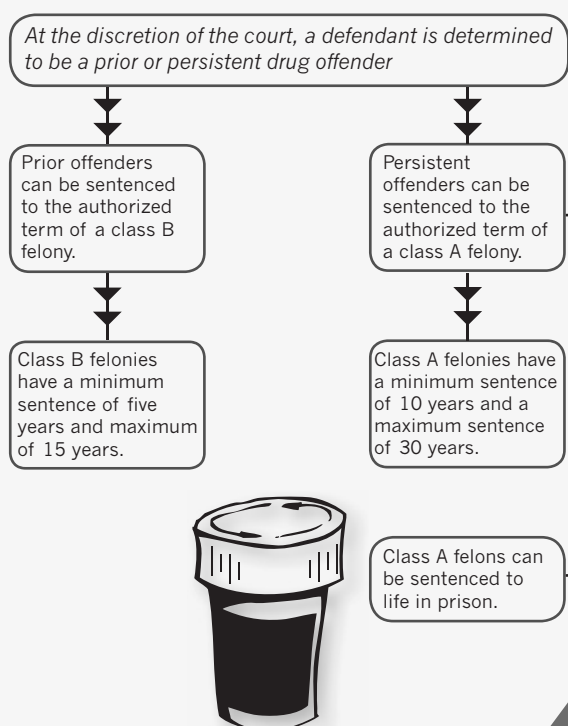


DRUG OFFENDERS

Missouri "prior and persistent" sentencing explained.



Immigration pays off in small towns



John Riti

Immigration is a part of the American identity. We're a melting pot, a salad bowl, whatever you want to call it. So why do so many people harbor negative feelings toward immigrants?

Last month, the Young Conservatives of Texas group at the University of Texas-Austin sparked national headlines when it announced an event called "Catch an Illegal Immigrant," according to a Nov. 19 NPR report. The group planned for students to walk around campus with an "illegal immigrant" tag, and any student who found them could redeem the tag to win a gift card.

Luckily, the student group cancelled this event after its announcement produced much controversy from school officials and the general public. However, the fact that a group of college students thought this sort of event was okay should give us all reason to pause and reflect.

Our country's foundations were built by the contribution of immigrants. Diversity makes our country great and is something we should pride ourselves on.

Immigration laws are important and definitely warrant discussion and attention, but it's unfortunate that demoralizing and offensive tactics such as those of the YCT serve as the impetus for discussion.

The dissatisfaction with immigration laws publicly voiced by groups such as YCT seem to have nonsensical and prejudicial roots — that is, they don't offer any logical rationale or data for their disapproval with immigration. Studies show immigration actually is beneficial to many small town aspects of American life.

According to a July 2012 NPR segment, studies show immigrants have a positive economic impact for small-town America. When the Hazleton, Pa., Illegal Immigration Relief Act went into effect during 2006, its goal was to "deny permits to businesses that employ undocumented immigrants and [fine] landlords who rent them apartments," according to the article. Questions regarding the legality of the law circulated, and the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals eventually found the ordinance invalid because of federal preemption.

Hazleton's story is an important one. While in effect, the immigration law didn't deter immigrants from settling in Hazleton. The article details how they kept coming, establishing a strong Hispanic community and revitalizing the local economy as they started buying cars and homes and opening local businesses.

Patrick Carr, sociology professor at Rutgers University, said in the article that towns like Hazleton — which has about 8,000 more people than Kirksville — illustrate the positive impact immigration can have on small-town life. He references St. James, Minn., as another town that welcomed immigrants and experienced an economic resurgence.

"There are no real findings to indicate that immigrants bring anything but positive things," Carr said.

Campus groups such as YCT have every right to voice their opinions. Free speech is something that's also an inherent part of the American identity. I'm happy political groups on Truman State's campus seem to have a strong presence.

My issues is when rude, childish and hurtful tactics are publicly imposed on innocent bystanders — in this case, any student at the University of Texas-Austin who comes from an immigrant background. If groups like YCT, who strongly oppose immigration, were willing to have a civil discussion or a campus debate, I'd have no problem with that.

Immigration is a controversial topic, but towns like Hazleton can shed some valuable light on potential benefits. One thing we should all agree on, however, is dehumanizing others is never okay, no matter how you view them.

John Riti is a senior English major from St. Louis, Mo.

Drug statute is unjust



Sarah Muir

Imagine spending the rest of your life in prison for something as minor as possessing marijuana. Sedalia, Mo., resident Jeff Mizanskey has been serving life without parole for the past 20 years for possession of marijuana, according to a Nov. 18 Huffington Post article.

Mizanskey was convicted and sentenced in accordance with the Missouri prior and persistent drug offender statute, according to an Oct. 24 Riverfront Times article. This statute allows courts to sentence three-time nonviolent drug offenders to life without parole. Several other states have similar sentencing statutes, but Missouri's is one of the strictest.

Given 54 percent of Missourians now support the legalization of marijuana, according to a March 25 CBS St. Louis article, this type of punishment is unacceptable. These outdated possession laws need to be revised immediately. Not changing them would be a legislative failure.

Most states' provisions require at least one of the offenses to be violent, but in Missouri, three non-violent offenses can lead to the life-without-parole sentence, according to the Riverfront Times article. Even if all three offenses involved only marijuana and no other crimes were being committed at the time, a person can be sent to jail for life. This law doesn't affect only violent drug offenders, but also average people like Mizanskey. Mizanskey has appealed his sentence three times so far without success, according to the Riverfront Times article.

