



PRC COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Welcome Back!

December, 2010

Welcome to the fourth newsletter! In this issue, we have some local action to report, including discussions about the legal drinking age by PIRE at Opposing Views, and reports on new studies.

If you have any information you would like to share in the newsletter, such as an upcoming event, local efforts regarding alcohol concerns, outcomes of a community project, please feel free to contact us.

We are still offering a \$5 gift card to Jamba Juice to the first 50 people who answer the survey brief survey. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/TNMRMG5>

Communities in Action

The Cow Palace in Daly City is known as a venue for raves and drinking among underage patrons as well as young adult drinkers. A number of serious illnesses including death have pointed to the need for fundamental change in the management of the venue, local activists say.

Currently the state owns the Cow Palace and controls it from Sacramento. Daly City, where the Cow Palace is located, has limited control over the venue. This means that promoters deal with the Cow Palace administrators in Sacramento. These administrators also control Cow Palace Security. Recently there have been reported problems with people going to the ER and dying after events. In late October, more than a dozen people (the youngest being 16 years old) were hospitalized for alcohol and drug use, and at least two were critical. Last May, two people died of a drug overdose and others (including critical cases) were hospitalized. In March, nine people fell ill after taking ecstasy.

A recent proposal hopes to alleviate the problems by putting the Cow Palace under local control where:

- Daly City is responsible for authorizing permits for promoters
- The chief of police in Daly city is in charge of security/approval for proposals (SA: please make clear)
- Cow Palace security (from the state) would be the second line of security
- Promoters pay an extra fee for the additional security provided by the police and fire departments, as well as education resources
- Eventually, Daly City would purchase the Cow Palace

A number of local residents want to bring about positive change at the Cow Palace. One of them is

Shakeel Ali, who meets with the local Bayshore community to express their concerns publicly. "The community wants to know what promoters can do for the community...rather than just 'throwing parties,'" Mr. Ali said. "Raves, which include the underaged to young adults, need regulations." He further notes the need for changes in security, so that it is locally based. Other needs include more health workers available and attempts at the venue to educate young attendees about the dangers of alcohol and drug use. "We want more local police officers and fire persons on site during the events."

He emphasized the need for promoters to pay extra fees as well as the desirability of a more locally controlled permit process. He also pointed out that water must be available in plentiful supply during events to avoid potential health consequences of dehydration among attendees. In addition to these important policy changes, he stated that there is a need for drug and alcohol education and prevention resources to be available at Cow Palace events.

San Mateo County

As reported in the local Bay Area newspapers, 7 store clerks in San Mateo were cited for selling alcohol to minors, after police officers sent underage cadets to attempt to buy alcohol in 18 stores. The clerks face misdemeanor criminal charges, and the stores receive administrative fines from the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control.

The businesses where the clerks were cited were: Safeway, 860 N. Delaware St.; CVS pharmacy, 862 N. Delaware St.; 25th Avenue Liquors, 101 W. 25th Ave.; Liquor City, 1230 W. Hillsdale Blvd.; Bob's Liquor, 522 Peninsula Ave.; Taqueria El Nayarita, 660 E. Third Ave.; Fiesta Latina Market, 1424 Cary Ave. (November 4, 2010; IIAA)

Special Report!

Opposing Views

At [Opposingviews.com](http://opposingviews.com), you can read and debate on many popular issues. PIRE, verified as an “expert” contributor, has posted discussion on some of the alcohol debates. Below is one of the commentaries that you can find at the Opposing Views website, which discusses the right to fight for ones country and the legal drinking age. Also included is a discussion on caffeinated alcohol drinks from various sources including Opposing Views.

Alcohol and Fighting for Your Country do Not Mix

Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

Proponents of a lower drinking age often argue that "If I'm old enough to go to war, I should be old enough to drink," but many rights have different ages of initiation. In most States, a person can obtain a hunting license at age 12 and drive at age 16. US citizens can vote and serve in the military at 18, serve in the U.S. House of Representatives at 25, and serve as the U.S. President at 35. Other rights we regulate include the sale and use of tobacco, and legal consent for sexual intercourse and marriage. Vendors, such as car rental facilities and hotels, also have set the minimum age for a person to use their services—25-years-old to rent a car and 21-years-old to rent a hotel room. The minimum age for initiation is based on the specific behaviors involved and must take into account the dangers and benefits of that behavior at a given age. The minimum age for initiation is also based on physical development, including brain function. The military recruits 18-year-olds fresh out of high school because they are young, impressionable, and highly trainable. This does not mean these 18-year-olds are ready for alcohol use.

Alcohol actually affects teens differently than adults. A teenager may look like an adult physically and may even appear more physically fit, but the teenager's body is still developing. According to the American Medical Association (AMA) it actually takes less alcohol for a teenager to get drunk than it does for an adult in his/her twenties. A normal adult's liver can safely process an estimated 50 alcohol calories an hour (one ounce of 40 percent alcohol). However, studies show that a teenager's liver can only process half that amount before they experience harmful effects. To ingest only 25 alcohol calories per hour, a teenager could drink no more than one-fourth of a “light” beer over the course of one hour.

