

Heavy drinking still popular

OTTAWA (CUP) — The generation of students now making its way through the country's colleges and universities may be the most health conscious ever, but alcohol abuse is no relic from the past.

A CUP survey of several university health service departments indicates the popularity of drinking has remained a steady problem, and several universities as well as the federal government have campaigns to slow alcohol use.

"Alcohol is much more likely to be a problem than drugs. Alcohol is the number one problem here," said David Smith, director of Health Services at the University of Toronto. However, Smith believes the problem is under control.

Other health officials are not as optimistic. "We're seeing a lot more alcohol related incidents," said Joan Davis of health services at Carleton University in Ottawa. "Availability and low pricing are definitely contributing factors to the problem."

To curb student drinking, Carleton launched a responsible drinking campaign last September. Davis said the campaign is primarily educational, but will affect beer and liquor prices on campus, and restrict brewery access to Carleton students. The university

is also encouraging non-alcoholic activities, Davis said.

Dalhousie University in Halifax is also countering a tide of student drinking and according to health services director Joe Johnson, the results show the campaign is working.

"Alcohol is less of a problem than it used to be. We used a quiet campaign and as a result bar sales went down last year," he said. For Johnson's department, "marijuana abuse is much more noticeable. More students around here are having trouble with it. It affects their studies and their performance."

"Alcohol abuse at the University of Saskatchewan has been a curse for the school since 18-year-old Shawn Reineke, a non-student was killed at a residence party in September, 1984. Jack Andrews, a social worker at the university's health services department, says the university's campaign to combat excessive drinking has improved the school's image.

"There's been quite a reaction since then. It was a real concern here ... but I don't think it's a greater problem here than on any other campus," he said.

"We're more concerned with group abuse of alcohol, where several people get together and

drink too much. That's the real danger," he said.

Andrews says the university and student union are promoting more non-alcoholic events through a new programme called Cheers.

"We've encouraged the campus groups to really downplay the use of alcohol in their events, to place less emphasis on the importance of alcohol," he said.

There have been difficulties, though. "The problem is that smaller groups use alcoholic events as fundraising tool, and say they don't have much else to use," said Andrews.

Breweries don't appear to like these moderation campaigns. Bill Wade, a marketing representative for Labatt's in Ottawa, said "you can appreciate it from our viewpoint that (students are) an attractive market, and it's the very small minority that is causing everyone

all this trouble."

Wade said overall beer sales have not swayed for years, despite stiff competition from universities promoting moderate drinking.

Advocates of moderation have been helped by the federal government, which in the past two years has kicked in more than \$2 million in advertising alone to fight over-drinking. According to Rachel Ladouceur, a Health and Welfare official who co-ordinates the advertising campaign, students are listening to the moderation message.

"It was very successful last year — the awareness level (of alcohol abuse) has increased by more than 20 per cent," she said.

Last year's campaign was targeted for an audience between 15 and 29 years of age. This year, though, the government is narrowing the age group.

"By the time you're 29, you've established your lifestyle, career and brand preference, so it's not a preventative concern," she said. The government now is looking at two groups: the underaged drinker and the young (19-24) drinker.

Ladouceur says the advertising campaign, which this year will use mostly radio "is trying to portray a lifestyle where people turned down a drink that was offered to them. One person's refusal can influence a young person's decision. It's peer pressure, I guess, but it's used in a positive way," she said.

Except for those under the legal drinking age, Ladouceur says the government isn't discouraging anyone from drinking. "Drinking is okay — it's lots of fun and a good opportunity to socialize."

"But you must have some moderation," she said.

New Voice winners announced

New Voices Winners Announced

The winning plays in the fourth annual New Voices Playwriting Competition conducted by Island Community Theatre have been announced. Judged as the top play is "The Heirloom" by J. J. Steinfeld, Mr. Steinfeld, who was awarded first place in last year's competition will receive the first prize, an Olivetti electronic typewriter donated by Wizard Business Products, Inc.

Awarded second place was "Dogs and Chicken" by David Moses. He will receive a cash prize of \$200.00, the Eastern Graphic Award. Mr. Moses is well known in local theatre circles particularly for productions he has directed for the U.P.E.I. Theatre Society.

"The House at Abell's Cape" by Michael Hennessy will receive the third place O93 Award of \$100.00. Mr. Hennessy was winner of the first New Voices competition for his play "The

Trial of Minnie McGee" in 1983.


The judges also cited three other entries for Honourable Mention. They are: "Maggie Hannigan's War" by Michael Hennessy; "Jackpot" by Wayne Wright and "Morning Belongs to Columbus" by Davie Kellum.

The judges in this year's competition were journalist/broadcaster Kennedy Wells; Richard Lemm, head of the poetry section at the Banff School of Fine Arts; and, Deb Allen, actress, director and broadcaster.

In addition to this year's New Voices competition being the largest to date, the judges were also impressed by the overall quality of the entries. All participants will receive summaries of the judges assessments of their plays.

A reception for the participants will be held at 2 p.m. on March 25 at the offices of the P.E.I. Council of the Arts.

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