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| *July 16, 2004* |

1. [When Life Gives You Lemons ...](#First)

2. [Stepping Up Looks to UI for Funding](#Second)

3. [Gin Makes a Comeback as a Fresh Summer Spirit](#Third)

4. [Underage Drinking Still a Concern for Safety Advocates](#Fourth)

5. [Des Moines Woman Sues Brothers](#Fifth)

6. [Harrah's to Buy Caesars for $5.2 Billion](#Sixth)

7. [Judge Upholds Permit Denial](#Seventh)

8. [Lawyers Set Sights on Alcohol Producers](#Eighth)

9. [Attention, Parents: Teens Want You to Lock up Your Liquor](#Ninth)

Quenchers

**1. When Life Gives You Lemons ...**



By Kate Lawson - *The Detroit News*

July 15, 2004

You’ve got options. For instance, with the help of Bacardi Razz,

you can make this terrific lemonade, perfect for sipping away

the summer. Lemonade is always a refreshing libation, especially

when the temperature climbs. Bacardi Razz can be found at

your favorite party or liquor store.

**Razz-berry Lemonade**

**3 ounces Bacardi Razz**

**3 ounces Bacardi Limon**

**2 ounces sweet and sour mix**

 **(such as Rose’s or Mr. & Mrs. T’s)**

**Juice of 2 fresh lemons**

 Shake over ice and pour into chilled martini glass or pour

 over ice in tall glass.

 Serves 1.

**2. Stepping Up Looks to UI for Funding**

By Kristen Schorsch – *Iowa City Press-Citizen*

July 10, 2004

**Group hopes program goes on**

IOWA CITY, IA -- A community partnership aimed at curbing high -risk and underage drinking is looking to pass on its reins once its grant is completed in 2006.

If the budget allows, University of Iowa officials want to continue efforts of The Stepping Up Project. School officials are reluctant, however, to be swayed by early calls to rely on student fees for a program whose current annual budget exceeds $100,000.

With dozens of bars in downtown Iowa City, which borders the University of Iowa campus of roughly 28,000 students, school and city officials have long tried to change the drinking culture in Iowa City. Public intoxication charges, binge drinking and bars allowing those younger than 21 have prompted concern.

The group's latest four-year grant, this one for $466,729, runs out in 18 months.

"We spend every nickel that we get," said Stepping Up co-coordinator Jim Clayton.

Housed in UI's Currier residence hall, The Stepping Up Project was launched in 1996. UI was one of 10 universities nationwide that received grants to help reduce high-risk drinking among college students.

The project provides alcohol alternatives for students with activities such as Night Games, late-night recreation at UI's Field House and Weeks of Welcome, a festival kicking off the new school year.

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| **Details**• Binge drinking is defined for men as having five or more drinks at a time and, for women, four or more drinks at a time.• Recent data collected from 360 University of Iowa students shows binge drinking rates at UI are higher than those of students at 140 colleges and universities nationwide. About 70 percent of UI students meet criteria for binge drinking compared with 44 percent of students nationwide, said UI psychology professor Peter Nathan, who has studied binge drinking at UI since 1996. |

Officials say Stepping Up has made changes in the Iowa City drinking environment, helping to push for a 19-and-older bar entry age, which began in August. However, they acknowledge they have more work to do, such as increasing the bar entry to 21-and-older.

"You can go out in the rainstorm and catch one raindrop at a time," Clayton said, referring to one raindrop as a binge drinker or harmful effect. "We have yet to build an umbrella."

To continue funding Stepping Up activities, project officials have asked UI Student Government to contribute $1 of student fees a year to activities Stepping Up would have funded. But UISG President Lindsay Schutte said the school's roughly 400 student organizations already serve as alcohol alternatives.

"I have concerns with signing a document promising student fee money toward Stepping Up-like activities when so much of the student money already goes toward alcohol alternatives," said Schutte, who will be a senior this fall.

She said about $800,000 is allocated to student groups.

Phillip E. Jones, UI vice president for student services, said UI plans to fund a staff position from its general operating budget that would coordinate UI and city affairs, such as alcohol awareness, if budget cuts do not hinder funds.

UI is now grappling with a $12 million cut meant to brace for future reductions. UI President David Skorton has implemented $2 million in cuts so far based on recommendations from a task force.