Early onset of drinking by youth has also been shown to significantly increase the risk of future alcohol-related problems (e.g., addiction, getting into fights, drinking driver crashes, other unintentional injury).

When the age 21 law was challenged in Louisiana's State Supreme Court, the Court upheld the law, ruling that "... statutes establishing the minimum drinking age at a higher level than the age of majority are not arbitrary because they substantially further the appropriate government purpose of improving highway safety, and thus are constitutional."

For references: <http://www.opposingviews.com/arguments/alcohol-and-fighting-for-your-country-do-not-mix>

Ban on Alcohol-Caffeine Mixes

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sent a warning letter on Nov 17 to request four companies to stop selling caffeinated malt alcoholic beverages including the one producing Four Loko. The FDA said the caffeine added to their malt alcoholic beverages is an unsafe food additive.

The four companies and their products affected are Charge Beverages Corp. (Core High Gravity HG, Core High Gravity HG Orange, and Lemon Lime Core Spiked), New Century Brewing Co., LLC (Moonshot), Phusion Projects, LLC (Four Loko) and United Brands Company Inc. (Joose and Max).

The FDA said it based its action on a scientific review of studies, experts' opinions on caffeine and alcohol, and tests results from the agency's independent analysis of these products. It concluded that caffeine is not "generally recognized as safe" in alcoholic beverages and can mask "some of the sensory cues" drinkers rely on to determine their level of intoxication. One study published in the April 2010 issue of Addictive Behaviors found bar patrons who consumed alcohol mixed with energy drinks (like Four Loko) were three times more likely to leave a bar highly intoxicated and four times more likely to intend to drive upon leaving the bar, compared with those who did not drink the mixed beverage.

Recent efforts to ban caffeinated alcoholic occurred after incidents at raves and college parties led to hospitalizations and other incidents after parties drank too much of these type of drinks. According to Mark Berman of Opposing Views, things came to a head after 50 college students got sick at one party. There have been other reported incidents of college parties where students drank too much of these drinks, such as in Washington state where nine students were hospitalized after drinking at a house party, and one with a blood alcohol level of .30 almost died.

Drug czar Gil Kerlikowske said he welcomed a ruling by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that would effectively ban drinks like Four Loko and Joost, and Four Loko is attempting to remove the caffeine in order to avert the ban. The caffeinated alcoholic drinks, which are sold in 23.5-ounce cans, contain the equivalent of four to six beers with the caffeine of a tall Starbucks coffee .

Obviously, banning caffeine in these drinks does not prevent drinkers from combining coffee or other caffeine and alcohol. But these caffeine-containing drinks appear to have been consumed in a particularly dangerous fashion.

In the Headlines!

Kids in Action!

In order to discourage adults from sharing alcohol with minors, students from the Auburn Enlarged City School District (New York) are putting yellow, orange, and black stickers on cases of beer, as well as six- and twelve-packs. Their actions were part of the Project Sticker Shock, which has operated across the country with various organizations. The stickers have written warnings about the penalties of purchasing alcohol legally and then providing to minors. Groups that often collaborate on the project include students, parents, merchants, prevention professionals, community members, and law enforcement. For Auburn, NY, it was the first event involving both students and cooperating merchants. (October 13, 2010; [IIAA](#))

Cheap Alcohol

The British Columbia Coalition for Action on Alcohol Reform has called on the government to stop the marketing of cheap drinks containing higher levels of alcohol to young people and others who drink high quantities of alcohol. According to those responsible at the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, part of the reason they haven't is that British Columbia has the highest tax rates in the country.

However, it is suggested these taxes should be reworked to be set by the level of alcoholic content. Currently there are inconsistencies in pricing. Below are a few examples (in Canadian dollars).

- A 6-pack of beer at 8% alcohol content is \$7.99 whereas a 6-pack of beer with low alcohol % is \$11.00
- Hard lemonade brands that are high in alcoholic content are cheaper than brands with less alcoholic content.
- Vincor's Vex Hard Pink Lemonade, with 7% alcohol, costs LESS than some soft drinks at just \$1.59 (October 13, 2010; [IIAA](#))

In New Zealand, they are also bringing attention to the low cost of alcohol – one point being alcohol is cheaper than bottled water! Researchers are concerned with cheap alcohol and its relation to the increase in binge drinking. They are also calling for a minimum price of alcohol per unit. (October 15, 2010; [IIAA](#))

AOD and Cognitive Development: In recent editions the PRC Community Newsletter has discussed cognitive ability with teens drinking alcohol. A study published online October 19, 2010 in *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* examined the effects of marijuana use and heavy alcohol consumption on adolescents' cognitive development.

The study found that the number of drinks per day was associated with cognitive function and attention. Teens who drank more had worse scores on cognitive function and attention. The study also linked more frequent use of marijuana to poorer memory, and youth who were diagnosed with substance abuse or dependence performed more poorly on memory, attention, and processing speed. The authors point out that longitudinal assessment is needed.

