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PERSPECTIVES

Liquor, beer no longer in the clear

Even with the zero-tolerance police crackdown, minors still have the ability to get the goods they want. And this is not limiting it to alcohol. In Eugene it is easier for a minor to get drugs than it is to get beer or liquor.

Not to condone one or the other, I am merely stating the obvious from people's experiences and their stories.



Amy Goldhammer

Still, in the college town crawling with fake IDs and secret "easy-to-get-into" spots, a minor has a better chance of finding a candyman, or drug dealer, rather than a 21-year-old with nothing to do.

As a University sophomore casually stated, "It is easier for me to get crack than it is to get beer."

Drugs have become the choice of underage students

(All names in this column have been withheld to protect privacy.)

So do we just have a high-rolling stash of illegal narcotics hidden from inquisitive eyes? Not really. Those who want it and those who do it know where to find it and how to get it.

And sadly enough, this is true. "For one thing, drug dealers don't card," said a University junior. "But, then again, any minor can go to any party and get a beer, too."

With no age limit on purchasing drugs, many underage students find this form of partying easier to obtain. A friend asks a friend who knows someone and in 10 minutes to two days a

minor can obtain his or her desired supply.

And the candyman has another 50 bucks in his pocket.

So, are minors stupid, incompetent and screwing up their future? Some are. But, the majority of students are going through the time in their lives where experimentation plays a key role in who they become.

And, most are careful. The police intervention has mainly scared a large amount of people and not necessarily made significant positive changes in the actions of minors. Those underage people just behave a bit better and don't get too out of control that much anymore.

Minors are not necessarily pulling the wool over the eyes of the police. However, the drug scene in Eugene has become much more underground and buried as a result of local officers focusing their attention on controlling inebriated youth.

"Just because they busted 13th Avenue doesn't mean that the drug scene is gone," the University sophomore said. "It's just under control. Wait, does that make sense?"

Can a drug scene be under control? Probably not, and Eugene is a prime example.

Students have figured out ways to keep drug deals low-key, therefore local news is not packed with large monthly drug bust stories. And maybe this is why the Eugene drug scene seems calm from the outside.

"Drugs are left and right, next door

and across the hall," said a freshman who lives in the dorms. "It's out of control."

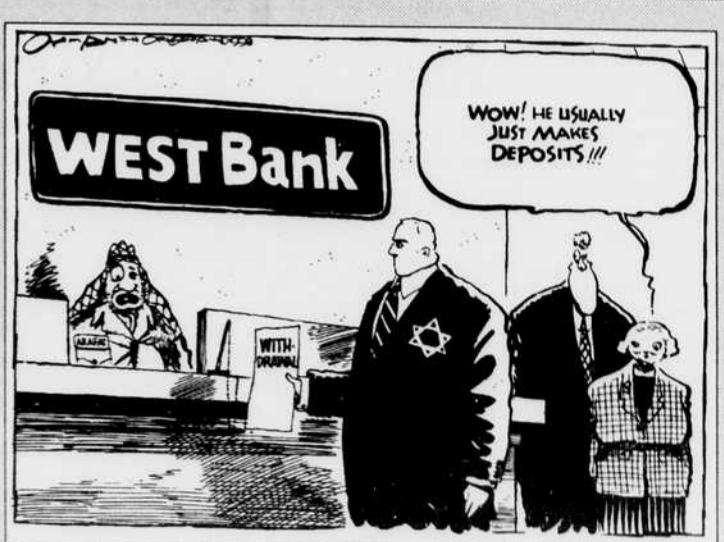
Eugene is not loaded with drug lords and mafia narcotic cartels. However, many students have flawless means of acquiring an array of drugs.

There is no one person at fault. There is no one person to blame. I don't think we can point fingers at the drug smugglers for drugs in Eugene. And we certainly can't blame the students for exploring.

Unfortunately students feel the need to heighten their experiences with chemicals and alcohol.

Many people and groups work toward promoting sober and clean means of enjoyment, but it will take some time before University students realize drugs and alcohol are not the key to jovial happiness.

Amy Goldhammer is a columnist for the Emerald. Her work appears on alternate Wednesdays. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the newspaper.



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