UI now helps fund Stepping Up staff positions and projects. The payroll for office staff, two co-coordinators and office space is less than $50,000, Clayton said.

"I don't contemplate using student fees at this time," Jones said. "That doesn't say that it'll never happen."

Student fees could support programming, such as the 10,000 Hours Show, which rewards volunteers with a free concert and is supported by Stepping Up, Jones said.

Despite efforts, the project has drawn criticism from bar owners who say education is key.

"I think the real education starts at home and starts with the family," said George Barlas, owner of the Union Bar, 121 E. College St. "It starts way before they come to Iowa City."

Barlas, 35, thinks bars are a small part of the problem when it comes to students and binge drinking. The students, he says, are going to find ways to drink.

Jon Wilson, manager of The Airliner, 22 S. Clinton St., agrees.

"There's always going to be problem drinkers," he said. "All you can do is inform them and whether they choose to use it is up to them."

Until its grant ends, Stepping Up will continue to push for change and to educate policy makers, such as the Iowa City Council, about the value of changing Iowa City's bar entry age and environment.

"Clear, plain, simple. 21 is the first priority," Clayton said.

**3. Gin Makes a Comeback as a Fresh Summer Spirit**

By Keith Saunders -*Daily News*

July 14, 2004

**STIRRED: When you order a martini, forget James Bond.**

According to Robert Hess, author of "Stirred, not Shaken," James Bond destroyed the martini. A true martini is made with gin, not vodka, Bond's preferred spirit. And his direction that it be "shaken, not stirred," is a fallacy; shaking gin muddles its botanical flavors and clouds its true appearance. Of course there's the matter of personal preference; many people like the microscopic ice shavings that float in a shaken martini.

Although Bond's vodka martini has been a mainstay of pop culture for decades, gin is making a comeback and enjoying its greatest popularity since the early 1920s. Gin is increasingly the choice of spirits ordered in many popular and exclusive clubs and restaurants around the country. With more brands being introduced, we're seeing new drink concoctions and more ways to mix a martini than ever before.

Gin is such a refreshing spirit. Not only is it crisp and easy on the palate, it also brings all the subtle, fresh herbs and flavors of summer. A 11/2-ounce serving of gin has no carbohydrates and 79 calories. Add it to your beverage list on hiking or fishing excursions. And for the next cocktail gathering, put gin at the bar and take the time to find the one that will suit your needs. Who knew we had a spirit so exotic, with ingredients from every part of our world, right in front of us?

SPIRITED HISTORY

Combining spirit with juniper berries is thought to have been introduced by 12th century Italian monks who learned the art of distillation from the Moors. The modern form of the drink is generally credited to Franciscus Sylvius de la Boe, a professor of medicine at Holland's Leyden University; he devised the first known recipe for gin in 1650. His aim was to invent an inexpensive medicine combining the strong diuretic qualities of juniper berries and pure alcohol to find a remedy for gout, gallstones and kidney ailments. He named his nostrum "Genievre," the French word for juniper, and it soon became as popular as modern alcopop.

William of Orange, a Dutchman, brought the libation with him to England when he became King William III, and English troops sampled it when they fought in the Lowlands -- hence the drink's nickname, "Dutch Courage."

William's wife, Queen Anne, boosted the island's industry by taxing imports and cutting the levy on domestic gin. By the 1740s, consumption was two pints a week for every man, woman and child in England. A pint of gin was cheaper than a pint of beer. It was often combined with sugar, lemon and warm water to create a gin toddy.

The English gin industry was shaken by Prohibition in the United States, a main market. Most American drinkers drank the poor homemade spirits found in speakeasies, "bathtub gin," the easiest and cheapest spirit to distill. By the time Prohibition was repealed in 1933, the legal gin industry had lost its dominance.

Since then, however, gin has advanced. By adding ingredients, called botanicals, Dr. Sylvius' tonic has taken a whole different course.

HOW IT'S MADE

Every distiller starts with spirit alcohol that has to contain 96 percent alcohol by volume. This neutral spirit, made from grain, wheat or molasses, is tasteless and odorless and eventually diluted by pure water. If this sounds like vodka, the truth is that gin is vodka with juniper added.

The spirit is pumped into a still where the botanicals are added and surface oils are removed by heat. The vapors are then cooled back into a liquid.

