

Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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Health hazard? Cell phone use not the only potential danger for drivers

As cellular phone use has become more common across the state, so have legislators trying to curtail their use.

LB42, introduced by Sen. David Landis of Lincoln, changes state law to say there is a "rebuttable presumption of negligence" for a driver who is using a cell phone while involved in a car accident.

In other words, if you're chatting on a cell phone and you get into a wreck, it's your fault unless you can prove otherwise.

Few would argue cell phones can be a distraction.

What this bill does not take into account is the numerous other distractions drivers can encounter on their daily commute.

If someone is fiddling with the radio and gets into an accident, that person has the same benefit of the doubt as every other driver who gets in a wreck. But if someone is talking on the phone, then that person is at fault — guilty until proven innocent.

What about people driving while also eating lunch, drinking a soda, talking to a passenger, reading a map, shaving, combing their hair, putting on makeup, yelling at a child in the back seat or just staring out into space? These are all distractions, but if they occur during an accident, the person involved is not presumed to have caused it.

And it's not like cellular phone users aren't currently faulted in accidents. If someone is driving negligently or recklessly and causes an accident — cell phone in hand or not — that person is at fault, just like what would happen under LB42.

But if a person is not at fault and using a cell phone, that person has to prove before a court of law that that is so.

So, in effect, this law punishes negligent drivers in the same way they are currently punished. It only affects responsible drivers who are using a cellular phone and happen to get into an accident.

The intent of the bill may be to punish unsafe cell phone users who get into accidents. But it targets all users.

An accident is just that, something unexpected that can happen to anyone. The safest of drivers can get into an accident because of other unsafe drivers or just an error in judgment.

And if that safe driver just happens to be talking to a friend, family member or business associate on a cell phone, that person's insurance will have to at least split the bill or go through an equally expensive legal battle.

Cellular phones have become commonplace tools in many people's cars. If more people have phones, more people will have phones when they get into accidents.

This is expected.

But a clear correlation between cell phone use and accidents has not been established. The phones may be a distraction, but no more of one than any of the many other things people do in cars.

Landis said consumers deserve to know that using a cell phone while driving hurts their health.

But will finding all phone users at fault in an accident improve their health?

This bill simply punishes people for owning cell phones and gives people who are truly responsible for causing accidents a loophole.

Whereas at one point cellular phones may have been status symbols, they now turns owners into second-class citizens.

