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| *December 29, 2006* |

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[**I.** **NATIONAL NEWS.**](#I)

# The Case Against Ladies' Night: Drinking Has Hidden Health Risks for Women

# December 26, 2006; Page D1The Wall Street Journal Online

Toasting the new year with an alcoholic beverage is probably good for your health -- if you're a man. If you're a woman, the impact of that glass of alcohol is far more confusing.

Overall, science shows that for both men and women, drinking a small amount of alcohol each day is better for you than never drinking at all, and it likely lowers your risk of heart attack, diabetes and mental decline. But for women, moderate alcohol consumption also carries risks you may not know about.

![[ ]]()Even small amounts of alcohol consumption are linked with higher risk for breast cancer. Women who drive after drinking are at higher risk than men of dying in a car accident, even at similar blood-alcohol concentrations. And women are at higher risk than men for serious health problems related to alcohol abuse, including liver, brain and heart damage.

The reasons alcohol appears to affect men and women so differently are complex. Women achieve higher concentrations of alcohol in the blood and become more impaired than men after drinking equivalent amounts of alcohol, even when taking into account differences in height and weight. This is likely due to the fact that a woman's stomach empties more slowly than a man's, giving the body more time to absorb the same amount of alcohol, many doctors say.

Lab studies suggest there may be gender differences in how alcohol affects the response to visual cues and other tasks related to driving performance, which may explain why it's more risky for a woman to drink and drive. And alcohol also may alter a woman's natural estrogen levels, which can influence her risk for a number of health concerns.

One of the most troubling effects of alcohol is that even small amounts increase a woman's risk for breast cancer. A pooled analysis by Harvard researchers of all the data on alcohol and breast cancer shows that a woman's risk increases by about 9% for every 10 grams of alcohol a day that she drinks. In the U.S., the typical serving of 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of liquor delivers about 12 grams to 14 grams of alcohol, according to the Harvard School of Public Health.

That means a woman who consumes just two drinks a day has about a 27% higher risk of getting breast cancer than a woman who doesn't drink alcohol.

It's worth noting that the absolute risk of alcohol consumption to an individual woman is slight. Consider that the typical 50-year-old woman has a five-year breast-cancer risk of about 2.1% -- so two drinks a day would boost her risk to only about 2.7%.

"It's not a huge difference to an individual woman, but it could translate into many thousands of breast cancers in a year that would not have otherwise occurred," says Walter Willett, epidemiology and nutrition professor at the Harvard School for Public Health. The alcohol-health equation "is definitely more complicated in women because of the relationship with breast cancer," says Dr. Willett.

For many women, similar risks from other choices have proved unacceptable. For instance, recent studies have shown a woman's risk of breast cancer increases 9% to 24% if she uses the menopause hormones estrogen and progestin, a concern that has prompted millions of women to abandon hormone treatments for menopause.

Exactly why alcohol consumption alters a woman's breast-cancer risk isn't entirely clear. Several studies have shown that alcohol can raise a woman's natural estrogen levels, and high natural estrogen is linked with higher breast-cancer risk. Alcohol may enhance the negative effects of natural estrogen on the breast.

While the breast-cancer risk sounds scary, it has to be weighed against other health benefits of alcohol. Women who consume about one drink a day have a 40% lower risk for heart attack, and a 70% lower risk of stroke. In the well-known Nurses Health Study, which now follows more than 120,000 women, those with diabetes who drank at least a half-serving of alcohol a day had a 52% lower risk for heart attack than nondrinkers.

Studies also show that moderate alcohol use might protect against osteoporosis, a serious health problem that leads to brittle bones and risky fractures and affects far more women than men. Women who drink six to seven servings of alcohol a week typically have higher bone density than nondrinkers. The higher bone density is likely explained by the estrogen-enhancing effects of alcohol, doctors say.

As a result, women need to take into account family history and personal concerns. A woman with a strong family history of breast cancer or someone with a family history of alcoholism might decide to forgo alcohol altogether. But someone without those added risk factors who is worried about heart attack, diabetes or osteoporosis might consider drinking small amounts of alcohol daily.

While there's disagreement about whether any level of alcohol is good for a woman, most authorities agree that women should limit themselves to one-half to one drink a day to get the maximum health benefits of drinking and minimize the risks. For men, the maximum health benefit comes with one to two drinks a day.

And women who do choose to drink should also take a multivitamin that contains folic acid. Recent studies show folic acid seems to blunt the harmful effects of alcohol on the breast and lowers risk of breast cancer to near that of a woman who doesn't drink alcohol.

"It's all about deciding what's best for you as an individual," says Sherry Marts, vice president for scientific affairs for the Society for Women's Health Research in Washington. "For women, whether to drink alcohol is another one of those risk-benefit decisions we make every day."

<http://online.wsj.com/services/article/SB116708489854059147-search.html?KEYWORDS=tackling+drunk+driving&COLLECTION=wsjie/6month>



**Alcohol, Headaches And Hangovers**

By JOEL SAPER, M.D.

Dec. 26 - Unfortunately, the "hair of the dog that bit you" won't do much when it comes to conquering alcohol-induced unease. But there are ways to lessen the impact of throbbing holiday headaches.

The spirits in a bottle can quickly ruin the spirit of a holiday. Some people just drink too much, and some people drink only a bit but pay a heavy price. For 35 years, I have encountered people with big headaches and little headaches, simple headaches and serious headaches, once-a-year headaches and daily headaches.

I have met people whose headaches result from just the smell of a beer and others whose headaches occur only after drinking a case of beer.

Here is some new information and some tips to help you take the spirits out of the bottle without taking the spirit out of the holidays.

**Headaches From the Bottle**

There are two major kinds of headaches that might appear after a night -- or afternoon -- of drinking. The first I call the soon-after headache, which occurs within one to four hours of drinking some but not all alcoholic beverages.

The other type of headache is the morning-after headache that occurs several hours after drinking has ceased and is usually part of the hangover.

**The Soon-After Headache**

Most people who experience the soon-after headache have had headaches in the past, usually migraine or related headaches. These headaches are actually genetic -- the brain biology changes so that it overreacts to both internal (hormonal, for example) or external changes, such as a swig from the bottle.

Ironically, even though alcohol is the intoxicating substance in these beverages, it is not usually the source of the headache. Certain nonalcoholic ingredients are more likely to induce the headache attack than alcohol itself.

Since brands vary in the amounts and types of these ingredients, some drinks are more likely than others to produce the headache.

Curiously, I have treated several individuals who can drink one brand of beer without developing a headache but can't stand even a sip of any other brand. Many people can drink white wine without developing a headache but will invariably experience a severe headache when they drink red wine.

Surprisingly, because hard liquor is more alcoholic than wine or beer, some people can drink vodka or gin (the crystal clear, light liquors) without developing a headache but cannot drink red wine, beer or the amber-colored hard liquors (rum, and the ever-gentle tequila).

**Why the Difference?**

As for beer, the ratio of hops, barley, malt and other ingredients distinguishes one beer brand from another.

Red wine contains tyramine -- which probably causes those red-wine headaches -- but white wine contains little, if any.

Hard liquor contains ingredients called cogeners -- which also cause headaches. Darker, amber-colored liquors contain more congeners than light-colored liquors, such as vodka and gin.

Recently, research has suggested that mixed drinks containing sugar substitutes, such as aspartame and saccharin, which may cause headaches in their own right, actually cause a more rapid rise in the level of alcohol in the blood after drinking. Therefore, beware of alcoholic beverages containing diet colas or diet tonics.

The Hangover and Its Headache

While the soon-after headache comes from nonalcoholic ingredients, the hangover comes directly from the effects of alcohol itself. The hangover occurs eight to 16 hours after drinking moderate to high amounts of alcohol, after all that alcohol is out of the bloodstream.

The key symptoms of a hangover include headache (usually a throbbing headache), nausea and diarrhea, extreme thirst and dehydration, and excessive fatigue.

In a recent study of college students, participants on average experienced five of 13 symptoms, with headache, extreme thirst and dehydration, and fatigue being the most common. A family history of alcohol abuse made the study participants more vulnerable to the most severe effects. Curiously, women generally had higher hangover scores than men did.

**What You Can Do**

Best advice -- don't drink.

Second best advice -- do the following:

Before drinking, hydrate with both clear water and sports drinks that contain sugar and important minerals and salts. Avoid too much plain water.

Before drinking, eat fat-containing foods and those with high carbohydrate content. These ingredients slow absorption of alcohol and other ingredients from the stomach.

Avoid sugar supplements that increase the speed of alcohol absorption.

Drink slowly, sipping the drink, and minimize the amount of total intake.

For those who have the soon-after headaches, drink "headache-safe" beverages, such as white wine and crystal-clear, light liquor.

To prevent the effects of the hangover, if you can do so safely, take anti-inflammation agents, such as ibuprofen, naproxen or mefenamic acid before drinking.

If soon-after or hangover headaches do occur, treat them with anti-inflammatory agents (you must wait several hours if you took such an agent in advance of drinking) or an anti-migraine agent if you have them available.

Rehydrate with water and sports drinks. You must avoid narcotic-containing painkillers or any ingredient containing acetaminophen, most commonly known as Tylenol. Alcohol can make those drugs deadly.

Also, acetaminophen-containing products may cause serious liver damage when mixed with alcohol, reactions that are sometimes fatal.

These steps can help. Enjoy the holidays, but be smart and be careful.