Botanicals are herbs and spices that each distiller uses to differentiate his gin from the competition. There are 120 botanicals that can be used in gin; good-quality gins have between eight and 20. The main flavoring ingredient is juniper berries from Italy or the former Yugoslavia, the best coming from Tuscany. These are handpicked between October and February and fragrant with a bittersweet flavor and overtones of pine, lavender, camphor and banana.

Coriander seeds are the second key botanical. Other add-ins might include almond, angelica root, orange and lemon peel, cassia bark, cubeb berries and grains of paradise -- dark brown berries related to peppers.

TYPES OF GIN

There are two main styles of gins, English/dry gin, also known as London gin, and Dutch/sweet gin. Here's a list of brands worth sampling.

• Tanqueray: The No. 1 imported gin in the world today is a mystery because Tanqueray won't disclose all the ingredients in its product. It is quadruple distilled for a refined smoothness. The taste is rich with a full-bodied palate, finishing with cardamom and a rooty note. Tanqueray Malacca is not produced any more; that's a shame, because it's the most exotic gin, with a warm zesty tone and light hints of juniper slowly coming through. Bottles can still be bought locally, but once these are gone it will only be a nice memory. So stock up.

• Bombay Sapphire: This triple-distilled molasses-based brand includes Chinese licorice among its 10 botanicals and uses an unusual distilling process: The spirit is boiled on its own, and the botanicals only come into contact with it as a vapor. This is done with a specially adapted still, of which there are only four in the world. The purified vapor passes though a copper basket holding the bouquet of botanicals, absorbing their essences before turning into a liquid. This process gives Bombay Sapphire a watery palate. It has a surprising sweetness with a lemon-peppery edge.

• Beefeaters London Dry: This brand is distinctive for two reasons. One, the grain spirit comes from corn blended with barley. Two, the botanicals are steeped in the grain spirit before it is distilled for 24 hours. The mixture is then heated and distilled for eight hours before it is turned back into a liquid. Some suggest this process results in a poorer quality, and Beefeater ranks among the mid-range, pricewise. But the mellow, rounded product has been a popular name brand for many years.

• Desert Juniper: This relatively new and wonderfully bold gin is produced in Bend, Ore., and is one of the finest small-batch gins available. Central Oregon has the largest juniper berry forest in the world, so Desert Juniper uses the freshest wild juniper berries around. It's microdistilled in small batches of 250 gallons and is combined with grain spirit made from the waters of the Cascade Mountains. The volcanic activity in the area enriches the soil for an unmatched quality of juniper and other botanicals native to the Northwest that go into the mix. Its distinct aroma has a very bold flavor of juniper. It has an unusual complexity and sweetness but a slightly lower alcohol content, 86 percent.

• Hendricks: This small-batch gin is considered unusual because it's made in Scotland and uses cucumber among its botanicals. Hendricks has a mild balance, and the cucumber gives it a creamy edge. Don't garnish it with a lime or add vermouth for a martini. Simply add a twist of lemon or slice of cucumber. This spirit is meant to be savored in its natural condition.

• Magellan: By far the newest gin on the market, this is another small-batch product, imported from France. Magellan is triple-distilled by hand before the botanicals are added. On its fourth distillation, 11 botanicals are added to a small copper-pot still, including juniper berries from the high altitudes of France, cinnamon from Sri Lanka, nutmeg from India and iris from Italy. The iris flower is infused with the spirit to give it a very light blue color. The water comes from the Gensac Spring in Cognac, France, filtered naturally through grande champagne limestone and then demineralized for a soft texture. Magellan has an easy juniper aroma with floral notes, a unique crisp flavor that is very well-balanced with light, sweet undertones. No surprise that it is fast becoming a favorite on the world market.

**4. Underage Drinking Still a Concern for Safety Advocates**

 By: Karen MacPherson - *Post-Gazette National Bureau*

July 15, 2004

WASHINGTON -- Lawmakers and highway safety advocates yesterday celebrated the 20th anniversary of the law that raised the nation's minimum drinking age from 18 to 21, pointing to federal statistics showing that it has saved an estimated 20,000 young lives.

But the lawmakers, joined at a news conference by leaders of the group Mothers Against Drunk Driving, or MADD, cautioned that the battle against underage drinking and driving isn't yet won.

