ask anyone shipped to detox. There's no guarantee that the second criterion will be carefully evaluated when an officer catches a minor near alcohol, and depending upon the officer's perception frequently may lead to the presumption of guilt—which is unconstitutional.

This proclivity toward determining guilt is precisely why this bill threatens designated drivers. Despite Quandahl's statements to the contrary, there is no guarantee to non-drinking minors that they won't be cited, so they won't attend to their drinking friends.

The bill continues in its irresponsible policy by increasing punishments for an MIP charge. The bill eliminates a provision allowing for public service and includes language mandating at least a three-month suspension of one's driver's license.

Quandahl claims that the punishment is necessary to force minors to take notice of their wrong, but these punishments border on the absurd.

It makes no sense to take one's driver's license just because they may have consumed alcohol illegally. The punishment doesn't fit the crime—drinking illegally does not break any traffic law.

In fact, it sounds more like a parent disciplining a child—why don't they ground us instead? Parenting isn't the role of the state or the police.

If any punishment fits the "crime," public service does. But that provision is cut out by LB114.

Whatever its intent, this bill gives too much authority to police officers and far too much trust in their perception. Minors—a group which includes many at the university—should not be subjected to this embarrassment and outright revocation of freedoms.

LB114 must not pass.

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Neal Obermeyer/DN

Professor of myths, man of legend

In the fall of 1997, a young, naïve me strolled into the Love Library auditorium for my first college class.

I wondered many things that day: Would I like college? Would it be too hard? Would I ever score? What would my professors be like? As I sat down that day, my mind was as open and ready for new experience as it had ever been in my entire life.

The class was classical mythology, and nothing could prepare me for the teacher, Professor Neil Adkin. If you've had him, you know what I'm talking about. If you haven't, go sit in on one of his classes before your time here at the university is up.

First of all, Adkin is from Liverpool, England, but his accent sounds nothing like any of the Beatles. His speech patterns are quite peculiar, and I'm still not convinced that the way he speaks in class is the way he talks in his everyday life. "Claassecal meeeethology," was how he referred to the class.

He spent the first two full days of class taking roll. After reading each person's name, he would give commentary on it. It usually began with him reading the name, waiting for the person's response, then guessing the origins of the name and telling a story relating to the name.

When he got to mine, he proclaimed, "Bock. German, meaning raaaam. I once had an encounter in Munich with a girl named Bock." He did this more than 200 names.

Some highlights from the rest of the semester: Showing a nude and fully aroused Odysseus on the projector, he asked, "Does that turn you on? Or off?"

One day there was a problem with the film projector—it would only play the documentary in fast forward or reverse, not at normal speed. After viewing the entire film, in reverse, then fast forward, then reverse again, an exasperated Adkin decided to try and lecture about it as it was going on in fast forward.

Many left the auditorium in disgust. I just laughed.

Another time, Adkin noticed a larger amount of people than normal were asleep in class. Turning the microphone up a little, he said, "Is that bettah?" When there was no response, he turned the mike up to an eardrum-piercing full volume and yelled, "IS THAT BETTAH?"

In the middle of class one time, he announced that it was "intermission." He proceeded to shut off all the lights and hide under the podium for a few minutes. Then he got out from underneath and sat in the front row for a couple more minutes. Then he went back to the podium and picked up on the rest of his lecture.

The first half of the semester was spent reading "The Odyssey," the second half I don't really remember. One of my friends was in Adkin's class and also in the large, boring class I had right afterward, coincidentally, so we devised an ingenious scheme where I would skip one day and go the other, and he would skip that day and go the other. Genius. Well, as I'm sure you can guess, both of us ended up skipping all the days. I ended up getting a B.

As I walked out of class that first day, I wondered if all professors were as eccentric as Adkin; I wondered if he was the norm. As time passed, I came to realize there is no other professor, or person, quite like him. I don't know if he has tenure or if he has had many articles published or if he's excelled at whatever criteria the university judges professors by, but I do know he was the most entertaining professor I've ever had. And shouldn't that count for something?

Here in academia, there are too many arrogant professors who think they are God's gift to comedy and too many parasitic, ass-kissing students who will laugh at anything in hopes of raising their grade by tenths of a percent. Professor Adkin didn't care if you loved or hated him or if you laughed at his jokes.

I don't know if it was an act or not, and every time I see him riding his bike through campus, I'm tempted to ask him. Regardless, I will remember that class and that professor until the day I die.



Tony Bock

The class was classical mythology, and nothing could prepare me for the teacher, Professor Neil Adkin.

Letters to the editor

Unfair to Catholics

It made my heart terribly sad to read the inaccuracies alleged about the Catholic Church in Mr. Patrick's article yesterday.

It seems as though the article was written with little or no understanding of the true beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith.

The Catholic Church is based on the word of the Lord. And because some members of society use their free will to make choices that could be construed as "liberal" does not mean that they are in accordance with the word of the Lord or with the Catholic Church.

You see, society does not dictate the Catholic Church, God does. We Catholics are to live our everyday lives in accordance with His word and not by the accepted norms of society. This is true even when we vote.

Because the religious beliefs of the Catholic Church are not shared by all individuals, does that mean that we, as Catholics, should have to alter our beliefs so that they do? Is that tolerance?

Sara L. Fiedler
senior
English/psychology

Unfair to abortion

The anti-abortion advertising supplement from

the Human Life Alliance (January 21) devotes much of its space to trying to frighten women from having abortions by pointing out the possible physical and psychological after-effects.