Not only are these laws a blatant injustice, they also cost a lot of money, affect minorities disproportionately and are the leading cause of life-without-parole sentences for nonviolent crime.

Missouri is wasting taxpayers' money by prosecuting people for something the majority of citizens believe should be legal, not to mention the additional costs it takes to house an inmate. Missouri spends an average of \$21,610 each year per inmate, according to an Oct. 7 Corrections One article. Ridding ourselves of these strict life-without-parole sentences for nonviolent criminals could save taxpayers serious money. Given that these criminals are not a risk to public safety, this money could be better spent prosecuting violent criminals.

Laws like Missouri's prior and persistent statute often are racist as well. Black people and white people use marijuana at comparable rates, but black people are four times more likely to be arrested for possession, according to a study by the American Civil Liberties Union published this year. While solving the underlying racial issues at play here will take much more than getting rid of one unjust law, doing so would provide an immediate short-term fix to the problem.

Additionally, drug laws are the leading reason nonviolent offenders are sentenced to life without parole. There currently are 3,278 inmates serving life sentences for nonviolent crimes in the U.S., and 80 percent of those cases are drug-related offenses, according to a Nov. 13 Reason article.

Because Missouri has one of the strictest sentencing laws when it comes to drug possession, it's crucial to start overturning them here to show we want to make progress. Now can be a time when the Missouri legislature proves they are paying attention to the data. Just because the law is in place now doesn't mean we have to stick with it. Let's see Missouri lawmakers recognize the faults of the prior and persistent drug offender provision and repeal it as soon as possible.

Missouri also can seek to end the injustice of Mizanskey's sentence and give him back his life after severely overpaying for his crime. This doesn't mean Missouri has to legalize marijuana, but it does mean the state seriously needs to reconsider how it prosecutes marijuana possession charges.

Sarah Muir is a sophomore political science major from Lee's Summit, Mo.

How do you deal with a hangover?

"Before I go to sleep I drink water. When I wake up I make scrambled eggs without seasoning and clean the house."

Brooke Daly Senior



"I have bottled Gatorade on my bedside table and a trash can by my bed, and I wear a bathrobe ... Also, eating cold pizza for breakfast."

Samantha Arvin Senior



"I eat greasy food for lunch and do something productive while I'm sitting around at home, like cleaning or doing homework."

Greg Dunn Senior



"Drink lots of milk and try to avoid moving. I also try to avoid going back to sleep — that seems to make it worse."

Tian Zheng Senior



AROUND THE QUAD

Tips for dealing with relentless hangovers



Parker Moyer

Let's be honest, hangovers suck. Yet, drinking is a righteous time. So, what's up with life's cruel joke? I'm not sure — I am no philosopher. I did, however, write a paper about hangovers for a class, so even if I can't give you a run-down of the meaning of life, I might be able to get you out of bed and onto the long road of recovery.

Firstly, the best way to avoid a hangover is to know your limit

and drink responsibly. Yes, it is kind of lame, but somebody had to say it.

The Night Before

Dude, drink some water Dehydration causes many symptoms of hangovers, according to Stanford University's alcohol policy and education web page. While making your pee the color of lemonade, dehydration also is the culprit behind those nasty tension headaches you have the morning after.

Everyone has their own magic number of hydrating beverages, but a good rule to follow is one glass of water for every alcoholic drink you consume, according to WebMD.

Banana-boat it

Alcohol is great at destroying B vitamins, according to the

Stanford alcohol education page. Like Batman with a group of thugs, those vitamins don't stand a chance against Señor Cuervo.

Do yourself a favor and eat a nice banana before you go to bed, or take a B vitamin supplement. Assuming you no longer will be drinking, this will help your body replenish those lost B vitamins and make your morning-after less unpleasant.

The Morning-After

Dude, drink more water ...Or any other hydrating beverage. Sports drinks are popular and effective. Look for those that contain electrolytes and B vitamins.

For those of you looking for an option with fewer calories, coconut water is a great alternative to sugary sports drinks. Coconut water naturally is low in sugar, yet high in B vitamins and elec-

trolytes and is 94 percent water.

If neither of those options is available, just hit the tap or make your roommate bring you something hydrating.

Drop by Pancake City

Get yourself a greasy breakfast. Though I couldn't find much research behind a greasy breakfast, most people argue it will make you feel better. Pancake City seems to be the place to go for a good morning-after breakfast.

If you can handle it, try to include some eggs and tomatoes. Eggs contain an amino acid called cysteine, which aids in the recovery of a nasty hangover. Tomatoes, like bananas, contain Vitamin B, so including them with your eggs or within a nice glass of tomato juice will go far in making you feel ready to drink again that evening.

Pop a pill ... or two

Pharmaceuticals don't actually aid your recovery, but they can help control symptoms so you can get out of bed and limp to Pancake City or stumble into Casey's for a Gatorade. Upset stomach? Take some Tums or some other antacid. For body aches and head pains take an over-the-counter painkiller.

Be careful about your choice of pill. Avoid acetaminophen — used in Tylenol and Excedrin — because the drug is processed by your liver, and let's be honest — haven't you been hard enough on your liver already?

Parker Moyer is a senior philosophy and religion major from Columbia, Mo.