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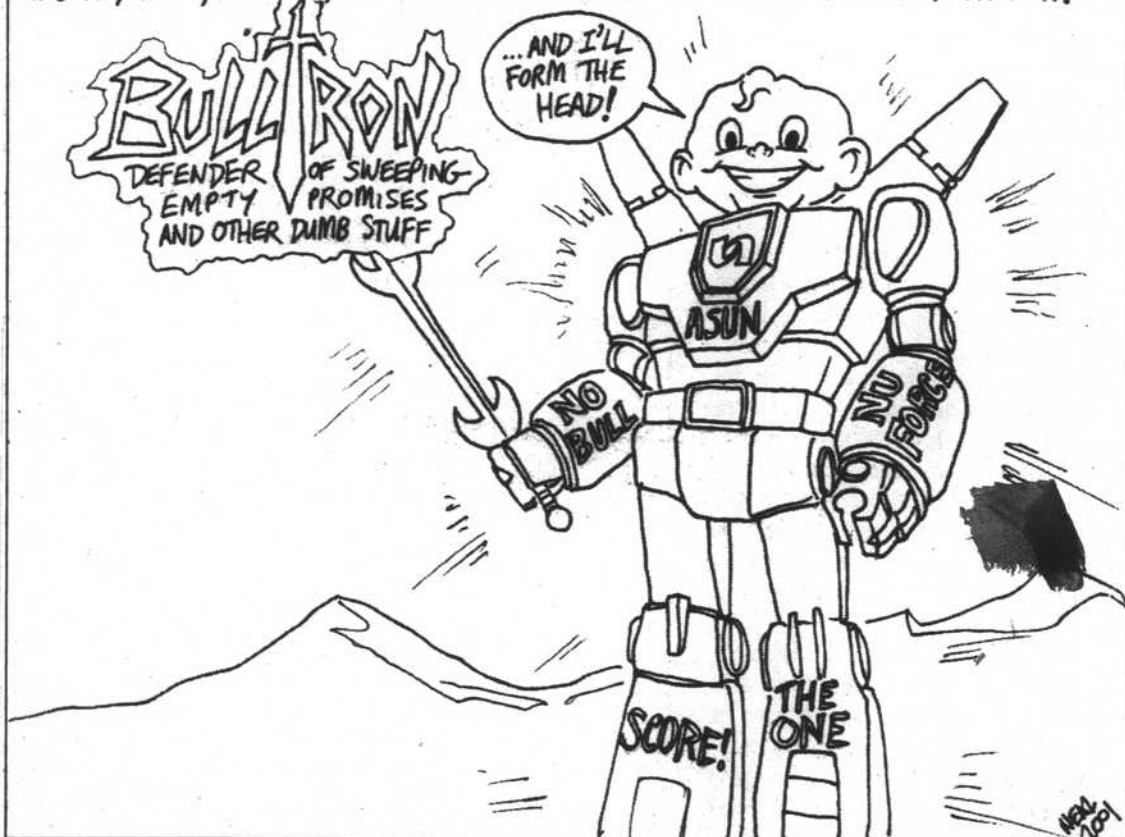
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No BULL, SCORE!, NU FORCE, AND THE ONE PARTY MERGE TO REVIVE THE CLASSIC ASUN SPIRIT!!!



Neal Obermeyer/DN

The nighttime is for 'mares

"A good reason to have dreams is that in dreams you don't have to have reason."

"Mommy! Mommy! I had a dream I was eating a giant marshmallow, and when I woke up — my pillow was gone!"

What do you think this means?

A. The subject was very hungry before he/she went to bed. B. The subject has an overactive imagination stemming back to his or her prolonged containment in an iron lung. C. The subject was exposed to minute amounts of radiation and is now morphing into the Stay-Puffed Marshmallow Man. D. The subject's father beat the tar out of him or her and he or she is now trying really hard to forget about it. It's called mental blockage, folks. E. The subject was born and raised in a briar patch.

If you picked A-E you are eligible to receive a degree in dream analysis and interpretation, just like I did.

I am now a certified Dream-Guessing Person. I have a wide area of expertise ranging from the classic "Mickey Mouse is out to get you" to "You're eating Goldilocks's porridge and a blind, naked Uma Thurman walks in" dream sequences.

Dreams much like the aforementioned scenarios are not hard to interpret once you take heed of what I tell you. (Be careful though, the last time I took heed, I woke up taped to the ceiling of the Wells Fargo Bank.)

Since dreams are the one thing in our lives, besides our bladders, that we have no control over, I would like everyone to be able to dissect their own dreams as well as their friends' so we can all feel peace in the "real" world (brought to you by MTV).

For those of you out there who refuse to listen to your peers' nocturnal goings-ons, dreams, to us certified-analysis types, are simply meant to take us to a realm I like to call Richard Simmons la-la-land. Here, Deal-A-Meal really does work so you can see your shoes all year round.

Real dreams suck (Remember what happened to the great MLK?) so I prefer to stick to the safe haven of what's in my mind.

The following interpretations certainly vary from person to person, but the main themes are the same and, of course, reason is thrown out the window.

What I say goes since I'm the professional.

Dreams about sex: These dreams always indicate the love one has for tepees and TP. Yep, toilet paper. You love it, you need it, you dream about it.

However, if you dream about sex with monkeys, it means you need to take a shower ... alone.

You are simply dirty and need to make yourself



Karen Brown

undirty.