They called for Congress to increase federal funding for enforcement of laws prohibiting teenagers from buying and consuming alcohol, and they want to create a nationwide media campaign aimed at convincing more adults of the need to limit teen access to alcohol.

Teen alcohol-related traffic deaths declined after the passage of the 1984 law, which pushed states to raise their minimum drinking age from 18 to 21. An analysis by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that, in the past two decades, the law has spared the lives of 20,000 youths who would have otherwise died alcohol-related deaths.

In recent years, however, teen alcohol-related traffic deaths have begun to rise, according to federal transportation statistics MADD presented. More than 2,400 teens ages 15 to 20 were killed in alcohol-related crashes in 2002, the most recent year for which national statistics are available.

Underage drinking results in the deaths each year of about 6,000 people under age 21 in traffic crashes, homicides, suicides and unintentional injuries, MADD officials said.

The national minimum-21 drinking law, combined with other efforts to mandate seat belt use and the use of air bags, "[has] totally changed the climate of highway safety in America," said Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., who helped ensure passage of the 1984 law as transportation secretary in the Reagan administration. "However, a great deal of work does remain to be done."

Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., who sponsored the 1984 law in Congress, agreed that "we've only begun to solve the problem." He pointed to his current efforts to target "higher-risk," or repeat-offender, drunken drivers who cause 40 percent of alcohol-related road deaths.

MADD officials are lobbying Congress to include provisions to expand the federal fight against underage drinking in a massive highway funding bill. The legislation is bogged down in a House-Senate conference committee, which is seeking a consensus on how much to spend for transportation needs.

Lawmakers are increasingly pessimistic that Congress will find a compromise and pass a highway funding bill before adjourning for the year.

Last fall, a National Academy of Sciences report estimated that underage drinking costs the nation $53 billion each year, including $19 billion from traffic crashes and $29 billion from violent crime.

The report concluded that "underage drinking cannot be successfully addressed by focusing on youth alone," noting that teens usually obtain alcohol -- either directly or indirectly -- from adults. In particular, "parents tend to dramatically underestimate underage drinking generally and their own children's drinking in particular. Efforts to reduce underage drinking, therefore, need to focus on adults and must engage the society at large."

The report also recommended that the federal government increase funding for enforcing current laws prohibiting alcohol sales to teens. In addition, there should be one federal agency designated to deal with underage drinking issues, the report said.

**5. Des Moines Woman Sues Brothers**

By Nick Petersen *- The Daily Iowan*

[July 15, 2004](http://www.dailyiowan.com/main.cfm/include/displayIssueArticles/issue_date/20040715.html)

IOWA CITY, IA -- A Des Moines woman filed suit on Monday in the 6th District Court against Brothers Bar & Grill, 125 S. Dubuque St., asserting that the establishment provided alcoholic beverages to the man with whom she was involved in a vehicle crash later that night.

In the lawsuit, Barbara Hansen contends that in August 2002, the motorcycle she was a passenger on crashed into Jerome Griffin's Nissan Sentra after the car went through a stop sign.

The plaintiff says Brothers was negligent for allegedly selling or giving the driver of the car alcoholic beverages because the bar employees knew or should have known that he would become intoxicated.

Hansen is also filing negligence charges against Donald Hansen, the driver of the motorcycle she was on, a bar in Oxford that allegedly provided Griffin with alcohol that same night, the owner of the car Griffin drove, and Griffin himself.

Records show that Barbara Hansen believes that the aforementioned parties' alleged negligence is the proximate cause of her alleged injuries.

According to the suit, the plaintiff is seeking judgment for an amount that will fully and fairly compensate her for her injuries and damages, including past and future medical expenses, pain and suffering, and past and future loss of earnings.

**6. Harrah's to Buy Caesars for $5.2 Billion**

By Peter Henderson

July 15, 2004

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Harrah's Entertainment Inc. has agreed to buy rival Caesars Entertainment Inc. for about $5.2 billion, creating the world's largest casino operator, sources close to the deal said Wednesday.

Harrah's and Caesars together would have $8.8 billion in annual revenue and more than 50 casinos. They would have a sizable presence in nearly every major legalized U.S. gambling market and own the Caesar's Palace brand -- one of the gaming industry's marquee names.

Harrah's will pay a mix of stock and cash currently worth about $17 for each share of Caesars, according to terms approved unanimously by the boards of both companies at meetings on Wednesday evening, the sources said.