Abstract: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1530-0277.2010.01320.x/abstract>

Source: http://www.centersite.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=news&id=132321&cn=14



Alcohol, Caffeine and Binge Drinking:

A recent study at Linda Loma University Medical Center has found those who drink caffeinated alcohol drinks are twice as likely to binge drink and act out with dangerous behavior. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, high school students reported that their friends who drank alco-pops said that the energy made them feel more confident about driving after consuming the high-energy alcoholic drink. The Linda Loma study, which surveyed 1.4 million Californians, found that those who drank caffeinated alcohol drinks were twice as likely to drink and drive, as well as engage in other risky behavior such as binge drinking.

The study also discusses binge drinking and risky behavior among drinkers with mental disorders, and the rising popularity of alcoholic energy drinks among teens and college students. Sales of such drinks have risen 70 times over the past few years. Like the Steering Group in Redwood City, they note how the drinks are marketed to youth such as coming in colorful cans and being placed in stores near non-alcoholic energy drinks. Robert Nash Parker, Sociology profess at UC Riverside and former PRC research scientist, said "This is just the latest development in the industry's attempt to get younger people to drink alcoholic sugary drinks by disguising the nature of the drinks...It's harder to enact some sort of it can't hurt for parents to know about these things and limit the access, but in general it's not an effective strategy. (November 3, 2010; [IIAA](#))

Community Updates

We would like to hear from you! In our last edition, we focused on some of the wonderful work being done in Redwood City. This edition we have some more news from Redwood City, from the Youth Advisory Board.

Youth and ATOD Access

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) at Sequoia High School conducted a survey last Spring, 2010 on youth access to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) and presented it at a local prevention meeting

A Q&A followed, and one idea brought to discussion was finding culturally sensitive ways to train non-English speaking store clerks. Other ideas included educational opportunities for merchants and mandated ID scanners.

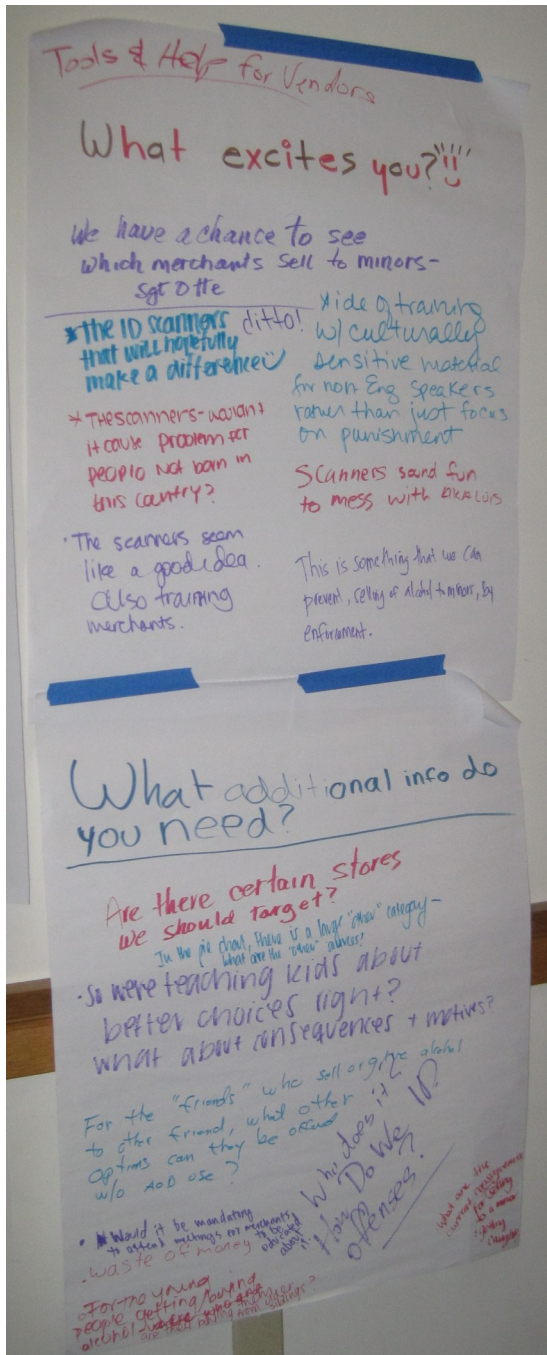
The YOC presenters were asked what they thought about the "honesty" of the answers. One youth presenter stated she felt that the youth answered honestly (see if can contact and ask to elaborate/why). Another question was whether the YOC felt the results applied to other schools around the areas. One responded she felt they would apply because the areas were similar, while another thought results might differ.

After the presentation, both the adult and youth members rotated to stations to discuss specific outcomes of the study, and made comments on needs and interests.

The Youth Advisory Committee hopes to share their findings with the entire school and support from the meeting members was given to help them contact community groups for action (police, Parks and Recreations, etc). We will present some of their findings in the next newsletter.

Next Issue:

- Photovoice update
- Results from the Youth and ATOD Access project
- Article from Asian American Recovery Services, South San Francisco



Your voice matters!

What are the areas you feel needs to be addressed by research?

What type of research best addressed the services or functions of your organization?

How can we help build the bridge between researchers and practitioners?

E-mail your thoughts to Imiramontes@prev.org