

no one is maligned for orientation, and no one is made to feel inadequate if unable to make a purchase.

I suggest that Ms. Firwood put down the boxing gloves and pick up some lubricant. Perhaps she'll find that stick in her hind-quarters much easier to accommodate.

Carole McClurg
Eugene

LUDICROUS REMARK

In response to the shooting death of the athletically and socially gifted, mentally ill 19-year-old, Ryan Salisbury, the remark made by the policeman that shooting a human in the legs will not deter or subdue a human is absurd and ludicrous.

I write as a marine veteran of Saipan and Iwo Jima, where it was not uncommon to stop the enemy in his tracks before putting him out of his misery.

Ryan Salisbury, though mentally ill, was a promising and positive citizen who had already shown leadership. Police fear is palpable in such confrontational shootings, but it is time for our policemen to be trained

to stop people who are not carrying firearms without shooting to kill.

Jerry Copeland
Florence

ENEMIES IN BLUE

I've been keeping up on the discourse on police brutality and police state both on a local and regional level, and I thought I'd toss my two cents in.

I've found a resource that is incredibly useful not only in describing the violent nature of policing but its history as both a politically, socially and racially repressive tool in the U.S. Not to say that policing doesn't have its place; in a society of inequity a counter to the social upheaval, namely crime, must be had, and even in an equal society a system of community security should be present. But instead of reducing the social inequities that contribute to crime, empowering a community to take care of its own problems in an egalitarian way or even being accountable to the public, our governmental structure has created a authority with increasing power and

increasingly violent tendencies in response to increasing social unrest, which in turn of course creates more unrest.

The resource I mentioned, called *Our Enemies in Blue* by Kristian Williams, provides an effective look at the results of our form of policing, why it is a favored (if not effective) tool in dealing with social upheaval instead of the causes of it and what we should do about it.

I think that we all have a good understanding of the results of our current form of policing, but I don't think so many people understand *why* or *how* such a structure arose and is supported. So check it out, read up on it and learn more about it. Only through complete knowledge can complete understanding be had.

Sam Hediger
Eugene

KEEP ON JAMMIN'

I was disappointed when I was at the Rooster's Blues Jam last week at Good Times and looked on as the manager announced that the blues jam would be can-

celed after the end of November. I would like to share my thoughts on this briefly.

I am sure that the Rooster's Blues Jam will very easily pick up and move to another location. But only for one reason, and that is because of the dedication of two of the true unsung heroes of our local music community: Byron Case and Skip Jones. Both of these highly talented musicians possess a veritable list of credentials and maintain very busy schedules. Yet they take the time to keep these traditions — the core of our local blues and jazz scene — alive and kicking.

They also they take a great interest in welcoming new players, finding them a spot and teaching them how to show some class. Byron does the same thing at Joe Fed's jazz jam on Thursday nights. Week after week, they balance the egos of the established stars and patiently encourage the talented newcomers who come in hoping to play, creating a culture of encouragement amongst the musicians.

How many musicians who regularly gig around town or who have passed through

viewpoint BY DEBRA MERKIN

Teeny-Boozers

Alcoholic culture drowns young minds

I'd like to begin this column in the same way I might start a class — with a quiz. Please answer the following questions:

1. The biggest drug problem in Lane County is: A) meth B) heroin C) alcohol D) marijuana
2. Oregon eighth graders' use of alcohol is higher or lower than the national average? A) higher B) lower
3. Boys binge drink more than girls: A) true B) false.
4. Underage drinking costs Americans ____ every year in lost wages, deaths and injuries? A) \$3 million B) \$3 billion C) \$62 million D) \$62 billion

If you answered C, A, B, D, you are right. Despite what the news media might show, the biggest kid killer in Oregon isn't meth, it's booze. In Oregon, eighth graders' use of alcohol is 54 percent higher than the national average. Girls are just as likely as boys to drink, and binge drink more often, attracted to playful sounding "malternative" sources of alcohol such as alcopops or low-alcohol refreshers such as Smirnoff Ice. The economic and emotional costs are staggering.

Everyday in the U.S., 5,400 teens under age 16 take their first drink, three teens die from drinking and driving and six more die of non-automotive alcohol-related deaths such as homicide, drowning and suicide. In Oregon, it's worse. Check out these statistics:

One in three eighth graders have had an alcoholic drink in the last month. Two in five 11th graders have also. In 2004, 669 Lane County youth were referred to the Lane County Department of Youth Services for alcohol-related offenses and allegations.

