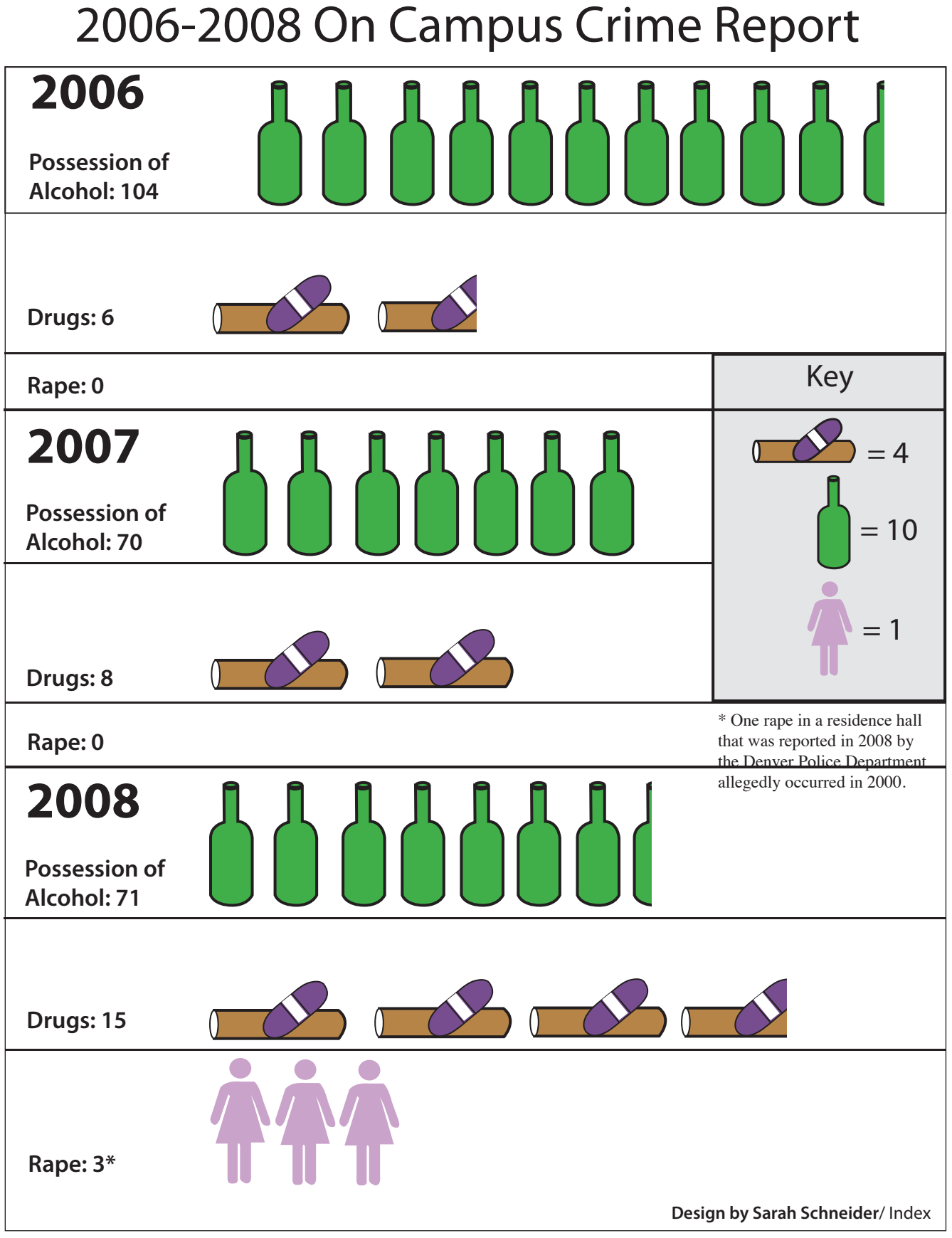
On campus alcohol, drugs decrease while rape reports increase



BY BLAISE HART-SCHMIDT
Staff Reporter

The number of alcohol-related arrests and disciplinary referrals of Truman students has decreased since 2006, while the number of reported rapes has increased, according to the Department of Public Safety's 2009 Campus Crime and Fire report, which was released Friday. The report includes data from 2006-08.