<http://abclocal.go.com/kgo/story?section=bizarre&id=4882133>

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**New gins are a tonic for James Bond Fans**

Charles Perry
*Los Angeles Times*
Dec. 26, 2006 12:00 AM

I blame James Bond. Everything started going downhill, cocktail-wise, when he insisted on vodka martinis, shaken, not stirred. That sounded ultra-suave in the 60s, but the vodka martini has a fatal flaw -- it lacks the heady aromatics and complex palate of gin (which must be why Ian Fleming actually specified a mixture of vodka and gin in "Casino Royale"). A straight vodka martini is a cocktail with a hole in the middle.

People were bound to fill that hole with something, and just look at what they're doing. The sugary, imitation fruit-flavored vodka cocktails being poured these days make me feel I'm at some kind of naughty children's Kool-Aid party.

I say a lot of these cocktails are suffering from gin deprivation, and apparently I'm not the only one who feels gin has been unjustly neglected of late. There's more interest in gin these days than there has been in many years. "It's something I notice around town," says dining room manager Jeremy Allen of Norman's in West Hollywood, Calif. "I think people are exploring." advertisement

Here's the best sign of a gin revival: In recent years, a whole category of boutique gins has arisen alongside the long-established brands.

The bartenders' favorite seems to be Hendrick's, a Scottish gin, which is so distinctive and yet refined that it creates remarkable cocktails. But keep your eyes open at leading bars and you're likely to notice other unfamiliar names, such as Junipero, from the Saan Francisco Bay Area; France's Citadelle; a gin made by a Sonoma, Calif., winemaker, No. 209; and Old Raj, another Scottish entry.

Anchor Brewing had just started making a rye whiskey in 1996 when owner Fritz Maytag decided to make a gin as well -- and discovered how much there was to learn. "I made a list of all the ingredients anybody ever mentioned in gin," he says, "First we made a minimalist gin with the three basic ingredients everybody uses, then we added one botanical at a time to see what they do.

"We experimented and wandered in a wilderness for a long time. Then one day I just said, Stop, this is great.' " Maytag's Junipero is powerful and sculptured, loaded with gin's distinctive juniper flavor.

Leslie Rudd fell into gin, as it were, when he bought the Edge Hill Winery in St. Helena, Calif., and discovered that in 1882 it had become U.S. registered distillery No. 209, producing gin and other spirits. Napa County does not permit distilling anything but grape-based spirits such as brandy and grappa, so Rudd set up his No. 209 operation -- which uses a still custom-made for him in Scotland -- in San Francisco. It's a subtle, well-considered gin that makes a sophisticated cocktail.

Gin was invented for medicinal purposes by a 17th century Dutch physician named Franciscus Sylvius, who added juniper berries, spices and other botanicals to distilled spirits. During the 18th century, the English took to drinking gin for its alcohol content, but in the 19th century, despite gin's bad reputation -- it had become a byword for alcohol abuse -- bartenders noticed that its crisp, piney flavor performed excellently in mixed drinks. In particular, it wedded beautifully with the body and winy aromas of vermouth. The all-time classic gin cocktail is the dry martini, created almost exactly 100 years ago, a cocktail so sleek and powerful it has been nicknamed the Silver Bullet.

As a result of this discovery, gin moved out of the categories of dubious medicine and cheap hooch to became one of the classic cocktail bases, along with whiskey, brandy, champagne and rum. Gin is the only one of that group that is almost never aged and gets its aroma entirely from added ingredients.

It starts as grain spirit (vodka, in effect; many gin distillers are also vodka-makers these days). The botanicals are steeped in it, it's distilled one more time, and -- voila! -- gin.

To be called gin, it has to include juniper berries -- its very name comes from the French or Dutch word for juniper. This provides gin's unique, refreshing outdoorsy scent. It always contains some citrus peel, either lemon or bitter orange or both. After that, the distiller has a huge range of choices. Coriander and anise are very common, but some gins use 20 or more botanicals such as cucumber, licorice, rose petals or almonds.

One of the most important is angelica, a cold-climate member of the carrot family that flourishes in Northern Europe. Angelica is astringent; it's the reason gin doesn't have a cloying aftertaste. Another traditional ingredient is orris root, which has a mild, funky herbal smell somewhat resembling violets. More important, orris root binds volatile aromas, which would otherwise evaporate more rapidly than they do.

But recently, more than a dozen specialty gins have appeared on the market, showing an extravagant variety of styles: powerful gins for memorable cocktails, delicate or exotic ones for sipping, new takes on classical gins with a twist of their own.

About half of the companies marketing the new-wave gins have long experience in spirits, such as mainline gin distiller Tanqueray and the French firm Cognac Ferrand. There's a surprisingly strong Scottish presence. Hendrick's comes from the Girvan Distillery, which supplies grain whisky for the Grant & Sons brand of blended scotches. Old Raj is distilled for Wm. Cadenhead, a specialist in bottling high-end single malts. Ian Macleod Distillers, producers of Scotch and many other spirits, makes the remarkable Kensington, which tastes like a cross between gin and aged whisky.

Among the West Coast gins, the best are the two made by companies moving up from less-alcoholic beverages, Junipero No. 209.

Other brands are mostly the work of newcomers to the business, based in places as various as Chicago, Santa Cruz, Calif., Princeton, Minn., and Bend, Ore. Martin Miller's sends its freshly distilled gin from London to Iceland to be brought down to 80 proof with the local water.

Most of the new gins show the ongoing effects of Sapphire's explosive effect on the design of gin bottles. Instead of being packaged in old-fashioned squared-off bottles, most of them arrive in fanciful containers that look like giant perfume jars.

But the real differences are inside the bottle. The well-known gin brands, like most spirits in the modern world, are distilled in high-volume column stills. In contrast, eight of the newcomers boast that they use the old-fashioned pot still, the kind associated with Cognac and Scotch malt whisky.

Pot stills are slower and less-efficient than column stills but can make a more distinctive product, and most of the pot-distilled gins we tasted were particularly good.

There's no single style to these new gins. Several of the newcomers have a somewhat unfocused flavor, but the Bay Area brewery and winery distill splendid, rather classical gins. Scotland produced three of our favorites, all quite distinctive, and they could scarcely be more different: Hendrick's poetic and delicate, Old Raj rich and robust, Kensington startlingly original.

With its whisky-like notes, a Kensington Martini is halfway to a Rob Roy, and Old Raj is such a flavorful gin that you need to add more vermouth than you otherwise would (yes, ultra-dry martini fans, this is one case when gin can overpower vermouth).

In the gin market, these brands are just the proverbial drop in the bucket. But they reveal new possibilities.



**DOT Releases 2005 State-by-State Data on Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities; Statistics Underscore Drunk Driving is Deadliest of Crimes**

2006/12/22 16:50:00
*Source: Layover.com*

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters today released new state-by-state data for 2005 showing that alcohol-impaired driving remains one of the nation's deadliest crimes. Last year, 23 states and Puerto Rico showed a decrease in the fatality rate for crashes where the driver had an illegal alcohol level of at least .08, while the rate in 21 states and the District of Columbia increased and in 6 other states it remained flat.

"These statistics confirm what every police officer patrolling America's streets already knows: that irresponsible use of alcohol and driving are a tragic and toxic combination that robs people of their potential and families of their loved ones," said Secretary Peters.

Also today, Secretary Peters announced that the Department launched the first-ever, December holiday season advertising blitz to support impaired driving enforcement committing $7 million for paid advertising as part of its ""Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest"" campaign. She added that the ads are directed at men ages 21-34, and will air nationally on television and radio from December 20th through the 31st. These ads warn drivers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico that law enforcement officials are cracking down to catch and arrest drunk drivers.

This unprecedented holiday ad buy coincides with a nationwide law enforcement crackdown that will run through New Year's Eve and includes thousands of police agencies throughout the United States. Peters joined officers in Phoenix, Ariz. today, and Albuquerque, N.M. yesterday, to get a first-hand look at stepped-up law enforcement efforts that include sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols, both proven to be effective tools in getting or keeping drunk drivers off the road.

"As a wife, a mother, and a grandmother, I never want to receive a call saying that a loved one will not be coming home because of a crash, especially one caused by alcohol," remarked Peters. "This coordinated air and ground campaign is helping prevent our officers from having to make that dreaded phone call."

The drunk driving data provide new details that will help law enforcement and the U.S. Department of Transportation tackle this persistent problem, Secretary Peters said. She noted that in the last two years alone, the Department has invested more than $410 million in impaired driving efforts nationally to fund programs ranging from education and enforcement to treatment and improvements to the judicial process.

"Statistics are a vital tool in our battle against drunk driving," said Peters. "But, we must remember that there is a human face behind every one of those numbers - a mother, an uncle, a brother or best friend that lost their lives because someone made a lethal decision. This holiday season, every one should picture their loved ones if they are planning to party. It will help you make responsible decisions."



**Beer Aged in Bourbon Barrels Gains Converts**

*Source: Chicago Tribune*
December 22, 2006

Few would argue that beer and whiskey are two great tastes. But are they great tastes that taste great together? Breweries, brewpubs and, most important, beer drinkers seem to think so, as evidenced by the growing demand for beers that have been aged in Bourbon and Scotch barrels.

Chicago's Goose Island Brewery, which has brewed its seasonal Bourbon County Stout since 1992, will boost production of the barrel-aged beer to roughly 9,000 cases in 2007, up from 1,200 cases this year. The Festival of Wood and Barrel Aged Beer, which featured 36 beers at its inaugural event in 2003, recently showcased 75 beers at the annual Chicago fest. And even Anheuser-Busch, best known for brewing mainstream beers like Budweiser, Busch and Michelob, added two beers to its catalog in 2005 that are aged on, not in, Bourbon barrels. (More on that process later.)