Harrah's will pay 66.3 million of its shares, or just over 0.2 of a Harrah's share per Caesars share, under the terms approved by the boards. It also will pay $1.8 billion in cash, and will assume about $4 billion in debt, net of Caesars cash on hand, to take over its bigger rival by revenue, one of the sources added.

At the end of March, Caesars had $4.5 billion in debt, but it expects to reduce that to $4.2 billion with proceeds from the June sale of the Las Vegas Hilton.

The companies, already the largest U.S. gambling concerns, expect to announce the agreement Thursday morning, the sources said.

MGM MIRAGE RESPONSE

A takeover would offer a sound rejoinder to MGM Mirage, which last month made a deal to acquire Mandalay Resort Group for $4.8 billion.

Federal and state regulators must now consider two mega deals that would create a pair of casino operators standing head and shoulders over the rest of the industry.

But the spread of gambling in the country has led many analysts to conclude that both mergers have a good chance of passage -- although each team may need to sell some assets.

Harrah's may have to sell a property in Indiana to satisfy state law, but does not intend to volunteer divestitures in talks with regulators, one source said.

The takeover agreement also offers some opportunity to exit the deal due to antitrust issues, said the source, adding that the takeover was expected to take about a year to close.

Caesars is an industry legend known for its glitzy Palace on the Las Vegas Strip and is owner of a number of brands such as Paris Las Vegas and Bally's. Harrah's is better known as a technology- and marketing-savvy regional operator that now needs more room in Las Vegas.

They began merger talks after MGM Mirage and Mandalay announced their own plans.

The main focus of the Harrah's-Caesars deal would be to solidify Harrah's foothold in Las Vegas's booming, casino-friendly tourist market where it trails major rivals.

"Harrah's wants to have a more significant Vegas presence today, not years from now," said Banc of America analyst J. Cogan.

Before the terms were announced, he said that the takeover could meaningfully add to Harrah's earnings if Harrah's paid in the high teens for Caesars shares.

Creditors are also expected to maintain Harrah's investment-grade credit rating, one source said.

Caesars shares rose $2.08, or 14.9 percent, to close Wednesday at $16.00 on the New York Stock Exchange (news - web sites).

Harrah's stock fell $1.00, or 1.9 percent, to $50.98.

LUCKY LAS VEGAS

Analysts speculated that Harrah's might sell or be forced to sell properties in Tunica, Mississippi, Lake Tahoe, Indiana and Atlantic City to limit exposure to regional markets, effectively capping the increase in debt that a takeover would require, and address concerns from state and federal regulators.

A 2001 agreement with New Jersey regulators bars Caesars from expanding into the Atlantic City marina area, where Harrah's has a property, for instance. Neither source commented on that, however.

Federal regulators might not view a merger in Las Vegas as anti-competitive because Harrah's targets gamblers who bet a little and often, while Caesars caters to the big spenders, according to lawyer Steven Newborn. Newborn was a director of litigation for the Federal Trade Commission and is now a partner in the law firm of Weil, Gotshal & Manges, where he is co-head of the firm's antitrust practice. (Additional reporting by Tom Johnson, Dan Wilchins and Jui Chakravorty in New York)

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| **7. Judge Upholds Permit Denial**By Greg Nath, Managing Editor – *The Perry Chief*July 15, 2004 |

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| ANKENY, IA -- A judge upheld the City of Perry's denial of an alcohol permit for the new nightclub located at the former Billy Brahma's site last week. Administrative Law Judge Margaret LaMarche handed down her ruling following a hearing June 23 at the Alcoholic Beverages Division in Ankeny. |

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"The decision is very rewarding," said Perry Police Chief Dan Brickner. "It upheld that the police department and the City did what they were supposed to do to protect the citizens of Perry."

Michael Bilshausen, the owner of Michael B's Saloon and Dance Emporium, applied for a liquor permit earlier this year. When he filed the paper work, he answered that he had never been arrested.

Brickner reviewed the permit request and did an Iowa criminal history background check. Since no arrests were reported in Iowa, Brickner recommended that the City Council approve the liquor permit request.

However, after the Council had approved, Brickner was given additional information that indicated that Bilshausen was not completely honest on his application.

Brickner requested the Federal Bureau of Investigation do a criminal history background check.

