



WAITING TO

EXHALE

A FEW MINUTES BEFORE 2 A.M., THE PURDUE PHARMACY STUDENT STOPPED BREATHING.

Her body poisoned with alcohol beyond its capacity to function, her gag reflex deadened, her throat clogged with vomit, the 20-year-old woman slumped in the dining room of a fraternity early last Saturday, rapidly suffocating.

Had the police and paramedics arrived just a few moments later, the Purdue University community would have been mourning the loss of another student to binge drinking.

[TURN TO PAGE A2]



Breakfast Club can take a toll on participants; some start early Saturday morning, without sleep. About noon, these two men found comfort on the front walkway of an apartment off Northwestern Avenue in West Lafayette. Many people, including J&C reporter Justin Mack, saw them there. That story is on Page A7.

\$2.00 RETAIL



W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the overview

A SOBER TASK

When Purdue's weekend drinking rituals begin, the entire community holds its breath.



Caleb Owens, left, guides James Heddin as he places a barricade early Sept. 26 on State Street. The barriers help keep pedestrians safe from traffic during Purdue football weekends. "We have four barricades that have been damaged. So I know they work," says Dave Downey, street department superintendent. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL HEINZ/JOURNAL & COURIER

[CONTINUED FROM A1]

As it turned out, the young woman was intubated, transported to a hospital and released the next day.

There were other close calls and alarming incidents across the campus area during Purdue homecoming weekend.

Police arrested 12 people younger than 25 on alcohol-related charges — and ushered home dozens of students too unsteady to make it on their own. A handful of students sustained drinking-related injuries serious enough to warrant a trip to the emergency room. Scores of underage students drinking at off-campus house parties scattered at the approach of any squad car.

But nothing really terrible happened.

The police logged no reports of sexual assaults committed against incapacitated female students. There were no riots, such as the infamous alcohol-fueled debacle that rocked the community back in 1984. There were no deaths, like the Purdue freshman who stumbled into a room housing electrical transformers and electrocuted himself in 2007. Or the 24-year-old woman, just graduated from Purdue, who got behind the wheel of her car, drunk at nearly three times the legal limit, and plunged to her death in the Wabash River last May.

"We have accidents waiting to happen. So you just cross your fingers that they won't."

MITCH DANIELS,
Purdue University president

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK

You can find all the content from this section, plus more photos, video and stories, at jconline.com/exhale.

In fact, in the near-campus neighborhoods where beleaguered homeowners regularly brace for an assault of alcohol-fueled litter, noise and vandalism, the storm passed without much damage at all. And West Lafayette officials pronounced their weekly effort to safely contain the mayhem a success.

Another big football weekend, another Breakfast Club — and another bullet dodged.

Not that Purdue President Mitch Daniels is feeling particularly relieved.

"We have accidents waiting to happen," Daniels acknowledged. "So you just cross your fingers that they won't."

College = Drinking. It's a simple equation, and one that most everyone takes for granted. College students are going to drink and party and get wasted. It's been going on at every campus, in every college town, since, well, forever.

In West Lafayette, the habits are so ingrained that a complete Football Saturday ritual evolved — the Breakfast Club. Thousands of students dress up in costumes and crawl the bars on Saturday morning to drink up before the game.

The city is so inured to the bacchanal that municipal workers actually put up barricades along State Street to restrict vehicle traffic and channel the drunken students overflowing the sidewalks.

The police intentionally scale back their arrests for public intoxication, reasoning that a "zero tolerance" crackdown would only drive students to drink covertly, in uncontrolled environments.

Local restaurants, liquor stores and other businesses count on the regular boost in business to pump up their bottom lines.

But should it really be this way?

From the night of Thursday, Sept. 26, through the morning hours of Sunday, Sept. 29 — homecoming weekend, when Purdue played host to Northern Illinois — a team of 20 Journal & Courier reporters and photographers fanned out across campus and adjacent West Lafayette neighborhoods to document what a typical drunken weekend looks like.

We rode with police, visited bars, tailgated with alumni. We walked into house parties, fraternities and sororities, stood watch with homeowners, sat down with municipal and university officials. We talked with the family members of students who have died in alcohol-related tragedies.

What we found was a community grappling with a culture of drinking that feels like everyone's responsibility but lies beyond anyone's control.

— Howard Witt/hwitt@jconline.com

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MANNING THE

Days before drinking, prep for

By Ron Wilkins
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The high-pitched whines of leaf blowers and the tinkling sounds of a beer bottle pushed to the curb by the gust of air broke the pre-dawn silence in the Village on Thursday before Purdue's homecoming weekend.

In what has become another home-game tradition, West Lafayette Street Department workers gave streets and sidewalks a thorough cleaning before setting out orange-and-white barricades along State Street.

The barriers narrow the road, slowing traffic and shielding pedestrians from cars. They are useful on Saturday mornings, when the Breakfast Club brings pregame revelers out en masse.

"We have four barricades that have been damaged. So I know they work," said Dave Downey, West Lafayette Street Department superintendent.

Whether the street barricades facilitate the drinking crowds or help to control them and keep them safe is a matter of perspective.

On a typical setup morning, four workers — on this particular day, James Heddin, Doug Pierce, Caleb Owens and

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Chris Thomas sweeps Sunday outside Brothers Bar & Grill.