"For a long time people had the one beer that they drank, and it was the one beer they drank everyday," said Goose Island brewmaster Greg Hall. "Nobody eats like that, and people that drink wine don't drink like that. Beer drinkers are starting to catch up. They want to drink different beers for different occasions."

A barrel-aged beer certainly isn't an everyday ale. For starters, most of the brews hover around 10-percent alcohol. (Compare that to Rolling Rock's 4.6 percent or Amstel Light's 3.5 percent.) Some of that added alcohol comes from the barrel, which may still contain as much as five gallons of barrel-strength whiskey when it arrives at the brewery. But the bulk of the alcohol comes from the beers, which are bigger-bodied and higher in alcohol even before the aging process.

"If you were to put an American wheat beer in the barrel, the flavor [of the barrel] would immediately overwhelm it," said the Chicago Beer Society's Jeff Sparrow, who has also judged the barrel-aged beer category at the Great American Beer Festival. "You want the flavor of the barrel to enhance, not overwhelm, the flavor of the beer. Bigger beers, like an imperial stout or barley wine, can stand up and also have flavors [complementary to Bourbon], like coconut and vanilla."

With all these flavors and aromas swirling about, most experts say that in order to fully appreciate these complex beers, tasters should sip them from a brandy snifter, which helps trap the beers' rich aroma.

Chicago's Rock Bottom brewpub, which aims to have at least one barrel-aged beer on tap at all times, serves its barrel-aged beers in 10-ounce snifters.

"It's nice to see someone having lunch with a snifter of 10-percent alcohol Bourbon imperial stout," said head brewer Peter Crowley. "It's becoming accepted in ways similar to a fine wine. It's a rare and very high-quality product that we're making."

It seems that judges agree with Crowley's self-assessment. The top award at the recent Festival of Wood and Barrel Aged Beers went to Clare's Thirsty Ale, an imperial stout Crowley aged with raspberries in Woodford Reserve Bourbon barrels. (Rock Bottom is fresh out of Clare's Thirsty Ale, but Crowley expects to release a barrel-aged raspberry oatmeal stout in February.) Second place went to another local, suburban Flossmoor Station Brewery, which has also won awards for its barrel-aged beers at the Great American Beer Festival.

Because they're brewed in such small quantities (a whiskey barrel is about 50 gallons), barrel-aged beers are much easier to come by in brewpubs.

Anheuser-Busch, however, has found a way around this problem. Instead of aging the beers in Bourbon barrels, the St. Louis brewer ages its two barrel-aged beers on Bourbon barrels. The process involves brewers disassembling the barrels and layering the staves on the bottom of the stainless steel tanks, which can hold much more than a barrel.

The results can be found in Michelob Celebrate Vanilla Oak and Winter's Bourbon Cask Ale, two beers introduced last year as a part of Anheuser-Busch's new seasonal beer program.

Goose Island's Hall believes that these kinds of specialty beers are what beer drinkers are looking for these days.

"Thirty years ago, if you had two bucks you could get a beer, a glass of wine or a drink at a bar," he said. "Wine was the first [spirit category] to move up. Liquor moved up in the last 10 or 15 years. And beer kind of lagged behind. It wasn't because the customer wasn't willing to pay more for a special beer, it was that we brewers didn't have the [courage] to make one. You can see that's beginning to change."



**After Outcry, Kohl's Agrees to Stop Selling Drinking Games**

*Join Together*
December 21, 2006

Kohl's Department Stores has agreed to stop selling controversial drinking games after public-health groups said that items like a roulette-wheel shot game promote dangerous and underage drinking.

"Be assured that the remaining games are being removed from all Kohl's stores and online," wrote Kohl's spokesperson Julie Landro after Join Together, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), the Oregon Partnership and others this week urged Kohl's to stop selling the games.

"It doesn't make sense that retailers would want to profit by encouraging dangerous behavior, even if it's in so-called 'fun,'" Eric Helmuth, Join Together's director of online communications, told the Hartford Courant on Dec. 21.

An action alert sent out by Helmuth and CSPI Alcohol Policies Program Director George Hacker stated that, "Intentionally or not, these youth-friendly games promote high-risk and underage drinking. They have no place in the gifts section of a family department store, especially during the holiday season."

Helmuth said that more than 2,600 e-mails had been sent to Kohl's objecting to the games since the alert was sent out on Tuesday.

The Courant pointed out that Kohl's is not the only store selling alcohol-themed games. Target sells such games on its website, and even Linens 'n Things sells beer pong online. Urban Outfitters also sells alcohol-themed games even though its stated target audience is 18- to 30-year-olds, advocates noted.

Prevention groups are planning to target Target next with an e-mail campaign, Helmuth said.



**Spirits**

By RON LIEBER
December 28, 2006; Page D2
*WSJ*

Liquors infused with artificial fruit flavors crowd store shelves. But many imbibers find them too sweet. Now, a new crop of drinks using real fruit have hit the market. The offerings are a bit more sophisticated, but results are still mixed.

Boz Spirits Inc.'s 267 Infusions makes a cranberry vodka and a mango rum. Modern Spirits offers Pear Lavender and Chocolate Orange. For $15,000 and up, the company will help you invent your own flavor and then make 120 bottles of it. Hangar One, distilled on an old naval air base east of San Francisco, makes raspberry vodka in June when the Washington-state fruit is ripe.

You could also pick your own fruit and follow the recipes in "Infused," a new tome from Chronicle Books, which would make a nice gift for your New Year's Eve host paired with the better bottles below.

**Name: 267 Infusions,** [**267.com**](http://www.267.com)

Price: $25 (750 milliliters)

Tasting Notes: Orange (vodka) has Tang-like flavor, while the Pineapple (rum) tastes like juice and was easily identified in our blind test; lowest alcohol content of the three brands (21%).

**Name: Hangar One,** [**hangarone.com**](http://www.hangarone.com)

Price: $36 (750 milliliters)

Tasting Notes: Kaffir Lime smelled of turpentine, but Mandarin Blossom fared better and appealed to the panel's straight vodka drinkers; both might benefit from mixers.

**Name: Modern Spirits,** [**modernspiritsvodka.com**](http://www.modernspiritsvodka.com)

Price: $25-27 (375 milliliters)

Tasting Notes: Best of the tasting; subtle Grapefruit Honey inspired requests for second shots and the powerfully flavored Candied Ginger had us dreaming up cocktail recipes.



[**II.** **IOWA NEWS.**](#II)

**State Alcohol Sales Remain on Record Pace**

by Darwin Danielson

Holiday gift giving and celebration made things pretty busy for the state Alcoholic Beverages Division. Lynn Walding, the administrator of the division, and told Radio Iowa just before Christmas, sales were really moving. Walding says they're running about 11-percent this fiscal year above last year in alcohol sales. He says the week before Christmas sales were 19-percent above average.

The fiscal year began in July and since then the division has seen nearly 161-million dollars in alcohol sales with a net profit of 53-million dollars. Walding says the gallons of alcohol sold are up about seven-and-a-half percent. Walding says that's been the trend for the last five years. He says the trend has been toward liquor and wine and a little away from beer. Walding says the "spirits" industry has become somewhat of a gourmet industry with lots of flavors and unique categories.

Walding says the alcohol companies are coming up with new flavors all the time. Walding says they just got a bunch of new products with pear flavors, and says pomegranate was recently the hot flavor. Walding says many new clubs are showing up that are catering more to an upscale audience.
Walding says about 20-percent of the products get used at bars and clubs, and people in the 21 to 29-year-old age group are probably the biggest market for the alcohol. Walding says that group tends to go out more and probably has more discretionary income to spend on the alcohol.

While the new flavors have been catching on -- Walding says the top seller has held steady. Walding says the number one product is and always has been Black Velvet. Walding says one of the fastest growing categories is Vodka. Walding says the use of flavors and the Vodka's ability to mix with all types of things has made it more profitable.

Sales figures on the division's website show just over 85-thousand-700 cases of Black Velvet have been sold. Hawkeye Vodka was the number two seller with 66-thousand-31 cases. Also, four of the other top ten sellers are Vodka varieties. To see the full report on state alcohol sales, surf to [www.www.iowaabd.com](http://www.www.iowaabd.com).

<http://www.radioiowa.com/gestalt/go.cfm?objectid=D7F02DA7-9CD8-464F-8376280B41E5CAD5&dbtranslator=local.cfm>

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**Wine Industry Continues to Grow in Iowa**

*Radio Iowa*
December 22, 2006

Chances are getting better that if you're a wine lover the bottle you get for Christmas could be made right here in the state of Iowa. Lynn Walding, the administrator of the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division, says excise taxes collected show that wine sales are up seven-and-a-half percent. Walding says some of that is due to Iowa wines.

Walding says we're up to 67 native wineries in Iowa, and they're adding wine trails and new wineries. Walding says Iowa's wines are also getting attention outside the state. Walding says the Sunday New York Times had an article about Iowa wines as did the London Times. Walding says the wine industry goes beyond alcohol sales.

Walding says the wineries represent rural economic development and provide another crop for Iowa. The industry continues to grow and with that Walding's division is holding some hearings to discuss how native wines are classified. He says they're particularly talking about whether they're going to allow wine to be imported and mixed with native wine and still qualify for the benefits given to native wine growers to state growers.