While Brickner was waiting for the results of the FBI search, Bilshausen went to a Council meeting and complained. He said he felt he was not be fairly treated by the police department and they were intentionally delaying the process.

Brickner discovered that Bilshausen had been arrested nine times on a variety of charges and convicted four times. Those arrests include petty theft, deceptive practices, violating a restraining order, fraud by checks, contempt of court, sexual assault on a child and theft of rental property.

Once the Council received this information, they denied his request.

Then Bilshausen decided to appeal that decision.

Judge LaMarche wrote in her decision, "The applicant's unverified explanations for his failure to disclose his arrests and convictions were not credible. By failing to disclose his criminal record, the applicant prevented the local authorities from considering his criminal history in its initial licensing decision."

Bilshausen now has 30 days to appeal the Judge's decision to the Alcohol Beverages Division.

**8. Lawyers Set Sights on Alcohol Producers**

 By: Doug Bandow -*The Japan Times*

July 16, 2004

WASHINGTON -- There's nothing new about lawyers, especially in the United States, attempting to profit from tragedy. When an individual dies after behaving irresponsibly, an attorney always can be found to blame someone with deep pockets.

Today many lawyers are as interested in regulating behavior as in making money. So it is with a raft of lawsuits against alcohol producers for having the temerity to advertise their products.

The multibillion dollar American tobacco suits were the mother of abusive litigation. Lawsuits have since proliferated against the fast-food industry.

Now attorneys are targeting the alcohol industry. The suits "wholeheartedly" borrow from the tobacco litigation, admits lawyer Steve Berman, handling a Los Angeles case. Leading the legal assault are David Boies II, hired by the Clinton Justice Department to sue Microsoft, and his son, who heads a separate law firm. Their target list includes Bacardi, Coors, Diageo and Heineken, as well as the Beer Institute.

The plaintiffs claim that alcohol producers are "deliberately and recklessly" targeting underage consumers by advertising in publications "disproportionately read" by young people. Reliance on cartoon characters, use of such youthful themes as video games, reference to college activities such as Spring Break, placement of products in movies and TV shows watched by minors, introduction of sexual imagery appealing to young males and creation of Web sites accessible to teens are supposed to prove that the alcohol producers are attempting to hook the young.

The plaintiffs assume that advertising is spurring underage drinking. "This is extremely sophisticated marketing that's making an awful lot of money," argues David Boies III, a lawyer hoping to make an awful lot of money with his lawsuit.

Along with these class actions are individual suits, such as the one filed by the family of 19-year-old Ryan Pisco against Coors. Pisco drank, drove while drunk, and recklessly exceeded the speed limit. He crashed and died. Which, his family claimed, was Coors' fault because of its sponsorship of sporting events that Ryan allegedly attended.

These lawsuits constitute gross judicial abuse. Countless people drink without undue effect. The problem is drinking irresponsibly and sometimes illegally, not drinking. But foolish behavior cannot be blamed on advertising. Most alcohol consumed around the world isn't even advertised.

Changes in advertising in America and other nations have had no measurable impact on total consumption. When kids explain why they drink, they cite their parents and peers, not ads.

Why, then, do companies advertise? To win market share. People are going to drink. But which brand they drink is not foreordained.

In its 2003 Report on Alcohol Marketing and Advertising the U.S. Federal Trade Commission discovered "no reliable basis to conclude that alcohol advertising significantly affects consumption, let alone abuse." Moreover, the Commission "found no evidence of targeting underage consumers."

The Department of Health and Human Services recommended against restrictions on alcohol advertising in a report to Congress. The agency observed no significant relationship between advertising and consumption.

Private studies reach the same result. Explains John Calfee of the American Enterprise Institute: "Invariably, empirical research finds no effect of advertising on the total amount of alcohol consumption."

Certainly nothing suggests that advertising encourages irresponsible drinking. People who abuse alcohol don't need to be encouraged to do so.

But all of this evidence is really irrelevant. Freedom of speech is an important right, possessed even by alcohol producers. We punish brewers and distillers for selling their legal products at our peril: The paternalists will soon find another unpopular vice to penalize.

Moreover, controlling publications mostly read by adults because some teens also see them sets an extraordinarily dangerous precedent. Surely we do not all want to be treated as kids.