There were 71 alcohol-related arrests on campus in 2008, down from 104 in 2006. In that same time frame, disciplinary referrals for alcohol dropped from 48 to 28.

Tom Johnson, director of the Department of Public Safety, said he couldn't say whether students actually are drinking less, but he attributed the difference in numbers to students acting more responsibly.

"People are being a little more aware of things and how they do things," he said. "The important part of that is that people are probably watching out for each other a little bit more."

Reports of rape increased from one in 2007 to five in 2008. No rapes were reported in 2006.

Johnson said one of these rapes was a rare case. DPS was notified by the Denver, Police Department of a rape that allegedly occurred on Truman's campus in 2000. Johnson said federal law states that any rapes reported to DPS must be included in the report, regardless of whether DPS can investigate it.

Johnson said federal law requires colleges and universities that receive federal funding to publish annual crime reports.

"The purpose is to inform people ... who are here or are considering attending here [of] what the safety procedures [are] and what's in place," he said.

David Hoffman, assistant dean of student affairs, said the rape will not be looked into because no complaint was ever submitted to the conduct board and the substantial time gap prevents an investigation.

Fire statistics also were included in the crime report after a change in the federal law. Additionally, the report includes information on all fire equipment in the residence halls.

Alcohol-related referrals and arrests were also down in residence halls across campus. There were 85 alcohol-related arrests made in 2006, but only 45 were made in the residence halls in 2008.

John Gardner, interim director of Residence Life, said his department works hard to educate students on the consequences of drinking and pays attention to the yearly reports.

"We're working hard with DPS to make our residences as safe as possible, and we'll continue to do that," Gardner said. "There wasn't a lot in [the crime report] that necessarily surprised us."

Gardner also said Reslife will not make any changes to their policies or programs based on the report.

"The perception of how often and how much students engage in the use of alcohol, I think the perception is higher than what it actually is," he said. "But it's a little hard to determine because there's so many variables."

David Hoffman said he doesn't know why the numbers of alcohol related arrests and referrals are down.

"Our Partners in Prevention survey data actually indicates that student drinking has increased over the last few years," Hoffman said. "But the number of students involved in high risk drinking seemed like it was decreasing."

The annual crime report is available on the DPS Web site, or a hard copy can be attained at the DPS office.

Netbooks gain popularity

BY CHRIS DREW
Staff Reporter

Most college students come to school with a computer, usually a laptop. With the arrival of the netbook, however, that might be changing.

Netbooks are similar to laptops but smaller, usually with screens between five to 10 inches, and with less processing power. But most students won't even notice the decrease in processing power, said senior Cody Sumter, co-chair of the student technology improvement committee.

"The majority of users don't use the power that is in their laptops — netbooks are great for word processing, internet and video," Sumter said. "Why spend more money when you can get what you need for less and with more portability and battery life?"

As developing technology, netbooks have been around for only about a year and a half, Sumter said. Netbooks are one of many new devices blurring the line between usability and portability, the newest of which is the "ultra-portable computer."

"It's halfway between a netbook and a laptop, about 10 to 13 inches, and with a better processor, but still around eight hours of battery life," Sumter said.

Senior Torin Brenner said he was first introduced to netbooks at an Information Technology Services table where workers demonstrated the new computers last semester. When his laptop broke, he looked into buying a netbook to replace it. Brenner said the netbook he found had everything he needed at a cheaper price.

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> Co-chair of student technology improvement committee

Truman's chemistry department also has taken interest in netbooks and has looked into them as a possible replacement for their aging laptops.

In 2003, the chemistry department updated their lab exercises to involve the use of computer-assisted data acquisition, said chemistry professor James McCormick. After six years of service, the laptops they bought to go along with the updates have begun to show their age.

The chemistry department and ITS found the netbooks could run the software necessary for the labs and take up less space on lab benches. The low cost of netbooks would allow the department to replace their laptops with netbooks for about half the cost, McCormick said.

But because of higher priorities for department money, the laptop replacements have been put on hold.

Krista Goodman/Index
Junior Gabriel Parker sits with his netbook. Netbooks have only been around for a year and a half.