Walding says they hope to be able to make some recommendations on that to the Iowa Legislature. The Alcoholic Beverages Division has already held two forums on native wines, and will hold the third and final forum January 12th at the Whispering Hills Vineyard in Carson.

<http://www.radioiowa.com/gestalt/go.cfm?objectid=62AA787F-3310-42FB-B45122DC3C605F89&dbtranslator=local.cfm>



**Webster County Supervisors OK keg Ordinance**
Law takes effect in March 2007

By LUKE JENNETT
Messenger staff writer

The Webster County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday in favor of the final passage of an ordinance requiring alcohol retailers to keep records on the sale of beer kegs.

The ordinance, which was first brought before the board this summer by a student group, will begin to take effect in March.

Supervisor James Gill said there’d been no verbal or written opposition to come before the board throughout the passage of the bill, and one major alcohol retailer he’d spoken to said they understood the board’s overall motivations for passing the ordinance and gave their support for it.

Retailers will now be required to tag kegs and keep logs of sales from the last six months, allowing city and county law enforcement to track kegs left as evidence back to the adult who purchased them.

The tags that will be used to identify kegs sold in Webster County will be provided free by the county to retailers, said Kuhn. The tags will include the date of sale, the name and address of the buyer, and an identification number such as a driver’s license number. Tampering with the tags will result in the loss of a $50 deposit.

Liddy Hora, coordinator for a group called Drug Free Alliance in Fort Dodge, attended the meeting and thanked Gill and Assistant County Attorney Cori Kuhn for their work in passing the ordinance. Hora works with Youth in Action in Fort Dodge, a group of 35 high school students from St. Edmond High School and Fort Dodge Senior High who initially brought the issue before the board.

‘‘They asked the supervisors to pass an ordinance similar to one passed in Humboldt County to curb underage drinking,’’ said Hora.

Hora and Gill stressed that no one was suggesting the ordinance would completely eliminate underage access to alcohol — the focus of the ordinance centers on adults who purchase kegs for the use of minors.

‘‘There have been several cases where police will go out to parties, and everybody will run and leave the evidence behind,’’ said Gill. ‘‘Nobody will take responsibility for supplying the kegs. This will help police trace them back to the adult who bought them.’’

Hopefully, said Hora, the ordinance will make people think twice about buying kegs for minors.

Members of Youth in Action have taken on social issues in the past, said Hora. The group has taken on health and fitness and Character Counts initiatives, and at the beginning of the year will start a campaign outlining the negative effects of marijuana use.

‘‘They care about the community, and they’ve realized they have a voice people will listen to, and they’re exercising their right to make a positive change,’’ said Hora. ‘‘They’re very passionate about the community, and they’re concerned about how things are affecting their fellow students. It reinforces the view that there are good teens out there.’’

Webster County Sheriff Brian Mickelson said he believes the ordinance will result in a decrease in underage access to alcohol.

‘‘That’s not to say they won’t be able to get their hands on it, but it won’t be quite so easy to get adults to buy for them,’’ he said.

Mickelson, who is also a member of the Drug Free Alliance, said similar ordinances have been passed in many Iowa counties, and the Iowa State Sheriff and Deputy Association has supported a statewide keg registration law, as well as stronger penalties for adults who knowingly supply alcohol for minors.

<http://www.messengernews.net/News/articles.asp?articleID=6048>



[**III. OTHER STATE NEWS.**](#III)

**Tackling Drunken Driving With a Glass at the Bar (Vermont)**

Top of Form

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By [KATIE ZEZIMA](http://query.nytimes.com/search/query?ppds=bylL&v1=KATIE%20ZEZIMA&fdq=19960101&td=sysdate&sort=newest&ac=KATIE%20ZEZIMA&inline=nyt-per)

Published: December 26, 2006
*New York Times*



Stewart Cairns for The New York Times

R. T. Carmody of Carmody’s Pub in Bennington, Vt., serving a drink in a glass emblazoned with the
town’s police logo. A police official said, “When they see the police logo, maybe they’ll stop and think.”

If you order a beer in Bennington, Vt., this week, chances are that a subtle warning from the police will come with your Pilsner.

The Bennington Police Department has distributed to local bars and restaurants 200 pint glasses bearing three of its logos.

“It’s about alcohol awareness, trying to get people to drink responsibly and not drink and drive,” said Lt. Paul Doucette of the department. “When they see the police logo, maybe they’ll stop and think.”

The police handed out the glasses, which were donated by a local glass company, to seven bars and restaurants in Bennington, a town of 15,000 in western Vermont. Lieutenant Doucette said that the glasses were becoming a novelty in town, and that other police departments were calling to replicate the program.

“Unfortunately some of them will disappear because people do collect pint glasses,” he said.

T. J. Carmody, owner of Carmody’s Pub, got about four cases of the glasses last Tuesday. He said customers were coming in and requesting the glasses, which are being rotated between the dining room and bar, so nondrinkers can also use a glass.

“We don’t want people not to drink, but we want them to be aware that they can’t drink and drive,” Mr. Carmody said.

Mark Krause, 47, was drinking a Smithwick’s out of a Bennington police glass on Friday afternoon at Carmody’s. Mr. Krause said in a phone interview that he had waited to drink from a police glass.

“I think it’s a great idea,” he said. “If you’re sitting at the bar and you’re having a cocktail, most people spin the glass around to see the logo. This one makes that light bulb go off and you think about drinking and driving.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/26/us/26bennington.html?_r=1&oref=slogin>

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**Ill. Couple Charged for Teen Son's Party (Illinois)**

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Published: December 27, 2006
Filed at 11:21 a.m. ET

DEERFIELD, Ill. (AP) -- A couple have been charged with allowing their son to have an underage drinking party in their home, after which two teenage partygoers were killed in a car crash.

Jeffrey Hutsell, 53, and Sara Hutsell, 52, were charged with five misdemeanors, including endangering the health of a child and attempting to obstruct justice, police said Tuesday. Both were freed on $5,000 bail after turning themselves in Friday.

Officials allege the Hutsells allowed their teenage son to have a party in their basement where beer and rum were served. Two 18-year-olds who authorities say attended the party, Daniel Bell and Ross Trace, were later killed in a car crash not far from the Hutsells' home.

Bell, who was driving, had a blood-alcohol level of 0.132 percent, according to autopsy results. The legal limit for drivers older than 21 is 0.08. Toxicology reports also show Trace had marijuana in his system.

Prosecutors allege that the Hutsells knew what the teenagers were doing.

''The defendants were home, aware of the gathering, failed to control the party, failed to control access to their home (and) failed to control children's access to alcohol,'' said Assistant State's Atty. Dan Shanes. ''Alcohol was freely and readily available to all the kids who were there, at least a couple dozen who came in and out.''

There was no immediate response Wednesday to messages seeking comment that were left at numbers listed for the Hutsell in Deerfield.

<http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/us/AP-Teens-Killed-Charges.html>



**New Campaign Aims to Cut Underage Drinking (Utah)**
Suzanne Ashe
Tuesday, 26 December 2006

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| There are a few new shady characters hanging out in the liquor store on Tooele's Main Street, much to the delight of state Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission officials. With sales of alcohol increasing more than $11.5 million from November to December & a drastic jump compared to other times of the year & a new state campaign aims to make sure none of that alcohol is consumed by underage drinkers. The campaign places larger-than-life-sized silhouette cutouts of teens with anti-drinking messages in each of the state's 38 liquor stores. Part of the campaign will also focus on in-house training for store managers. The cutouts, which arrived in stores Friday, are sponsored by ParentsEmpowered.org and feature thought bubbles above the heads of teens with anti-underage-drinking messages: "No thanks. I need all the brain cells I can get," one reads & a pithy take on new research that shows underage drinking can cause permanent brain damage. Another says, "After school is the best time to party," & an ironic message based on the fact that most underage drinking happens between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Another cutout says kids who drink before age 15 have a 40 percent chance of becoming addicted, while chances of addiction are only 7 percent for those who wait until they're 21 to imbibe. "It's been real helpful having the program," said Robyn Jones, manager of the State Liquor and Wine store in Tooele. Over the past few weeks, Jones' staff has been extra cautious about "carding" customers. The liquor store accepts four types of identification: state-issued IDs, state-issued driver's licenses, U.S. passports and military IDs. "If an ID looks sketchy, if it has a hole in it or is bent, we won't accept it," Jones said. Jones said most often teens will attempt to buy alcohol using an older brother or sister's ID. She admits that although the new campaign is helpful in making parents aware of the dangers of underage drinking, teens will still find ways to break the rules. She added that concerned parents should be wary of national ad campaigns that target teens. "All of the different flavors of rum, vodka and now cognac really target a younger drinker & from 21 to 25," Jones said. "But those flavors appeal to teens too, especially with all of the fruit-flavored drinks." Jones doesn't think the cutouts will actually deter teens from attempting to buy wine or spirits illegally, but she hopes they will raise awareness among adults who otherwise might buy alcohol for a teenager. "Like anything else, there is an age limit for drinking," Jones said. "And there is a good reason for that age limit." grapesLos Gatos High To Use Breath Alcohol Tests At Dances (California)LOS GATOS -- Los Gatos High School plans to join a growing number of high schools that perform random breath alcohol tests on students at dances and other events.Principal Doug Ramezane said he would institute the new policy after winter break because several students were found to be under the influence of alcohol at football games, the school's Coronation Ball and even during class this year."It isn't OK that any of these kids are doing it," Ramezane said. "It probably isn't going to eliminate the problem completely, but we want to minimize alcohol and drug use."Although Los Gatos High has had a Breathalyzer alcohol detector available at school dances for several years, campus officials have only used it when they suspected a particular student was drunk. In the future, students will be tested at random, he said.Los Gatos police are training teachers on how to identify the use of alcohol or drugs in school and have contacted teen groups on campus about participating in an upcoming meeting in January, said Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Chief Scott<http://www.ktvu.com/news/10611792/detail.html>grapes**Alcohol-Free New Year’s Celebrations Decline in Popularity (New York)**Last Edited: Wednesday, 27 Dec 2006, 9:58 AM ESTCreated: Wednesday, 27 Dec 2006, 9:58 AM ESTTrenton, N.J. -- Alcohol-free, community-based New Year's Eve celebrations that hit a high point in popularity as New Jerseyans ushered in the millennium have declined by more than half in the six years since, according to a published report. The festivals, often held outdoors and co-sponsored by churches or school groups, brought music, food, fireworks and vendors to communities seeking family friendly options for New Year's Eve. In 2000, 18 New Jersey cities and towns hosted First Night festivities, which were among the 225 such celebrations worldwide that year. The number worldwide scheduled for this year is 107, The Star-Ledger of Newark reported in Wednesday's newspapers. First Night International, an umbrella organization, blames a combination of factors for the festival's waning popularity: the post-Sept. 11 economy, lack of financial support from hosts and too few volunteers. "Something like this takes a lot of support all year long and needs the patience from the surrounding community it serves," Janice Allen, chairwoman of Morris County's First Night, told the newspaper. Dave Sullivan, executive director of First Night International, said nonprofit groups such as his have suffered since Sept. 11. Safety and security issues have increased costs as well, he said. In Summit, for example, First Night celebrations began in 1993 and attracted 5,000 participants. By 2004, there were no more First Night fetes in the Union County town. In other communities, however, the tradition flourishes. Montclair's festival has been put on annually since 1988, and Morris County's event this year is to feature 400 artists, 80 performances and 26 venues. Nationwide, 10 new towns have applied as First Night hosts, proof to Sullivan that the concept has staying power.<http://www.myfoxny.com/myfox/pages/News/Detail?contentId=1888354&version=1&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=TSTY&pageId=3.2.1>grapesColorado's Last Dry Town Lifts Alcohol Ban (Colorado)POSTED: 5:51 am MST December 27, 2006 |