Dreams about zombies: Your second cousin, Rudy, is a keyboard rock star and you are jealous.

Dreams about falling: Such dreams generally involve extraterrestrial elements such as Jay Leno, silicone breasts and aliens. (The first and third are synonymous.) If you fall in a dream, then they are coming for you at any time.

Don't panic. Simply wake up before hitting the ground and all will be well. If you hit the ground then expect a "visitor" very soon.

Dreams with Fabio: This indicates your desire to catch and cage rich white men with thinning hair so as to make a fortune off of home made rugs from their receding locks.

Lucid dreams: To grasp some sort of "control" over the uncontrollable, lucid dreams were designed to give us a false sense of hope for actually reaching a trans-world salvation.

I oftentimes have lucid dreams for about two seconds before they fool me, the creator, yet again.

I will be in the middle of the street walking through what feels like quicksand (I can't run in dreams) as a car comes barreling down the road, and with all my hope, I can consciously wish to be somewhere else.

So, I wake up strapped to an operating table with no anesthesia.

Dreams about flying (or should I say swimming): Of course, this can only mean that you do not take enough hallucinogenic drugs (the legal kind).

If you need dreams to help you get the sensation of flying, then find yourself some Robitussin and go nuts.

I guarantee you will be "flying" in the real world so you can reserve the dreams for sex with monkeys.

Dreams involving Lucille Ball: You left your wallet at Kuhl's restaurant, and you'd better go pick it up.

Dreams of Jeannie with light brown hair: You need to get out more because Jeannie isn't the cream o' the crop any longer. And her hair is a dye job.

Perhaps what all this truly means is that dreams *could* be a gateway into another world, or they *could* be allegories meant to depict what's so very wrong with us but, for the most part, they are simply there for our amusement.

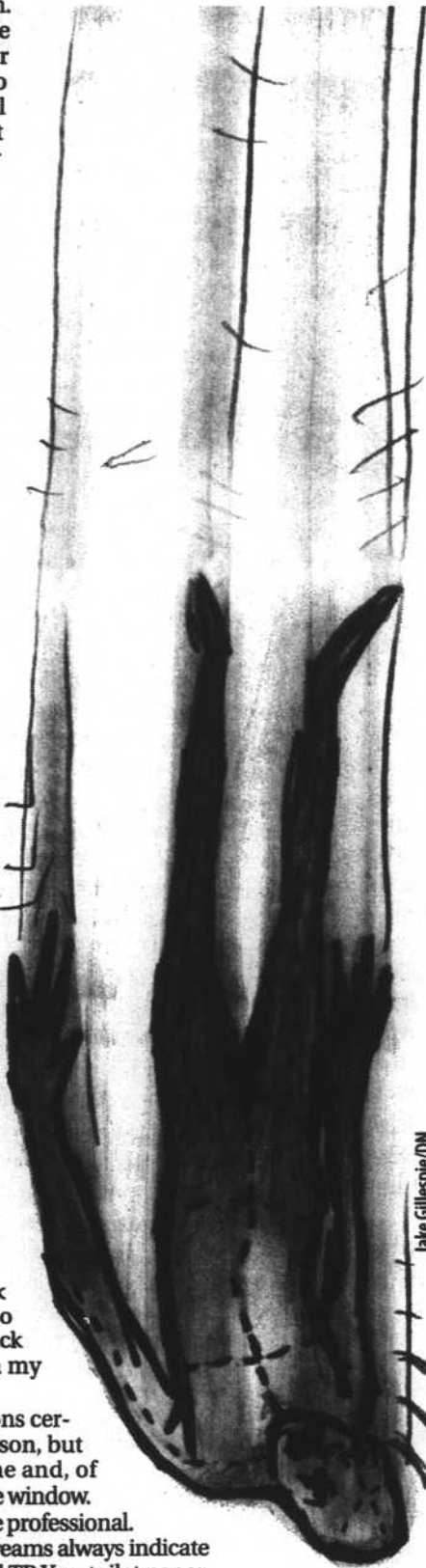
If you choose to accept the dream for what it tells you, you will succeed and become the next Maury Povich. If not, well, you belong in an iron lung.

