

A blast from the past?

Proposed laws against underage, irresponsible alcohol use reminiscent of Prohibition

Underaged drinking is an issue that is not foreign to College Station. The recent death of a Texas A&M student is just one example of what can happen when inexperienced drinkers are drinking too far.



ZACH HALL

Many students have been to parties that have been busted by the police in which minor in possession (MIP) citations were given. In fact College Station police issued 1,075 MIP citations in '98.

City ordinances involving drinking are abundant in Bryan and College Station; and in Dallas, police authorities and Mothers Against Drunk Driving are questioning the validity of laws that allow minors to drink with the consent of their parents. They cite a recent example of parents in Lubbock who sued beer to their teens for a party; two people were killed after a car left the party drunk and had a wreck.

However, the answer to preventing unneeded deaths is not another Prohibition.

Alcohol can adversely affect anyone who misuses it, but instead of punishing everyone to combat a problem caused by a few, city and university authorities need to focus on those who are truly responsible.

In the case of Barry Joseph Vail II who fell from the third floor of a parking garage, authorities were actively pursuing the students who hosted the party that Vail and his friends visited and the convenience store that he bought alcohol from.

If the convenience store or students knowingly and recklessly provided Vail and his friends with alcohol then they should be prosecuted for those charges, not because he died. There seems to be a great need to place ultimate blame in this case.

But the individual who had absolute and final responsibility for his own actions was also the one affected by those actions. Furthermore, in cases in which parents supply alcohol to minors, who in turn are involved in accidents, the parents should be prosecuted. That is where the responsibility and fault lies. Texas laws do not need to be changed because a few people are too stupid to follow existing laws or to control their own actions.

More laws only punish those who are responsible drinkers. College Station already has enough ordinances involving alcohol as it is. Whether it requires bars to stop serving alcohol at 1 a.m. or permits one from drinking in his own front yard after 1 a.m. Increasing the number of laws and city ordinances is not the way to prevent underage or irresponsible drinking.

Many students can relate to being at parties where underage drinkers were not present but that were busted by the police anyway simply because they were looking for underage drinkers.

In an *Bryan-College Station Eagle* article on underage drinking, one officer was quoted as saying that they will target parties knowing that there are usually one or two minors present who are drinking.

But regardless of whether there are minors present or not, the party is usually busted. Furthermore, there is no room to argue with the authorities in these situations.

Still other students can relate to having been given public intoxication citations for walking from Northgate to their homes or dorms. Was the better solution to have driven home? Why is there



RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

this double standard within laws and ordinances within the city? Underage and reckless drinking are problems that every community must deal with, but the answer is not to pass reckless, irresponsible ordinances and laws.

As Prohibition showed in the '20s and '30s, drinking will go on regardless of the number of laws, ordinances or scare tactics used. The answers and solutions to keeping these problems under control

must come from holding those who are ultimately responsible accountable for their actions.

Over-reaching laws and ordinances only create an apathetic student and community population and punish those who are responsible and accountable to their own actions.

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Israel should not protect spy lest American support disappears

According to *Webster's New World Dictionary*, a traitor is "a person who betrays his or her country, cause, friends, etc."



MARK PASSWATERS

Despite his protests and those of the current Israeli Government, Johnathan Pollard fits this definition perfectly. He is the prototypical reminder at the United States should ever consider itself as having permanent allies, only permanent interests.

Pollard worked for the Department of Defense before he was arrested in 1985 for espionage. What was the nation for which he committed his treason? The state of Israel, supposedly one of America's staunchest allies.

Israel claimed it was looking for weaknesses in regional foes, which registers as pure garbage since no nation in the Middle East uses the encryption systems the United States uses to code its messages. No excuse can hide the fact Israel was looking for possible weaknesses in the United States military.

Pollard was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. To this day, Pollard claims he committed his treasonous acts because he is a Jew and he wanted to protect his people. Protect them from whom? Israel's number one subsidizer who doles out \$2 billion worth of aid yearly?

Pollard's claims have apparently tugged at the heartstrings

of many Israelis, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Israeli leader wants Pollard freed, saying that he did a patriotic duty for the Jewish state.

To make his point, Netanyahu refused to sign the Wye Accords for two days, until President Clinton promised to review the case.

What Netanyahu and other Israelis are neglecting to mention is the concept of Pollard's patriotism is an absolute farce. Pollard was American, not Israeli (he was made an Israeli citizen in 1995 to increase his chances of release).

