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AggieLife

Page 4

THE BATTALION

Monday, October 15, 2006

What Aggies should know before the big 21

By BETHANY BROWN
THE BATTALION

Turning 21 means many things in American society. It gives people the right to consume alcoholic beverages, it is the point where a person can no longer be considered a minor, and it is a landmark representing adulthood.

Many Aggies celebrate this milestone by doing the one thing they could never legally do before. For them, a night of drinking is the best way to celebrate. Along with the new privileges of buying drinks at bars or getting a keg for a big party come the responsibilities of drinking legally. It is important for students to remember that being 21 does not make them immune to alcohol-related laws.

Gordon Hitzfelder, a senior agricultural development major, had some ups and downs on his 21st birthday.

"I thought that my 21st would not be fun because five days before it, I got an MIP and a PI right behind the Dixie Chicken," Hitzfelder said.

Regardless of this set-back, Hitzfelder managed to have a good time on his birthday. He spent most of the day celebrating at Northgate and said he had a memorable birthday. But things soon changed when he got in trouble with the law again.

While at the Stock Show and Rodeo in San Antonio, Hitzfelder was caught contributing to minors.

"I never thought that [the officer] would ask me if I bought [my friends] beer," Hitzfelder said. "I was

thinking that if I told him honestly that I had bought the beer he would let me go." Hitzfelder was wrong.

Dan Jones, a lieutenant with the College Station Police Department, said that laws such as public intoxication and providing alcohol to minors are very much an issue for people 21 and over.

"A person who is 21 should be aware that it is against the law to purchase alcohol for or provide alcohol to anyone that is under 21," Jones said.

While it seems he is stating the obvious, College Station police frequently arrest or ticket violators of these laws. Perhaps the most important law for students to remember and consider is the Drinking While Intoxicated (DWI) law. The legal blood alcohol content in Texas is .08 and anyone found driving with a content level at or higher than the legal limit will suffer serious repercussions, such as fines, loss of license and even jail time.

Dr. Maurice Dennis, director of the Center for Alcohol and Drug Education Studies and a health and safety professor at A&M, said students should recognize that 21 is not a "magic age for drinking."

"For example, drivers age 21 in Texas are 150 over-represented in DWI fatalities and more than 2,000 year-old drivers die in DWI crashes than do 17-, 18-, 19- or 20-year-old drivers," Dennis said. "Drivers age 21-25 are the single largest risk group for DWI fatal crashes."

Another risk that is especially threatening to young women is the risk of being raped or assaulted while intoxicated.

See BIRTHDAY on page 4

Ask Aggie

Dear Aggie,

What do all the symbols mean on the Aggie senior ring?

— An Inquiring Aggie

Dear Ag,

Here's what I found about the meaning behind the symbols on the Aggie ring. This was found on the "ring" link on the Association of former students Website at: www.aggienetwork.com. This Website contains a lot of really interesting information including the proper steps for getting your Aggie ring. Enjoy!

The Website states:

The Aggie Ring at A&M is as deep

in symbolism as it is in tradition. The shield on the top of the ring symbolizes protection of the good reputation of the alma mater. The 13 stripes in the shield refer to the 13 original states and symbolize the intense patriotism of graduates and undergraduates of A&M. The five stars in the shield refer to phases of development of the student: mind or intellect, body, spiritual attainment, emotional poise, and integrity of character. The eagle is symbolic of agility and power, and ability to reach great heights as ambitions. One side of the ring symbolizes the seal of the State of Texas authorized by the Constitution of 1845. The five-pointed star is encircled with a wreath of olive or laurel leaves symbolizing achievement and a desire for peace and live-oak leaves symbolizing the strength to fight. They are joined at the bottom by an encircling ribbon to show the

necessity of joining these two traits to accomplish one's ambition to serve. The other side with its ancient cannon, saber, and rifle symbolizes that the citizens of Texas fought for their land and are determined to defend their homeland. The saber stands for valor and confidence. The rifle and cannon are symbols of preparedness and defense. The crossed flags of the United States and Texas recognize the dual allegiance to nation and state.

Thanks again for the super question!

Do you have questions about anything on campus? Having trouble with roommates? Professors?

Email Ask Aggie: AskAggie@thebatt.com

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