ORCHARD CITY, Colo. -- Colorado's last totally-dry town is going away.

Voters in the Western Slope town of Orchard City overwhelming approved lifting the long-standing ban on alcohol sales in November's election. The town is now allowed to issue liquor licenses for restaurants and liquor stores, but no bars or taverns.

Town Trustee Don Suppes said the next step is coming up with the rules and regulations for alcohol sales, an area the town has no experience in. That process could take up to six months.

No hurry. Town Manager Ike Holland said that so far, no one has applied for a license.

Orchard City is a town of about 3,000, located 170 miles west of Denver

<http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/10615011/detail.html>



**New Year's gets an Alcohol Law Exception (Florida)**

**Carolyn Quinn
December 26, 2006
*Charlotte Sun-Herald***

Ordinarily, alcohol can't be legally sold once the clock strikes midnight, signaling that Sunday has come to an end in Charlotte County.

To many, that's no way to hail the start of 2007.

"What are you going to do, say 'Have a happy New Year and get out'?" said Chris Evans, operations manager of Harpoon Harry's in Fishermen's Village.

Almost 30 years ago, it seems the Charlotte County commissioners understood Evans' sentiment. They permitted an exception to the rule, and since Jan. 2, 1979, it has been legal to sell alcohol until 2 a.m. on Monday when New Year's Eve falls on a Sunday. The city of Punta Gorda has an ordinance allowing the same thing.

"They had to change it because it wasn't right, it wasn't fair the way it was written," said Charlotte County Sheriff's Office spokesman Bob Carpenter.

The holiday has been on a Sunday three times since then -- in 1989, 1995 and 2000 -- and will be a Sunday again at the end of 2006.

Kevin Doyle, owner of The Celtic Ray Pub in Punta Gorda, said the extra time makes a difference in how much his business makes and how happy his customers are on New Year's. Of the 50 to 70 patrons he expects on the holiday, he thinks most will arrive late on Sunday night.

"We start getting busy around 11 on New Year's Eve," he said. "They're just getting warmed up at midnight. They'd be like, 'What? We have to go home?'"

With time to allow customers to linger, some bars are planning special events to herald the new year. Evans expects several hundred people to see a fireworks show over Charlotte Harbor from Harpoon Harry's. Doyle said the celebration at The Celtic Ray will consist of "Just the usual bells and whistles, hats and things."

Police spokesmen said they do not expect the extra time to result in extra DUIs, vandalism or other crimes.

"It has not been a major problem. It's only those few that choose to drink and drive," Carpenter said.

He added that alcohol-serving establishments tend to regulate their patrons, which makes them less of a problem for police than house parties.

"Bartenders, most of the time, keep an eye on it," he said, "Whereas people who go to home parties drink themselves into oblivion."

The Punta Gorda Police Department will have extra staffing, a DUI-specific detail and extra officers assigned to the Fishermen's Village fireworks event on New Year's Eve, PGPD spokesman Butch Arenal said.

"Traditionally, people have been very well-behaved," he said. "Our goal is to not have any DUI arrests that night."

Charlotte County Ordinance 76-19 states that with the exception of a Sunday New Year's Eve, alcohol may not be sold, served, consumed or allowed to be served or consumed between 2 a.m. and noon on Sundays, midnight to 6 a.m. on Mondays and 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. the rest of the week.

<http://www.sun-herald.com/NewsArchive4/122606/tp5de5.htm?date=122606&story=tp5de5.htm>



**Device may check Alcohol Offenders (California)**Monitor tests sweat, offers an alternative to jail time

By Alejandro Alfonso, STAFF WRITER
Article Last Updated: 12/25/2006 02:47:20 AM PST

The desire to have a drink always stays with alcoholics.

The satisfaction of that desire can often lead to patterns of destructive behavior, such as domestic abuse and drunken driving.

Still, unless they have seriously injured or killed someone, even repeat offenders can quickly find themselves back on the street, still burdened by their addiction with little monitoring.

New technology, however, is giving judges an opportunity to burden them with something else; if they do have a drink after being ordered not to, no matter where they are or what time it is, the court will know about it.

The Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitor (SCRAM) is a 24-hour monitoring device that is strapped to the ankle and measures blood-alcohol levels in a person's sweat at least every hour. Patented in 1993, the device is being used more frequently in the courts as a way to monitor repeat DUI offenders.

Leaders in Community Alternatives Inc., a San Francisco-based private electronic monitoring agency thatprovides tools and resources for alternative sentencing and transitional planning, has touted the device to judges and lawyers across California in lieu of jail time for alcoholics.

"We don't believe locking up alcohol and drug addicts is working," said Leslie Summers, community liaison for LCA. "SCRAM is absolutely a deterrent. It's bulky and kind of uncomfortable — you know it's there. Clients have told me they walk by the liquor store and think twice because they are wearing it."

Although the number of people using the device is still small, Summers said the successful completion rate for those in the program is around 85 to 90 percent.

The cost to monitor someone is $12 a day and is deferred to the wearer by the court. Strapped to the ankle, it has an alarm to detect any attempts to tamper with it, and communicates with a modem linked to a telephone line.

Judges are still wary of using the new technology. Some think it may be too intrusive, Summers said. But, she added, the fear of big brother watching is balanced by the benefits: less-crowded jails and the cognitive reminder to addicts that they need to change their behavior.

Law enforcement agencies and interest groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving have endorsed the use of SCRAM as a monitoring tool for repeat offenders.

Paula Birdsong, executive director of California's MADD, said she supports SCRAM as another tool in the fight against drunken driving, but that it is no substitute for prison in the circumstance of someone being seriously injured or killed by an intoxicated driver.

"I don't think our organization could get behind that," she said. "But we do hope it shows favorably."

<http://origin.insidebayarea.com/dailyreview/localnews/ci_4898365>



**Judge Upholds much of Kentucky law Governing wine Shipments (Kentucky)**

Source: *WAVE 3*Dec 26th

(LOUISVILLE, Ky.) -- Out-of-state wineries can ship their wares into Kentucky, even if a customer buys the wines online or over the phone, a federal judge ruled Tuesday.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Charles R. Simpson III upholds a state law set to take effect in January and eliminates the requirement that someone purchase the wine in person before it is shipped.

The ruling came in a lawsuit filed by Cherry Hill Vineyards, an Oregon winery, which claimed Kentucky's law violated the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution by giving preference to Kentucky businesses over out-of-state merchants.

The ruling comes four months after Simpson struck down the provision requiring any wine to be purchased in state, then shipped.

Cherry Hill Winery challenged the new state law on four grounds: that the provision limiting shipments to wineries that produce less than 50,000 gallons a year unfairly protects Kentucky's small wineries; that limiting shipments to two cases at a time favors local wineries; requiring wine purchases to be made in-person discriminates against out-of-state businesses; and that the creation of the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council leads to Kentucky businesses being treated differently than out-of-state businesses.

Cherry Hill's attorney, J. Alex Tanford, an Indiana University law professor, said the ruling will open the door to small wineries that sell high-end wines to begin doing business in Kentucky, not the mass-produced, $10-a-bottle wine makers.

