

editorials·letters

Support Hunt's DUI proposal

Much has been said about drunken drivers and the current driving under the influence laws. Several states, such as Virginia, have already implemented tougher laws for those people arrested on a DUI charge and have raised the legal drinking age to 19 or older.

Gov. Hunt recently jumped on the band wagon with these other states and outlined his solution to the problem of the increasing number of DUI charges in North Carolina, as well as the increasing number of 18 year olds and younger teenagers drinking too much.

First of all, Gov. Hunt, a Democrat who has held the office of governor for two terms, said that he was in favor of raising the drinking age to 19 or higher, if the state legislature and North Carolina citizens so wished.

There are many groups that are favoring such a move, such as Mothers Against Drunken Drivers (MADD), other parent groups, such as PTAs, and many religious organizations.

That part of Gov. Hunt's proposed tougher drinking laws will probably be passed by the state legislature soon, much to the dismay of some 17 year olds who have been eagerly waiting until their eighteenth birthday to take that first legal drink of beer and wine.

Gov. Hunt also went on to propose several other possible tough DUI laws that would supposedly make drinking drivers think twice before getting on the road and driving themselves home. Among other possible suggestions were impounding the car, spending at least 48 hours in jail without bond, higher fines and court fees for the people arrested with a DUI charge.

All of the proposals are stiff and needed very much. Where the problem comes in is the wealthier people can afford to get a slick-tongued lawyer to get them off the charges, or reduce the charges down to next to nothing.

This will leave the less fortunate staying the night in jail, or worse without a license or a car. Or if a minor gets caught in their parents' car with a DUI charge, the innocent parents will be without a car for possibly several days.

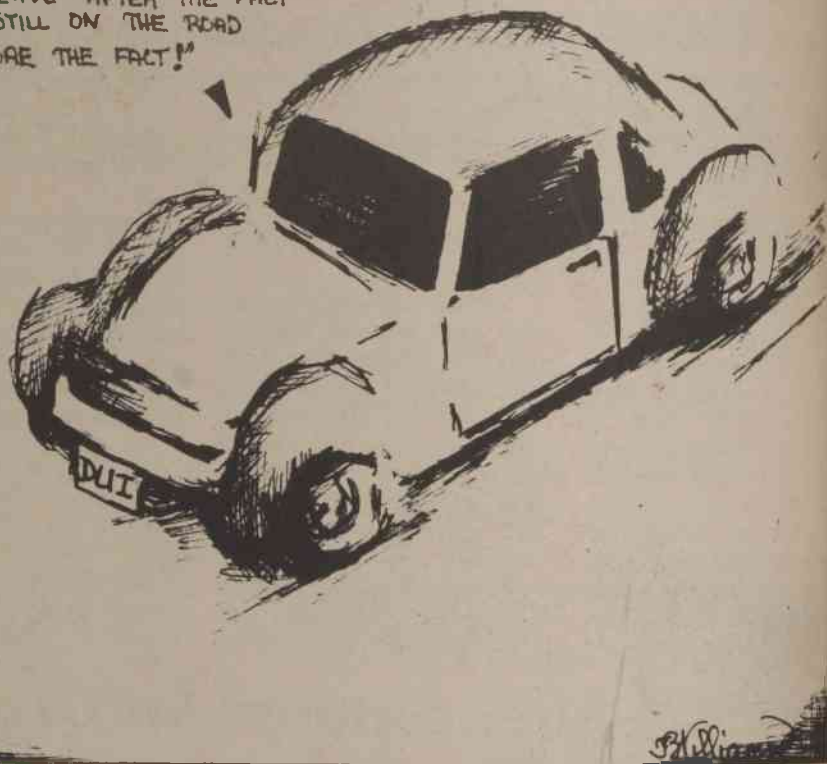
The initial proposals are too broad to be passed now. Hopefully legislators will understand this and require that the proposals be defined to more specific terms. The laws do need to be passed. There is too much drinking and driving going on and definitely too many deaths because of this folly.

Places that sell alcoholic beverages should keep a register of organizations that offer free rides home to people that have had a "little too much" and take advantage of these organization's offers by calling rides for their patrons.

However, these people who sell the alcoholic beverages should not be held responsible for the drunken drivers, as one state legislator suggested. No one forced the patrons to drink. They could have easily left the bar or restaurant half way sober and then gone to a store and bought more liquor and became highly intoxicated off of this.

What all the proposals boil down to is that life is too precious a commodity to waste on such an idiotic thing as driving while intoxicated. And it is equally stupid to endanger other innocent peoples' lives by getting behind the wheel while drunk. The proposals do indeed need to be defined more stringently, but they also certainly do indeed need to be passed.

THOSE DRIVING PROPOSALS WILL NEVER SOLVE THIS PROBLEM. THEY SERVE "AFTER THE FACT" I'M STILL ON THE ROAD "BEFORE THE FACT!"



Reagan playing Cold War games with proposed summit conditions

Yuri Andropov may not be far off the mark when he says that Ronald Reagan's proposed conditional summit is no more than a part of a "propaganda game."

The condition Reagan says must exist before the two leaders can meet is a banning of all U.S. and Soviet land-based nuclear missiles from the European theater. The Soviets have rejected such a proposal several times before. Andropov summed it up as well as anyone when he said, "I must say quite definitely that there is nothing new in President Reagan's proposal."

While Reagan's proposal may sound like the effort of a peace-keeper, it is more accurately his attempt to regain some of the Europeans' lost affection for the American stance.

The Soviets, who hold superiority in land-based nuclear warheads in Europe, claim that they cannot accept the latest Reagan proposal because it makes no provisions for American dominance of air-based and sea-based nuclear missiles in Europe. As a counter, they propose a bilateral reduction of medium-range land-based missiles. Another Soviet proposal is to ban all nuclear weapons, medium-range and tactical, from Europe. Whether this is a

sincere proposal or a little propaganda Moscow-style, if pursued, it offers a tangible alternative to the false hopes aroused by the political gaming and Cold War tactics we have suffered through for so long now.

It was not by chance that Vice-President Bush read the letter outlining Reagan's proposal in West Germany. National elections in that country are not far off, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl, a strong supporter of Reagan's

military plans in Europe, could be in real political trouble as disillusionment grows among West Germans over American military presence there. Reagan's rewording his same old proposal may help salvage Kohl's role as a leader and supporter of Reagan's position.

It will take more than such toyings with words to get the Soviets to the negotiating table, and Reagan should know that by now.

The Pendulum welcomes letters, limited to 250 words, from our readers. Longer material may be submitted as opinion articles for page 3. Editors reserve the right to edit for length, libel, good taste and accuracy.

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The staff meets Thursdays
at 9:30 a.m.

Room 208 in Long Student Center

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