What it neglects are the possible physical and psychological after-effects of NOT having an abortion: i.e. of carrying to term and then either keeping or giving away the child.

True, a legal abortion can, rarely, lead to health complications. But so can carrying a fetus to term. Any medical procedure carries risk, including childbirth. And abortion actually is less dangerous than childbirth.

True, a woman who has an abortion might regret it and might have psychological problems afterward. Also true is that post-partum depression, sometimes severe, is common even in mothers who sincerely want their babies. And a woman who carries to term and then gives up the child for adoption might regret that far into the future. And a woman who keeps her accidental child might regret that, too, although it would be hard for her to admit it.

The decision on whether to abort should be made by the individual woman. Not by a church or a law.

Edgar Pearlstein
professor of physics, emeritus

Little man is goin down

"Bart: I'd like to get my ear pierced.

Employee: Well, better make it quick, kiddo. In five minutes this place is becoming a Starbucks."

—The Simpsons

There have been so many mistakes in this world—tofu, Crystal Pepsi, Styx, Glamour Shots—but rarely do I myself make a mistake.

There are only two mistakes that I can think of: The first was when I became addicted to and spent my allowance on nothing but Glamour Shots, Crystal Pepsi and Styx albums, and the second was not becoming a pharmacist.

I worked in a pharmacy every weekend of my high school career under the reign of my loud-mouthed, snot-snorting, abusive-in-that-"endearing"-way god-father, Larry.

Though Larry was no Marlon Brando, he did care for me unless I screwed up. "Never tell anybody outside the family what you're thinking again."—Don Corleone to Sonny, "The Godfather."

There was love there—it was just hidden under extreme violent tendencies I like to call noogies and pinches.

The point of this is that I came to college determined to be a pharmacist because, for the love of money, I would be guaranteed a job.

So, as a young chemistry major for a year, I soon broke down and learned that money is the root of all evil, especially if you can't balance equations and you try to snort NaCl because you think it's a groovy drug.

I say this only because of the new wave that's hitting the economy of the pharmaceutical world, and that wave is the degeneration of the baby boomer's tissue and bones.

Yeah, it's called getting old.

This crazy notion of the baby boomers getting older, thus needing to pump their bodies full of feel-good pills (read: Viagra for him, Valium for her, Prozac for them), was the main pitch for Walgreens execs who want to justify their monopolization of the world.

They can be, and unstoppably will be, the next Wal-Mart or McDonald's as far as mass franchising goes. Hell, maybe McDonald's and Walgreens will merge, selling the idea that prescriptions have more meat (from pig parts in the gel caps) than do McDonald's hamburgers.

I've found a new diet!

It seems that, since these "babies" who "boom" are the catalyst for Walgreens's, uh, security and faith (they currently have 3,300 stores in 43 states with projections of 6,000 within a decade), we've forgotten to take a look at our generation and those younger than myself.

Can we say Ritalin?

What are the Walgreens execs not telling us?

That they haven't forgotten about us, the kids.

There seems to be a trend in America today that includes TV and parents who work... a lot.



Karen Brown

When a child misbehaves—"cause that's what children do—we pump them full of "downers" or, as I like to call them, "baby-sitting pills."

All right, maybe I'm being a little too negative, and I certainly understand that not every child's parents will replace attention and discipline with medicine, but the simple fact is that it does happen and it will continue to happen.

Of course, I'm just angry because, with all these drug stores popping up, they need pharmacists, and I changed majors!

I know what my kid is going to do regardless of what they want.

I don't like the fact that a Walgreens has popped up on the corner of 27th and Vine. It is, in fact, right across the street from a drug store, Wagey Drug, that has been there for eons.

Yes, it's their right as much as any company to buy off existing buildings and demolish them for the good of the neighborhood, and yes, it will produce jobs, but the mom and pop shop and all of its encompassing love will be hidden by the façade of a loveless terra cotta shell.

Wagey isn't scared.

They're secure in the idea that most customers are loyal and will continue their services to them, regardless of less expensive items across the street.

But optimism can only get you so far. The reality of the situation is that corporations will take away from local business.

Walgreens has more lights to better see it, it is a familiar name, even though the owner of Wagey is familiar to the neighborhood, and it has a parking lot.

Space.

Location.

Visibility.

Convenience.

This is exactly what I don't want to happen with the proposed megaplex that will soon consume a block of downtown (10th and 11th streets between P and Q streets) and, in turn, also will consume some local business.

In this megaplex downtown, which will house 16 theaters and possible space for more stores, you can bet your bottom dollar that there will be a Starbucks.

Bye bye, Coffee Culture, The Coffee House, The Mill. Will there be a Hallmark store?

See ya, Avant Card.

I hope the megaplex fails and it might for one fact alone—parking.

What would I like to see there instead, you may wonder?

How about an all-night diner and a much needed grocery store to cater to the downtown population that largely includes—scratch your temple—students.

All I'm saying is we don't need more Walgreens, Wal-Marts, WalRus's B&R or any other Wal you want to invent. It's a shame that every town in the United States will soon, look the exact same.

The point of all things is to let your kids become pharmacists so that when they have a choice between working for a Walgreens or a Wal-Mart drug store, they also have the choice to run away and invent clear things with their chemical skills, like Crystal Pepsi.