"Those are the wineries that will take the gamble to see if they can sell wine in Kentucky," Tanford said. "There will be significant access to some interesting wines."

Tanford argued that defining a small winery as one that produces 50,000 gallons or less annually amounts to protectionism, because all Kentucky wineries currently fit that description.

Simpson rejected that argument, saying the state can offer all of its wineries the benefits outlined in the law.

"No justification need be shown for the 50,000 gallon limit, as it simply does not give Kentucky wineries a competitive advantage over similarly situated out-of-state producers," Simpson wrote.

Tanford said Simpson's view was "a bit like an ostrich," because lawmakers obviously wrote the provision to help Kentucky wineries.

"If he doesn't see it, its because he doesn't want to," Tanford said.

Simpson upheld the two-case limit and the creation of the Kentucky Grape and Wine Council, which is designed to promote bluegrass wines and cut deals with wholesalers to sell them, calling the provisions "evenhanded" and saying they do not violate the Commerce Clause.

"There are no Commerce Clause implications in a state's decision to sponsor and encourage economic development of its industries," Simpson wrote.

Earlier this year, the Kentucky General Assembly passed a law requiring in-state wineries to sell their wares through wholesalers, just like other producers of beer or spirits.

Because of laws enacted in the 1930s following the repeal of Prohibition, alcoholic beverages are distributed under a three-tiered system in which brewers, winemakers and distillers are required to sell their products to a distributor, who then sells the product to retailers such as bars, restaurants and retail stores.

The new law will eliminate a provision in Kentucky law that allows small wineries to ship their product directly to retailers rather than having to use the services of a distributor.

The U.S. Supreme Court last year overturned laws in New York and Michigan that prohibited buying wine directly from out-of-state wineries. The ruling stemmed from lawsuits by a group of wineries alleging that those states violated interstate commerce laws because they allowed in-state wineries to ship directly to consumers but prevented out-of-state wineries from doing so.

The initial plaintiff, Huber Orchard and Winery of Starlight, Ind., dropped out of the lawsuit and was replaced by Cherry Hill Vineyards. Messages left with Cherry Hill Vineyards, as well as with the Kentucky Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet, which oversees alcoholic beverage control, were not immediately returned Tuesday.



**Some Ohio Liquor Stores Don't Toast New Year's (Ohio)**

*[Toledo Blade](https://webmail.iowa.gov/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061227/NEWS24/612270373" \t "_blank)*
December 27, 2006

 With New Year's Eve on a Sunday, state law will prevent some Ohio liquor stores and bars from celebrating a profitable night of parties and high spirits.

The state's permit structure forbids those liquor stores and bars without so-called "D-6" licenses from serving drinks until the New Year arrives at 12:00:01 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 1.

"Ohio law does not make an exception," said Matt Mullins, a spokesman for the state Department of Commerce's Division of Liquor Control, which posted a notice on its Web site after calls and e-mails from Monday-Saturday permit holders.

Out of 1,069 license holders in Lucas County, for example, 697 establishments, or 65 percent, have an additional permit to sell beer, wine, and liquor on Sundays, according to the most recent Ohio audit. In Wood County, 78 out of 237 permit holders, or 33 percent, can sell on Sundays.  In Michigan, license-holders can begin selling alcohol at noon on Sundays, said Sarah McKart, a manager of Monroe Liquor Plaza.

Liquor permit holders in Ohio and Michigan said they consider New Year's Eve to be their peak sales day.

A representative from the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth, which regulates alcohol sales, was unavailable yesterday for comment on the Wolverine State's policies.

Approval of a precinct-level ballot issue allows a store, bar, or restaurant in Ohio to qualify for a Sunday permit. The Toledo-area had nine Sunday sales ballot issues in last November's election alone.

Many area Meijer stores are among those that sought Sunday permits in the last election. Permit requests were also approved by voters for restaurants in downtown Perrysburg, among others.

Unlike the last occurrence of a Sunday New Year's Eve seven years ago, Joseph's Beverage Center on Talmadge Road in West Toledo is among the outlets that can sell alcohol this time around because of the additional permit.

Tom Shea, manager of Joseph's Beverage Center, expects a repeat of what happened on Christmas Eve, which also fell on a Sunday.

The store could not sell any wine or spirits until 1 p.m., so a large crowd gathered with alcohol in hand in preparation for sales to begin.

"I probably had 75 people with liquor in their hand waiting for the clock to tick to 1:00 p.m.," Mr. Shea said. "We got them out in 18 minutes."

Mr. Shea described the scene as "beautiful." He expects some customers will try to beat a New Year's Eve crunch by purchasing party supplies on Saturday.

All 50 states regulate and restrict the manufacturing, wholesale distribution, and sale of alcohol, using proceeds from sales to pay for government programs.

In Ohio, the Division of Liquor Control is the lone buyer and distributor of spirits, or liquor containing more than 21 percent alcohol by volume. The division sets the prices and product lines for liquor.

Spiritous liquor sales in Ohio reached $638.8 million in fiscal 2006, an 8.72 percent increase over the previous year. This year's sales contributed $138 million to the state's general revenue fund, $23 million more than last year.

The liquor is officially Ohio's property, and the private businesses sell it on the state's behalf at a commission.

Businesses get a 4 percent commission on wholesale transactions and a 6 percent commission on retail transactions.

<http://toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061227/NEWS24/612270373>



**Illinois: Advocates wants 'alcopops' Advertising to dry Up (Illinois)**

BY DANA HEUPEL
*COPLEY NEWS SERVICE*
Published Friday, December 22, 2006

SPRINGFIELD - A group that targets substance abuse wants Illinois legislators to bottle up advertising for "alcopops," flavored alcoholic beverages marketed to teenagers.

The Illinois Alcoholism and Drug Dependence Association has sent letters to all lawmakers urging them to prohibit advertising beverages such as Mike's Hard Lemonade, Bacardi Silver and Smirnoff Ice in publications and on broadcasts with a large teen audience.

The alcoholic beverage industry operates under guidelines that prohibit marketing distilled liquor in media with a sizable audience under age 21, Joe Anna Sullivan, chief executive officer of the Springfield-based group, said at a news conference Thursday at the state Capitol.

But state law classifies flavored alcoholic beverages in the same category as beer because their alcohol content is malt-based, she said. That allows the beverages, which contain 3.5 percent to 5 percent alcohol, to be marketed more broadly and sold at convenience stores and other retail outlets that aren't allowed to offer distilled spirits.

"The thing they don't tell you is that they're adding hard liquor," Sullivan said.

Up to 49 percent of the alcohol content of flavored beverages can come from distilled spirits, so long as the remainder is from malt.

Sullivan said the flavored beverages, which are legally sold only to buyers over 21, are "a huge starter drink" for many teens, especially girls, because they are sweeter than most other alcoholic drinks.

"Our goal is that it stop being available to youth, stop being marketed to youth with labeling and ads that are clearly aimed at youth, and that it gets out of the hands of kids, and that it stops being deceptive," she said.

"There has never been any attempt to mask the fact that there are distilled spirits in the product," Paul Jenkins, executive director of the Wine & Spirits Distributors of Illinois, said later.

For most flavored alcoholic beverages, he said, "the first word in the title is the supplier's name." Even Mike's Hard Lemonade indicates that it contains hard liquor, he said.

Industry groups such as his and the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, Jenkins said, "work very hard to see that these products aren't marketed to people who are underage."

He said the industry has worked with law enforcement to set up stings to snare businesses that sell to underage buyers. Manufacturers and distributors "would be happy to listen to" any group seeking to further the goal "of not letting these products get in the hands of minors," Jenkins said.

"That's not in anybody's business plan," he said. "We do not want anyone under the age of 21 to consume beverage alcohol. At all. Zero."

Sullivan said her group is focusing on banning advertising and marketing aimed at teenagers, but lawmakers also could exert other options. Those could include reclassifying flavored alcoholic beverages as distilled spirits, which would limit their availability and place them in a higher tax category.

"We want to reduce underage drinking. Whatever strategy would be used to do that, that's great," she said.

Alison Seck, a 17-year-old senior at Sacred Heart-Griffin High School in Springfield, works with the local Operation Snowball chapter and is a member of the teen advisory board for Illinois Church Action on Alcohol and Addiction Problems. She said she has heard of numerous problems with alcohol from friends and peers.

"Alcopops are a serious problem in today's underage-drinking scene," Seck said at the news conference. "They are especially harmful because they appear so innocent. They could almost be mistaken for fruit juice."



**New York State Liquor Authority Taking A Tough Stance With Bars on NYE (New York)**

*New York (AP) --*

Dec 22

City nightclubs planning to ring in the new year with an all-night, liquor-drenched bash may be in for a disappointment if they haven't been on their best behavior.

The New York State Liquor Authority said it is taking a tougher look this year at the hundreds of bars and clubs that applied for a permit to keep serving booze past the usual last-call time of 4 a.m.

Establishments that have a history of liquor code violations are being turned down, said the authority's new chairman, Daniel Boyle.

``We are trying to make it a safe environment for anyone who wants to stay out and have a good time,'' Boyle said.

The authority has long had the power to turn down applications for the special New Year's Eve permit, but in the past it rarely said ``no'' to Manhattan clubs.

This year, it has turned down about 29 applications from New York City establishments so far, or about 1 in 10 of those who applied.

Some business groups were crying foul.