I teach courses and conduct research about mass media and advertising, and I advocate media literacy as a way of combating the ill effects of media messages. Therefore, when I learned about the level of marketing spending and attention directed toward young people to cultivate brand awareness, loyalty and trial of alcohol, I wanted to let you know, too.

I do not believe media and the advertising contained within them are the *only* causes of social, economic and emotional problems. I do, however, believe that the media significantly contribute to already existing problems. Television shows, magazines, radio,

the Internet and movies are supplanting other sources of education for our young people. The curriculum they offer is one sponsored by for-profit businesses whose only real interest is the bottom line.

Ad agencies are hired to construct the most effective and efficient message to reach those people most likely to purchase the advertised product or service. Simple as that. In an ad for booze, in which a bevy of buxom blond beauties beckon the hormonally charged, socially challenged, usually male young person, the message has been carefully crafted to play on weakness and maximize appeal.

What is most intoxicating about drinking for young people is not necessarily the high; it's the confidence they gain from the effect, the sense of social acceptability, popularity potential and lack of self-consciousness that comes with drinking. The ads display a drug-induced fantasy in a time and a place that doesn't exist. The price of admission to the imaginary club is high and often deadly.

This past June, figures released revealed the greatest costs ever (\$34.7 billion) associated with underage drinking. Most of the costs are associated with alcohol-fueled violence (including rapes), assaults, violent crimes and murders committed by underage individuals who have been drinking. This is followed by drunken-driving accidents (\$13.5 billion); that includes hospital bills, damage to property, lost work time. The emotional costs are immeasurable, for who can tally the emotional costs and damage, the heartbreak, of losing a child to the stuff? In fact, "alcohol kills four times the number of kids that illegal drugs do," according to Ted Miller, researcher in study by the nonprofit Pacific Institute of Research and Evaluation.

What do most teens drink? Beer. It is accessible, and it's cheap. Out of the 50 states, Oregon ranks 44th for its low beer tax rate, a rate that hasn't increased since 1977. Since it's inexpensive, young people buy a lot of it.

Where do they learn about drinking? Parents, through example, are an important source of information about alcohol, but marketing and advertising play starring roles. The babes-and-beer approach to advertising suggests, particularly to boys and young men, that attractive girls will be attracted to them if

they drink and hang out with other guys who are drinking. Many know that, when intoxicated, they feel more powerful, less inhibited and less vulnerable. At ages when kids feel invincible and welcome risk, it is a dangerous combination.

What appeals most to young children in ads are music, animals and humor. Think of the many beer ads that use all three — Spuds McKenzie, Budweiser's frogs. A study of children ages nine to 11 found that kids were more familiar with Budweiser's television frogs than Kellogg's Tony the Tiger, the Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers or Smokey Bear.

TV advertising, billboards, magazines, signage at sporting events and at concerts, the kinds of activities and events young people are interested in or accompany parents and adults to, are all effective means of reaching them.

Then there's magazine advertising.

According to the Center for Alcohol Marketing and Youth, youth see 45 percent more beer and 27 percent more liquor ads in magazines than do people of legal drinking age.

Alcohol marketing at the point of sale (check out stands, interior and exterior signage, floor displays and alcohol-branded functional objects such as counter change mats with an alcohol company logo) often includes low-height alcohol ads that are in children and young people's sight line.

What can you and I do? Write, read and rap. Write, call and email alcohol companies and tell them what you think about what they do. File a complaint if you see them violate the codes (www.camy.org/action/complaint.php). Let local and national media know what you think about their running ads your kids see. Get the facts. Read about the impact, influence and importance of taking action and share your feelings with friends and law makers (www.madd.org/stats/1114).

And, yes, talk to your kids. It's the best first step. Need strategies? Check out www.camy.org or www.cspinet.org/booze/CAFST. In addition, parents need to be aware that their child might in fact be drinking. How can you tell? Check out www.marininstitute.org or www.camy.org to learn what to look for. Locally contact Lane County Prevention (www.co.lane.or.us/prevention) where Damien Sands, MPA, is underage drinking prevention coordinator.

Debra Merkin, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the UO School of Journalism & Communication. A longer and more detailed version of this column is available at www.eugeneweekly.com