If there seems to be a convincing reason to sacrifice free speech rights, it should be done by the Congress, after a full debate, and not by a judge in a tort case. The political process is imperfect, but better includes diverse interest groups and better balances diverse interests than does a lawsuit.

Even some trial attorneys realize that they are operating on shaky legal ground. After Coors threatened to seek sanctions for frivolous litigation against Kenneth McKenna, the lawyer for Ryan Pisco, McKenna dismissed the lawsuit "with prejudice," which means that it cannot be refiled.

America is becoming a society of victims. No one is responsible for anything; everyone is liable for something. Now the trial bar has set its sights on the alcohol industry.

A democratic society must reject regulation by lawyers. Most people who drink do so responsibly; those who do not, have only themselves to blame. The only way to deal with alcohol abuse is to hold drinkers -- not brewers or distillers or sellers -- accountable.

**9. Attention, Parents: Teens Want You to Lock up Your Liquor**

*The Herald Tribune*

July 16, 2004

Attention parents of teenagers: A devastating killer lurks in most of our kitchens. And yet, in spite of its murderous effects -- claiming 100,000 lives each year and maiming countless others -- alcohol is the most accepted drug in the United States.

At a national level there are shocking statistics about alcohol abuse among teenagers. Several million teenagers are alcoholics with many more millions who have serious drinking problems.

The damage caused by alcohol is staggering. Not only is alcohol a significant factor for all three of the leading causes of death for 15- to 24-year-olds (automobile crashes, homicide, and suicide) but it is also connected to half of all teen rapes.

Many believe that Sarasota County is safe from all such misery; this is not so. The 2002 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey found that 58 percent of all Sarasota County students have tried alcohol during their lifetimes; 33.9 percent have used alcohol in the past 30 days; and 18.2 percent binge drink (five or more drinks in a row). Alcohol abuse is a pressing problem in Sarasota.

Advocates for youth have labeled parents as a major obstacle that police and school officials have to face in their battle against underage drinking (21 being the legal age). Parents have been found hosting parties for their teenagers at which alcohol is available, thinking that if their teens are going to drink, they might as well do it where it is "safe." Some national surveys claim almost half of all parents have said they have purchased alcohol for their children.

Parents are not only supplying teenagers with alcohol at parties but are keeping an available supply stored in the cabinet or refrigerator. When asked how she first gained access to alcohol, Lisa, a recovered alcoholic who now works with Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse, replied, "I went and got it from my parent's liquor cabinet, refrigerator and from older friends."

Despite being underage, teens are able to purchase alcohol. Lisa also disclosed that by the time she was 16, she had graduated to buying her own alcohol. Federal research suggests that two-thirds of all teens who drink buy their own liquor. Minors can easily get away with it by using fake identifications, and many stores don't bother checking.

The Internet is another source for purchasing alcohol, and teens can do so anonymously /[even though many states, including Florida, ban or restrict these sales/]. According to a National Academy of Sciences report, 10 percent of teenagers report purchasing alcohol over the Internet, and on one Web site selling liquor, almost 60 percent of all those who visited were under 21.

The first thing parents could do is put a combination lock on their liquor cabinet. It would be ideal for them to keep all alcoholic beverages, including beer, inside the liquor cabinet and only put these drinks in the refrigerator the day they will drink them. However, before doing so, talk to your teenager and explain your reasons and that they still have your trust.

Additional precautions may be taken by etching a crayon mark at the surface of the liquid in each bottle. This will let teens know that the parent is keeping a close eye on the household alcohol. These tips may seem silly, but seeing that most teens obtain their beverages from home when they first start drinking makes it all the more necessary.

Finally, parents should keep close tabs on their children, noting if they are purchasing or obtaining alcohol from businesses or friends. They can do this by knowing where their teens are when they go out and by becoming acquainted with their children's friends and parents.

At the beginning of this summer, 15 high school students, including us, enrolled in the STAR Leadership Training conducted by the Community Youth Development Project. We were assigned to complete a project concerning an issue we thought was a major problem in Sarasota County. We thought this issue was most prevalent.

We see what this dangerous drug does to our friends. We want you to help us take action to save someone's life. We want you to be a liquor locker.

 *This column was co-authored by Konstantine "Kosta" Dietrich and Talia Samelian. Martinsen, 14, attends Pine View School for the Gifted in Osprey. Dietrich, 16, attends North Port High School. Samelian, 14, attends Pine View.*

