

# PERSPECTIVES

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## BUSTED: Students' rights

Underage drinking is a bad thing. If we start by saying that, perhaps the rest of our words can be taken in context. We at the Emerald, as well as the University and the Eugene Police Department, believe that young adults must learn to, when legally allowed, use society's most prevalent legal intoxicant responsibly.

How, then, does a society go about encouraging responsible, legal use, and how does it best punish illegal use? The University's and the EPD's tactics strike us as ineffective and neglectful of students' rights.

For the encouragement aspect, the University works in conjunction with the EPD to provide education focusing on the risks of underage alcohol use. There are safety awareness programs with student groups and the Greek system, discussions during Intro-Ducktion and the recently created BUSTED program, which allows those with minor in possession citations to have their police record wiped clean after taking a University class. There are pros and cons to the BUSTED program, but education about the Constitutional rights of legal adults age 18 to 20 is

overlooked.

On the punishment side, the University has a zero-tolerance policy for underage alcohol use in the campus area, and after the last University riots in October 1998, the EPD instituted its "party patrol" every Friday and Saturday night to make pre-emptive strikes at those who host friends of all ages with alcohol present. Punishment has been increasing in recent years, sometimes at the expense of students' rights, while the education factor is clearly not doing enough.

The University should be applauded for instituting the BUSTED program. Young adults make mistakes, and offering them a second chance without marring their permanent record is a good thing.

And perhaps having to sit through lectures and write papers about the risks and responsibility of alcohol use will have an effect. But it can also seem like an easy way out. And simply offering the class begs the question: At an educational institution focused on reducing underage drinking, why is the basic BUSTED class not required for freshmen, with an advanced level available for those charged with an

MIP?

With the laudation done, we can say the zero-tolerance policy and the party patrol are not having the desired effect. Holding up the act of drinking as taboo will not discourage underage use in a society that constantly glorifies the intoxicated state. And the party patrol plays on society's current infatuation with militaristic policing in order to write tickets — tickets that are clearly not helping. In 1997, 505 MIP tickets were written. For the 1999-2000 school year, the number of tickets in the campus area alone was 1,118. Some of the increase can be attributed to the increased patrols, but where is the deterrent effect?

Part of the EPD's party patrol duty is to do pre-emptive keg checks. This means that when someone buys a keg and indicates where and when the keg will be tapped, the EPD checks this list and shows up at the house early to find out if the keg has been prematurely tapped and if there might be something illegal going on. What would we say if every time someone purchased an anarchist book, they had to write down their name and address and the police could

show up — just to see if maybe something illegal was happening yet? That sounds awfully militaristic, and it can happen militaristically, playing on students' lack of knowledge of their rights.

"Students," says Ilona Koleszar of the ASUO Legal Services, "are incredibly interested in their rights."

Koleszar is an independent contractor employed by the ASUO. Koleszar says the Legal Services and Office of Student Advocacy, located in 334 EMU, is, as far as she knows, "the only place where students are given their constitutional rights, if they ask."

Koleszar explains that students come to her, fazed by a potential violation of their rights.

"They're genuinely offended when a cop is climbing through their window, after being refused entry at the door, because they have a keg on the premises," Koleszar says. "Why are the police going to that door? Is this a community caretaking function?"

The University, as caretaker of young adults for a few years, should be informing students of their rights. But there is no formal University program offering this

information. This from an institution of higher learning?

Koleszar works to be sure that students do know their rights. And she is often chastised, as she and the Emerald were on local TV station KVAL earlier this school year, for giving students the knowledge of their rights to protect them in a situation when they have chosen to drink illegally. We're not, and she's not, condoning illegal behavior. Koleszar talks about students' responsibilities as students, citizens and humans, as well as talking about their rights.

But students age 18 to 20 are legal adults. They can make choices for themselves. If they choose to do something illegal, they should be informed of their rights under the Constitution so that they can make the choice of how best to conduct themselves when the party patrol comes knocking on their doors. To deny them that is an outrage and will only serve to further alienate students from police — which is what led to the University rioting in the first place.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu

## Joining the mainstream doesn't mean losing identity



### DIARY OF A MALCONTENT

MICHAEL J. KLECKNER

"Sometimes I feel like I can't even sing / I'm very scared for this world / I'm very scared for me." REM wrote that in "You Are the Everything," off 1988's "Green." It resonated around my head this morning as I rode to school.

I'm getting closer to graduation, and I'm getting closer and closer to joining the mainstream headlong. I'm just a little scared.

I've spent the last 28 years of my life holding strong beliefs that are left of center, and I intend to continue doing so. But it's easier to say that when you work a crappy service job somewhere, and you have the time and ability to pull back and say, protest the Gulf War in San Francisco, or spend weeks working on an idealistic hippie 'zine to distribute at the Burning Man Festival. It's even easy now to skip classes and go march in the streets of Seattle against corporate globalization.

When I graduate, however, I fully intend to get a mainstream job at a major daily somewhere, going about the business of putting out the mainstream news to a mainstream audience. Sure, I can push the envelope a little, but what of protesting? Not supposed to do it. Compromises journalistic integrity. What about publishing my own 'zine of leftist dogma and rants? Not supposed to do it. Most newspapers want you to work only for them. Sort of an intellectual property thing.

What will be left of me and my hopes for a better world where people respect human differences, where people work with control of the fruits of their labors and where people enjoy each moment of life, instead of waiting to enjoy life at some fictional later date? Will I just be absorbed into the mainstream, unable to effect any change?

What's the typical college answer to any pressing question? Talk to an adviser. So I did. I spoke with Pam Cytrynbaum. She gave me a pep talk that helped me remember the excitement of fighting for the good. She told me stories about covering racial injustice in the court systems of Louisiana at a newspaper that wasn't necessarily sympathetic. She reminded me that one-on-one interactions with people are incredibly effective at producing social change.

"Get in to where the damage is being done," she said, her hands clutching the air as if to take social injustice by the shoulders and give it a good shake. Her advice

continued, her energy unflagging even first thing in the morning. Be vigilant. Pick your battles. Live every aspect of your life through your beliefs. Deconstruct every word of what you hear. "These things can be small, but the effect is massive."

By the end of the conversation, I was animated and upbeat again. Thanks, Pam. I found the rest of the day's interviews and conversations a little easier, and I tried to remind myself to push the envelope with everyone, everywhere.

I guess, no matter what, if I retain my ideals and I remember the urgency of youth, I can make whatever I want out of a

mainstream experience. Or maybe I'll discover that the mainstream isn't what I want (after I pay off my college loans) and work for an alternative weekly paper or a leftist organization that shares my ideals. Maybe my ideals and the real world can come together in some productive way — if I don't hold a preconceived notion that the mainstream world won't allow my kind of change.

After all, just two songs later on "Green," REM writes, "This is my life, and / This is my time. / I have been given the freedom to do as I see fit. / It's high time I razed the walls that I've / constructed."