``This is New York. It's the New Year's Eve capital of the world!'' said Robert Bookman, a lawyer for the New York Nightlife Association. He said the switch was unfair to owners who plunged into holiday planning assuming that getting a permit would be as easy. ``Invitations have gone out. Tickets have been sold,'' he said.

The decision to start scrutinizing applications more closely is the latest in a series of measures implemented by the authority following a series of clubland tragedies.

Politicians began calling for change last winter after an unlicensed bouncer at a Manhattan bar was charged with murdering a young graduate student, Imette St. Guillen. The clamor grew after another bouncer shot several patrons outside a Manhattan lounge and an 18-year-old New Jersey girl was murdered after staggering drunk from a club in Chelsea.

Boyle said he is listening to complaints by some residents that the city's legendary nightlife has gotten out of hand.

In September, the authority temporarily barred new bars and clubs from opening on Manhattan blocks that already have a cluster of establishments with liquor licenses.

Among those being turned down for an all-night permit this New Year's Eve are the nightclubs Crobar and Avalon in Chelsea and the Moroccan restaurant and nightspot Le Souk in the East Village.

All three have repeatedly been cited for selling alcohol to minors. Le Souk is frequently ticketed for disturbances and fights on the premises. Avalon, previously known as Limelight, was accused of permitting drug use.

Crobar marketing director Jen Schiffer said her club, which was one of the venues where Miss USA Tara Conner reportedly partied before agreeing this week to go into rehab, was being unfairly singled out because of its size and popularity. It has a capacity of more than 3,000 people.

``I just wish they had told us when we opened, with a $20 million dollar investment, that they were going to bust us this hard,'' Schiffer said.

The club had beefed up security, added electronic ID scanners and taken other measures in an attempt to please the city, Schiffer said.

New York's New Year's Eve celebration has long been an all-night affair. A million visitors pour into just the Times Square area alone, and many don't start partying in earnest until midnight.

The classic celebration calls for drinking and dancing all night, followed by breakfast just before the sun comes up.



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| **Alcohol Watchdog Group expels NMSU (New Mexico)** |
| By Jose L. Medina *Sun-News reporter*Las Cruces Sun-News |
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| LAS CRUCES — An advocacy group has expelled New Mexico State University from its membership, saying the school doesn't do enough to prevent drinking by minors. The Underage Drinking Prevention Coalition, a Las Cruces group of about 30 members from law enforcement and county and state government, made its decision Monday. The expulsion is due in part because to last week's decision by the NMSU Board of Regents to move forward with acquiring a governmental liquor license for the Pan Am Center to provide alcohol sales during university athletic events. Joanne Ferrary, a coalition spokeswoman, said the university was not doing enough to prevent underage and binge drinking. "NMSU is concerned about the safety and security of all of our faculty, staff and students," said university spokesman Victor Venegas, "and we would never take any action that would put them or any members of the community in harm's way." Two NMSU students have died from alcohol poisoning since 2004. Since then NMSU has taken steps to control underage and binge drinking, including convening a task force to address the issue and bringing in experts to talk to students. The university also has Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education Program, which educates on issues of personal safety. Ferrary said the coalition, which was established in 2005, wants measures like parental notification, which would notify parents when an underage student is caught in possession of alcohol or charged with DWI. Ferrary said last week's regents' decision had a great deal to do with the expulsion. She said five members were present at the coalition meeting and the vote was unanimous. Members of the university are still welcome to attend the meetings but not in an official capacity, Ferrary said. "We are very pro-prevention of underage drinking," said Ron Lautenbauch, a member of the group and former university professor, although he did not teach at NMSU. "We don't really want someone working under the façade that they are doing something to prevent drinking on campus." NMSU Fire Chief Darrell Smith, who represents the university in coalition, said he had not heard of the expulsion and expressed disappointment. "I guess my comment is that it's unfortunate," Smith said. "I guess that would be my comment now that we're no longer invited to participate in the group. "To look at it and say that the university is not doing enough to stop underage drinking isn't accurate," Smith added. Smith said he believes in what the coalition is accomplishing and its goals given the broad range of individuals associated with the group. Ferrary added that the university could make a return to the group. "If they would start implementing policies that would really make a difference, then we would welcome them back," she said.  |



**Need a ride home? Call Desi (Arizona)**

By Kelly Wilson, Get Out

December 28, 2006

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 Greg Murray is helping to keep drunken drivers off the road with Desi, the Designated Driver. Murray, a 49-year-old Tempe resident, has a flatbed truck service that he uses to transport overindulgent drinkers and their cars home.

Desi, which runs from $35 to $75 (and is definitely cheaper than a DUI!), has been around for three years, although Murray says business really started to pick up two years ago when Hensley and Anheuser-Busch jumped on as sponsors, helping the designated driver keep his business alive.

 People are more likely to use his service than a cab because they don’t have to leave
 their cars behind, Murray says.

Mendy Grady and Sheri Woods both of Scottsdale at Dos Gringos at the Scottsdale Block party in downtown Scottsdale where they had music, DJs, entertainers, and food booths on December 31, 2004.
Get Out

“No one wants to deal with cabs late at night when they’re drinking,” he says. “People don’t want to leave their car behind because they’re afraid it will be vandalized or that there will be some kind of theft. And people don’t like the inconvenience of getting up the next morning and coming back to get it.”

Murray, who receives about a dozen calls a weekend and has one other driver employed, says he expects to be swamped come New Year’s Eve.

“We plan on being just buried from now until New Year’s,” he says. “We had over 50 calls last year on New Year’s Eve.”

Murray, who will hand out 180 energy drinks to his customers throughout the holiday season, recommends that people call in advance and plan accordingly.

“We’ll take appointments and reservations,” he says.

And as for the new year, Murray says Desi will add three more drivers in the East Valley to its roster.

“We hope to expand operations in the beginning of next year,” he says. “It took a long time getting it up there, but we’re making progress.”

Another safe ride option

Discount Cab: (602) 200-2000. The cab service will give you a ride to your car the next morning for free.

<http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/index.php?sty=81351>



# Teen Liquor Law in Effect as of Monday (Honolulu)

[*Honolulu Advertiser*](https://webmail.iowa.gov/exchweb/bin/redir.asp?URL=http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061228/NEWS03/612280340/1007/NEWS)

December 28, 2006

A new law to crack down on underage drinking will take effect Monday.

Act 203, dubbed the "use and lose" law, will suspend the driving privileges of any person under age 21 who illegally purchases, possesses or consumes alcohol. The violator's driver's license will be suspended for at least 180 days.

If the individual is not licensed to drive, a judge would have the discretion to postpone eligibility to obtain a license for 180 days or until age 17.

In addition, violators will be required to perform 75 hours of community service and undergo eight to 12 hours of alcohol education and counseling.

Thirty-six other states already have in place some form of a use-and-lose law.

"The use-and-lose law makes it very clear to teens that if they drink, they will lose their driver's license and the freedom that comes with it," Lt. Gov. James "Duke" Aiona Jr. said in a news release.

"The use-and-lose law serves as a reminder to children and adults that underage drinking is unsafe and unhealthy, and will not be condoned in our community."

<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20061228/NEWS03/612280340/1007/NEWS>



Drinking and Driving, Per Se (South Carolina)
Lenient state laws promote slack compliance and widespread acceptance of one deadly practice

Lindsay Sainlar
December 27, 2006
*Charleston SC Newspaper*

It was a cold Thursday night in Mt. Pleasant when Pfc. Andrew Harris got in his cop car, which smelled like a $3 Kmart air freshener. With an American flag hanging from the overhead light and his Sirius radio tuned to channel 61 — Prime Country — Harris buckled his seatbelt and put on his navy Mt. Pleasant Police Department (MPPD) ball cap.

The clock read 8 p.m. and "the permanent DUI shift guy" was ready to drive 70 to 100 miles in circles around his jurisdiction, looking for perps.

Harris says he's pulled over every kind of person there is for drinking and driving, and he'll never understand why people drive under the influence.

"If there's one DUI, it's one too many. People just think they're going to get away with it," he says, adding that he's never thrown back a few before driving.

But some people do drink and drive, and get away with it. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that an estimated 90 million car trips will be made by impaired drivers each year nationwide. Only about 1.5 million of those trips will result in the driver's arrest.

*Mt. Pleasant police check for illegal activity at an impromptu "roadblock party" between Highway 17 and Coleman Boulevard*



"There is no answer for why people drink and drive," says MPPD Sergeant Donnie Quick. "They just do it. They think they can get away with it, and they do for a long time. Then there's that one time where they run off the road and hit something or hit somebody, and that's it.

"If I knew the answer to make people quit drinking and driving, I could make a million dollars."

When asked what could be done to deter this problem, Quick replies, "It's gotta be education."

Awareness, too, he says, which is why he and his "permanent DUI shift guy" and eight other MPPD patrolmen met on a recent, random Thursday night on Bowman Road to set up some orange cones.

They were going to throw themselves a roadblock party on a popular cut-through for Highway 17 and Coleman Boulevard.

IIHS reports that "sobriety checkpoints are probably the most effective deterrence strategy" for drinking and driving.

Equipped with glowing red flashlights that look like they belong on an airplane runway, these men in black waved down passersby to ask for licenses and to take a quick look inside cars, checking for seatbelt usage and other traffic violations.

Quick says he and his guys perform roadblocks as often as they can. They like for Mt. Pleasant roadway travelers to know the MPPD is there, watching and waiting for someone to think he or she is above the law.

On this night, after standing for an hour in the cold, Harris wrote two tickets for open containers: a Budweiser bottle and a Busch Light can.

