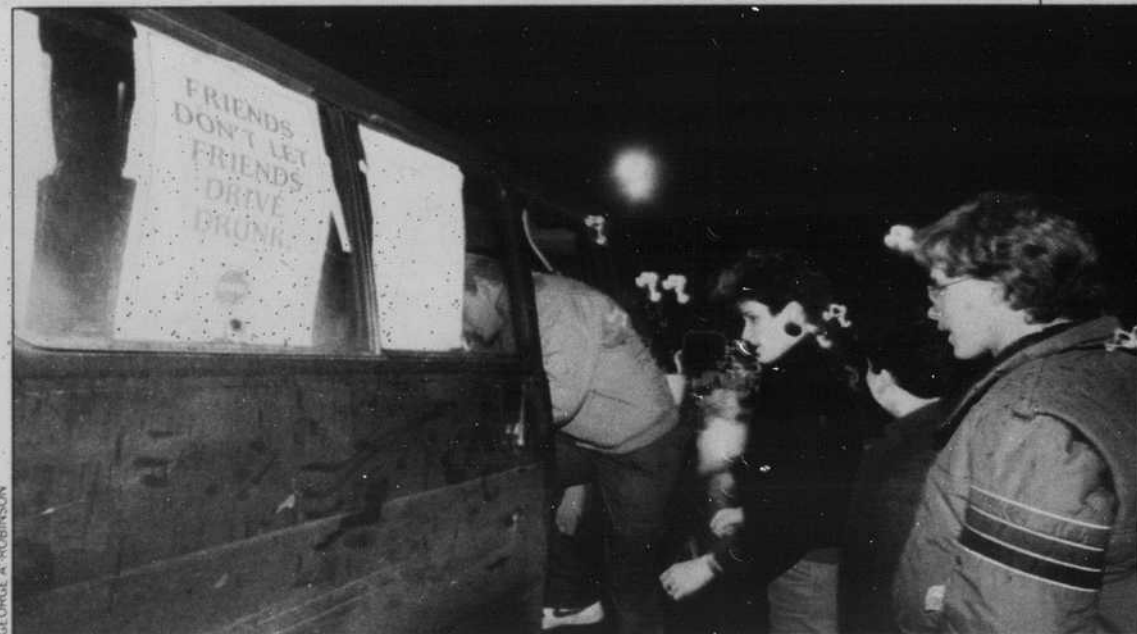


tested poorly or skipped class at least once a month due to heavy drinking.

To try to curtail abuse, and cope with changing laws, administrations have responded with varying severity. After two wild weekends at Southern Methodist last fall, officials first banned fraternity parties altogether, then reinstated the privilege with tight restrictions. Many schools, including the University of Miami, no longer allow open parties in their dorms. And at South Carolina, an all-pervasive new code of drinking regulations took effect in February. It forbids underage students to attend events where alcohol is available unless sponsors guarantee that no one underage will be served. It also bans anyone under 21 from having alcohol in the residence halls, although beer is still legal in the state for those 20 and over. No drinking is allowed in public areas of campus. Not only must all drinking parties with 10 or more people be registered, but a member of the host organization must attend a one-hour alcohol-education session. Dennis Pruitt, vice president and dean of student affairs at Carolina, concedes that "having the responsibility of an event on campus now is a lot of trouble. You have to limit service of the beverage, determine the age of those served, have food—there's a lot of liability."

Still other schools are coping with a confusing patchwork of rules. At UCLA, stu-



Vermont's 'Topsy Taxi': Organized efforts to keep student drinkers off the road

dents under 21 violate school rules, as well as the the law, when they drink in their dorm rooms. Penalization, however, depends on whether their door is shut. "We have no authority to enforce what goes on behind closed doors," says Guy Sanders, assistant director of residential life at UCLA. "But, given the fact that people underage are breaking the law if they are

drinking, if the door is open we would have to enforce that." Just as complex is the status of the UCLA student pub, the Cooperage—built five years ago but still waiting to serve its first drink. While the school forbids drinking in public spaces, it has backed efforts by the student food service to obtain a liquor license. The move has been thwarted by economics Prof. Edward Rada,



Arizona State workshop: Myth busting

contains as much alcohol as 1½ ounces of whisky or 4 to 5 ounces of wine. Many people actually consume more alcohol when they quaff beer, experts say, because they drink more, sometimes on the ground that it's nutritious. Beer does have slight nutri-

tional value, compared to other alcoholic beverages—along with controversial additives in some brands—but it's no food substitute.

■ *But I only drink on weekends.* "If, when you drink, you always get drunk," warns Paula Roth of the National Council on Alcoholism, "it is possible to become a weekend alcoholic. What happens then is that the binges get closer and closer together."

■ *I'll modify my drinking when I get out in the real world.* It didn't work that way for Judy and may not for you. "The way college students drink sets the tone for how they will drink for years to come," says Vassar psychologist Catherine Comins. "Even students who don't currently have serious drinking problems may be developing habits that will later take a heavy toll."

Myths aside, how do you tell if you or your friends are in danger? One warning sign is increased dependence. "You begin to look forward to that first drink after classes," says Roth. "And then you begin to find ways to have a drink earlier in the day. You start thinking that you need alcohol to function in certain situations." Soon, a student is tossing down a little hair of the dog each morning to erase the previous night's hangover—and is getting up later and later.

Other danger signals include losing friends, becoming defensive about drinking and getting injured. "Things really got out of hand when I got so drunk that I fell down and dislocated my shoulder," recalls Joan (not her real name), a senior at Houston who is now a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. In addition, the body itself sends up red flags. "It's dangerous if you find that your tolerance of alcohol is increasing," says Roth. The situation is even more serious, says Dr. Markku Linnoila of the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, "if a person begins to experience blackouts, acting in a manner which appears to be normal to others but having no recollection of it later."

Recognizing these warning signs is relatively easy; seeking assistance is another matter entirely. At the University of Wisconsin, for instance, the housing office had to switch to a system of "forced referrals" to counseling, because voluntary programs did not reach enough abusers. Says Robert Mason, a psychologist at the University of Georgia Health Service: "Students almost have to hit rock bottom before they recognize they need some help."

JOHN CAREY with ERIK GODCHAUX in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., KEITH ABLOW in Baltimore, SUZANNE COMER in Athens, Ga., and bureau reports