This makes him a traitor to his nation, not some kind of hero.

Pollard sold out his nation for money. He was paid a sum in the upper six figures for his betrayal, which shoots holes in his argument that he did his dirty work on behalf of his religion.

This man has far more in common with Benedict Arnold than some Old Testament figure.

The actions of the Israeli Government on this issue should be noted by Americans. The Israelis are acting with a mix of immaturity and arrogance.

Netanyahu had the audacity to halt action on the Wye Accords because of the Pollard issue, when the accords had nothing to do with the United States and Israel.

The Israelis are acting like a spoiled child who has been caught with his hand in the cookie jar, and wants to eat the cookie.

The United States has worked unceasingly through four administrations to help better Israel's

relations with its neighbors, and these actions are the thanks it receives.

There has to be a limit, and Jonathan Pollard should be it. If Clinton has one ounce of courage, he will take the advice of his CIA director and leave Pollard in jail.

Indeed, if it were possible, it would be better if Pollard were executed. This is the traditional fashion in which traitors are dealt with and it would quickly end this debate. It would also serve the dual purpose of sending a firm message to other people who are considering spying on their country, and remind Israel that their relationship with the United States requires some give and take.

Pollard should be doing a slow dance with a long rope, not dancing in front of the Wailing Wall.

The Jonathan Pollard episode is a large black spot on the American-Israeli relationship. America needs to realize that any nation is capable in acting in a manner contrary to United States interests, while Israel should remember their very existence is imperiled by an estrangement with America.

The special relationship between the United States and Israel has been one of the major reasons Israel has remained in existence.

Israel would be wise to bring up issues that strengthen its security and cultivate its relationship with the United States, and not revisit ones that could fragment it.

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Big record companies should embrace MP3 format, not fight it

The music industry claims it is losing a large amount of profits because of MP3s which stands for MPEG layer 3, a type of compressed data file used to record music. The files most commonly hold music in digital form.



LUKE SAUGIER

Like most other file types, they can be freely copied and distributed over the Internet or a computer network.

The music industry loses money because it is possible to convert music to the MP3 format and then distribute the contents of the CD for free.

And of course, no one who can get all the songs on a CD off of the Internet is going to want to buy that same CD.

In an effort to stem the rising tide of MP3 files available to people, five major record companies, including Sony and Warner Music, sponsored an IBM project code-named "Madison" to create a compressed file type to replace MP3s.

This new type of file cannot be copied, thus making it safe for record companies to distribute music via the Internet.

People are expected to use these new files instead of MP3s because they will sound better.

The major recording labels plan to maintain a huge online database of these files so people can pay for them first and then download them to their

computers.

While the record companies see this as the wisest course of action, it will, in fact, be detrimental to the growth of online distribution and the record companies' profits.

The point record companies have obviously missed is that while people would appreciate higher quality sound files, they appreciate the price of the slightly lower quality MP3's much more.

By creating this new uncopyable file type, the record companies have set themselves up as the bad guy who wants to cash in on what is currently enjoyable and free.

Because of the anti-authority nature of the Internet community, one of two things are likely to happen: the new file type may be entirely ignored, which is the best thing the record companies can hope for, or someone will come up with a way to copy the files.

The record companies will then have merely helped the spread of "illicit music" by funding the development of a higher-quality file type and providing an easy way to obtain the new files.

Instead of trying to fight what has already become too big to kill, record companies should embrace MP3s as a way to distribute the music of new artists, which currently costs the companies the most money.

Distributing singles on MP3 is a controversial topic in the recording industry; many companies see it as a wonderful

idea, while others (usually the larger labels) see it as the beginning of the end of profitable music promotion.

This is largely a case of fearing the unknown. By spending less money on the promotion of new artists, record companies would more than recoup the small losses caused by people who download music without buying the CD.

Releasing singles on MP3 is an extremely effective way to promote a new band. According to MP3.com, the vast majority of the people who download MP3s end up buying the CD the MP3 can be found on.

In the future, bands may promote themselves by releasing their music on the Internet in MP3 format, and only sign with record companies when there is great demand for their music.

This would reduce promotion costs for new bands, and the record companies would be guaranteed music that would sell. Because the companies would not have to promote the new artists, that savings would be passed along to the consumer.

By making singles available on MP3, the record companies would bypass radio and video broadcasting companies, who may or may not play their new song.

In addition, this method of distribution would provide their potential market with an easy and risk-free way to sample new music.

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