Another officer asked an 18-year-old to pour out the Natural Light cans he had stowed away in a cooler in the back of his truck.

Pfc. A.J. Santos performed an extensive field sobriety test on a woman driving her family home after she accidentally revved her engine while Santos examined her license.

She told him she had enjoyed two martinis that night, but after Santos made her recite the alphabet from D to P, do a one-leg stand while counting to 30, and walk the line, he checked her eyes for involuntary jerking through a Horizontal Gaze Nystagmus test (the "follow the pen with your eyes, not your head" technique). He says he knew she had probably had at least four martinis but concluded she was only borderline drunk and gave her a warning. She thanked him before she drove away in her Ford F-150.

Her level of intoxication was nothing to ruin her night over, Santos says.

In 2005, the MPPD was awarded the Agency DUI Hero Award by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and the S.C. Department of Public Safety for a DUI enforcement effort that resulted in 274 arrests.

Twenty-one-year-old downtown resident Robert Benson says he doesn't like to drive in Mt. Pleasant because of all the police. Still, he says he drinks and drives home from bars and parties far more often than choosing to find a designated driver.

"It's a bitch to get a ride," he says. "There aren't people that don't drink that go to bars, and what? Call a cab? I just spent my last $10 on liquor drinks."

He's not proud that he drinks and drives, though, and says he knows it's wrong and hates the idea that innocent people get caught in the crossfire.

"But when you never get caught and there's never been any consequences, why not do it?" Benson says. "Once I do get caught, my perspective will change."

He has friends who were in a near-fatal alcohol-related crash. The truck they were driving flipped a few times on the interstate. Everyone in the car ended up in the hospital. Benson says one guy almost died, but that he's back on the roads, drinking and driving at least three nights a week.

"Maybe we just need to grow up," he says.

Benson also thinks local police officers need to up the ante on drinking and driving if the residents of this college town want students to grasp the seriousness of the matter. If he were reading about DUIs and hearing about more people getting "popped," he says he would probably curb his DUI tendencies, but he thinks Charleston police, especially downtown, have bigger things to worry about.

Lt. Chip Searson with the City of Charleston Police Dept. says the city places a high priority on drunk driving, with a squad tasked specifically to DUI enforcement that often works late hours as the bars close.

"They've gotten away with it in the past, so they think it's no big deal," Searson says of the perception that the cops aren't out there. But he notes the danger isn't getting caught, it's getting killed. "You shouldn't do it. If not for yourself, for your family."

Executive director of the S.C. Sheriff's Association Jeffrey Moore says, "Sometimes I joke that in South Carolina, people think it's their constitutional right to drink and drive."

Moore quotes a MADD statistic that says before some people get caught, they'll probably have driven drunk 88 times in previous instances.

"Obviously, we have a drinking problem," Moore says. "Why should a state our size still be in the top one, two, three states with the worst driving records?"



\* Please visit the link listed below to read the rest of the story

<http://www.charlestoncitypaper.com/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A21306>



**Massachusetts: Easing a pinch, city set to Issue 55 Liquor Licenses (Massachusetts)**

By Bruce Mohl and Donovan Slack
*Boston Globe Staff*
December 28, 2006

Boston officials plan to issue the first of 55 new liquor licenses to restaurants next week, ending a logjam that has driven the cost of existing licenses to record levels, stalled some restaurant ventures, and hurt sales at others.

The Legislature granted the city the authority to issue more liquor licenses, raising the cap to 1,025 and breaking an 18-month-long stalemate with Beacon Hill.

The new licenses are unusual in that they are not transferable, and most of them are restricted to four specific areas in the city. Boston licensing officials, however, say they have the flexibility to issue licenses across most of the city.

Mayor Thomas M. Menino said the battle to raise the cap on the number of liquor licenses will pay huge economic dividends. "It's great for the small mom-and-pop restaurants in the neighborhoods," Menino said. "It's really part of the economic growth of our city."

Daniel Pokaski , chairman of the Boston Licensing Board, said he expects to begin issuing new licenses next week, specifically mentioning Salvatore's and Potbellies Kitchen in South Boston and Seiyo in the South End. Some of the restaurants have been waiting close to a year for a license.

Peter Irving , the owner of Potbellies, a 20-seat restaurant serving American comfort food , said he had applied twice for a wine and beer license. He said it was "scary" opening without one on Nov. 18, but now he hopes to get a license next week.

"It's going to double my business right off the bat," he said.

Joe Hanley , an attorney who represents the 40-seat Himalayan Bistro in West Roxbury, said the restaurant has applied three times for a license over the past year and will refile again now. He said the bistro couldn't afford to purchase an existing license.

"It's critical to the operation," Hanley said. "Patrons stay longer, they return more frequently, and you're going to have more revenue as a result."

The law, signed by Governor Mitt Romney last week, authorizes 55 new licenses -- 25 all-alcohol licenses and 30 wine and beer licenses. The city currently has 970 licenses -- 650 all-alcohol and 320 beer and wine licenses.

The new licenses, unlike the existing ones, cannot be sold to another owner or transferred to another establishment. They must be returned to the city if they are revoked or no longer in use.

Of the 55 licenses, 40, including all of the beer and wine licenses, are restricted to areas designated by the Boston Redevelopment Authority as "main streets districts, urban renewal areas, empowerment zones, or municipal harbor plan areas."

Pokaski said the only areas of the city off-limits for new licenses are the North End and Back Bay, although he said the board will probably arrange license swaps to satisfy the needs of restaurants in some of those areas. He said Panificio in the Back Bay, for example, is likely to receive a beer and wine license as part of a swap with a restaurant trading up to an all-alcohol license.

Pokaski said the city could also assign a license to a restaurant outside the areas designated in the legislation by having the BRA enlarge one of the covered zones.

Beacon Hill has regulated the number of liquor licenses Boston can hand out since 1906, a vestige of a time when Yankee lawmakers held strong puritanical beliefs and distrusted Boston's Irish elected officials. In most other cities in the state, the number of licenses is tied to population growth, triggering automatic increases.

Boston restaurants have been clamoring for liquor licenses since the spring of 2005, when the city reached its previous 970-license limit. The shortage has driven the cost of purchasing a license from another restaurateur to record levels, with an all-alcohol license going for $200,000 to $300,000, and beer and wine licenses selling for as much as $70,000. The new licenses will cost $200 for the application, plus an annual fee of $1,500 to $2,000.

Charlie Perkins , owner of the Boston Restaurant Group Inc., a commercial real estate broker specializing in the sale of restaurants, said he didn't think the higher cap would dampen demand for licenses.

"Boston is a super-hot market," he said.

Pokaski said the 55 new licenses should be enough for the next one to two years, but Perkins and other industry officials said they expected the new licenses to be gobbled up quickly.

Boston's new liquor licenses didn't come easy. The city revised its legislative proposal numerous times, starting out with 60 transferable beer and wine licenses in any part of the city. But Senator Michael W. Morrissey of Quincy wanted any new license to be nontransferable and tied to specific locations to protect the value of existing licenses. In addition, he wanted to include some licenses to sell hard liquor to accommodate the expected development along the South Boston waterfront. The senator could not be reached for comment yesterday.

"There was an incredible amount of give and take on both the city side and state side," said Patricia Malone , Boston's commissioner of consumer affairs and licensing.

Legal Sea Foods purchased a liquor license from Jimmy's Harborside restaurant several months ago for about $200,000 for a new bar and grill, according to Rick Heller , senior vice president and general counsel for the chain.

Heller said he's not worried about Legal's purchase because the new licenses are not transferable and therefore worth considerably less. "We don't lose the value of that asset," he said.



**South Dakota: Pressure building Against state Liquor License Cap (South Dakota)**

*Source: Aberdeen News*
Dec 28th

Some groups hoping legislature removes population limit.

The state Legislature might be asked to consider changing the way on-sale liquor licenses are distributed to cities and counties in South Dakota.

The number of licenses a city or county may have is tied to population.

Dave Owen, president of the South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said some consider the issuance of liquor licenses a quality-of-life issue.

"More and more cities are finding the kind of restaurant chains they want to attract won't come in unless they can offer a full-beverage menu," Owen said.



**Three Men Wanted In String Of Liquor Store Heists (Maryland)**

Baltimore, MD Baltimore City Police are on the hunt for three young men suspected behind a string of liquor store robberies.

WJZ's Kathryn Brown has been following the story of what police believe to be five linked robberies in the Baltimore City area.

Surveillance video obtained by Eyewitness News shows the suspects during the latest holdup at Smitty's Liquor Store on South Charles Street.

"They case out these locations and when they enter they strike quickly," said police spokesman Troy Harris. Harris added, that in each robbery the suspects go "straight to the register, placing anyone that's inside the establishment on the ground."

In each robbery police say the suspects use a handgun wrapped in a dark plastic bag.

All five robberies have taken place within the last month with three of them coming at Smitty's.

The other two robberies linked to the three suspects were at the Belvedere Liquor Store on the Alameda and at Harry's on Greenmount Avenue.

In every robbery the suspects have been dressed relatively the same, wearing blue jeans, dark jackets, baseball caps or bandanas to cover their faces and white sneakers.

The suspects are all believed to be between the ages of 16 and 20. In each robbery the suspects are also seen fleeing the scene in three separate directions.

Investigators firmly believe the suspects will strike again and they are asking anyone with information to call police or Metro Crime Stoppers at 1-866-7-LOCKUP.

<http://wjz.com/topstories/local_story_362203714.html>