Dreams are television clips and sound bites that make morning-talk more interesting with your loved one.

If you don't have a loved one to share these blips of craziness with, then write them down. Stephen Kings remembers his dreams and writes them out.

They're called "best sellers."

I can't think of a better reason to fall asleep than that.



Tired of writing letters?

Whether you are a conservative, a liberal, or a moderate, you can get your words in print.

Impress your friends, pay your resume, and get a little cash on the side.

Pick up an application in the Daily Nebraskan office, 20 Nebraska Union, apply a column or two and you're all set on this page.



Twenty-five bucks later, graduation

I got bitch-slapped by the University last Friday.

I'm graduating this May, and Friday was the last day to turn in graduation applications.

I walked into the office with a confident strut, ready to turn in the application and be on my way. The lady behind the counter said, "OK, now there's just the \$25 fee and you'll be set."

It was all I could do not to use profanity to express my feelings to her. But I knew she was just doing her job, so I pulled out a cigarette and offered it to her.

She looked puzzled, so I said, "Oh, I assumed you'd want a cigarette after screwing me that hard."

She didn't find the humor in that comment, so I gave her 25 of my hard earned dollars and left.

At first I was extremely bitter about it. It's not the fact that they need the money, I'm sure they do, but why not just add that on to my university bill?

It's an insult after all the thousands of dollars I've spent here on tuition, books, beer, marijuana and other necessities that they then take \$25 from me at the moment I'm finally about to get something out of this university.

But I'm over it now, and I got to thinking about what I could do to better our school.

For one thing, I know the university has a problem with what's called the "brain drain" (the state's smartest students leaving to go to a good school), and I think I have a solution that would not only help improve that situation, but also would help with out-of-state recruitment.

I propose that prostitution be made legal, but only to NU students and only at the health center.

After being tested for diseases, a student would be able to go to the health center, show their student ID card and do their business at an affordable price.

I call this plan "Hookers at the Health Center," and I can guarantee if it was implemented that enrollment numbers would skyrocket.

I have a couple well-known athletes in one of my classes this semester. Normally on the first day of class when I hear the names of well-known athletes being read as part of roll I rejoice, sure that this class must be easy.

Well it is, but the athletes talk through the entire class. I guess they would rather not be there, and I can't blame them.

I know the athletic department makes sure athletes are going to every class, and if they don't, there is some sort of punishment.

How freaking ridiculous is that? Seriously, we are admitting people to a university here, right? And they have study hours — hours specifically set aside for studying.

Last time I was at a school where time had to be made for forced studying, I think we had a spare set of pants just in case someone soiled their pants.

This isn't high school, and I think any person admitted here should be able to sink or swim without someone forcing them to study and to go to class.

"I'm sure this doesn't happen at Harvard," goes through my head as I hear the group of athletes talking while I'm trying to listen in a class I'm paying a lot of money for.

At this school athletes are given every advantage possible on their way to a degree.

I say either the university makes sure every single student has the opportunity for tutors, test files and the facilities the athletes have, or turn the Athletic Department into an academic department.

Allow those "student-athletes" that don't give a damn about anything but sports to get a Bachelor of Sports, or a BS degree.

I know it's hard work being an athlete here, and I respect that. It's probably harder than being a broadcasting major.

So let's let them get college credit for lifting weights, calisthenics and everything else that's part of our athletic programs.

If someone comes to Nebraska on a music scholarship, we allow them to get a music major, but if you come here on a baseball scholarship you have to major in something completely different.

Does that make sense?

About as much sense as charging someone \$25 (not even counting the more than \$30 for cap and gown) to graduate.



Tony Bock