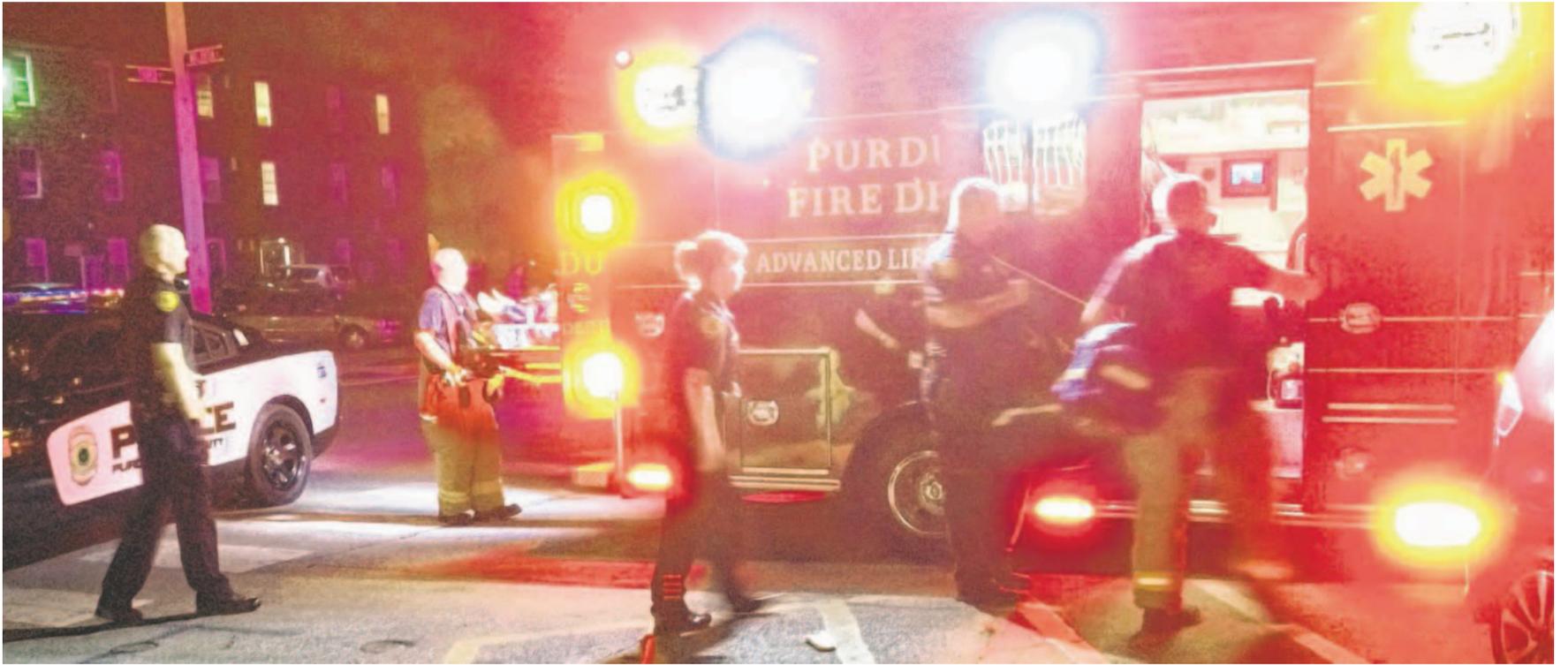


W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the effects

'SHE WAS DONE'

A Purdue pharmacy student, poisoned by alcohol, is saved in the nick of time



Purdue police Officer Ryan Edwards, left, watches paramedics transport a woman who stopped breathing Sept. 28 at a fraternity house. MIKEL LIVINGSTON/JOURNAL & COURIER

BARRICADES

home-game blast begins

Henry Bell — arrive at the street department about 3:30 a.m. and cart the street sweeper and two small skid loaders to the Village, where work begins in earnest about 4 a.m.

Each employee gets four hours of overtime for setup and another four hours for tearing down on Sunday. At an average standard wage of \$20 an hour, and given time-and-a-half for overtime, that's an additional \$240 for each crew member.

Setup on Sept. 26 was more pleasant than it was for the Notre Dame game two weeks earlier, when it was cold and rainy.

"When it's raining," Downey said, "you get soaked right down to the bone, and the temperature is right around 30 or 40 (degrees)."

While the weather might make the task different for each home game, some things are consistent.

"Every week we do this, we usually find somebody's been sick and relieved themselves in the alley," said Heddin, standing at the opening of Gum Ball Alley. "That's probably the worst thing we have to deal with."

The work of blowing litter from sidewalks and gutters, sweeping and vacuuming the street, then lifting and lowering barricades in place creates a racket.

"It wakes the neighborhood up," Downey admitted. "It can't be any worse than the bars being open."

Even with all the noise, their work is the calm before the weekend storm of every home football game.

Despite the early mornings and the unpleasantness of washing vomit from sidewalks and alleys, Heddin said the weekend drinking and revelry by Purdue University students doesn't keep him up at night.

"I don't think there's that big of a problem," he said. "You know, they're going to drink. It's a college campus. Personally, I've never had a problem out here. Actually, it's good entertainment for us. We get to watch them sometimes when we come in early."

SAFETY FIRST

It takes some work to keep pedestrians safe on the roads near campus. See how the street department does it at jconline.com/exhale.

By Mikel Livingston / mlivingston@jconline.com

As his patrol car clock ticked just past 1:30 a.m. Saturday, Purdue police Officer Ryan Edwards pronounced the night uneventful so far. / A few pullovers for broken license plate lights. A quartet of students sharing a cigar and some bottles of vodka and lemonade near the stadium. Others skateboarding along a dark street.

In other words, a typical Friday night/Saturday morning for Edwards, a self-described night owl who enjoys the unpredictability of his 12-hour shifts.

Then, at 1:41 a.m., a 911 call came in from 302 Waldron St., the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity house. The code was for alcohol poisoning.

Such a report often can be a misnomer, Edwards said as he quickly aimed his cruiser toward Waldron.

"Typically, it means just a very drunk person," Edwards said. But because alcohol poisoning is potentially lethal, he'll waste no time.

Edwards knows most fraternities by name, not by address, so as he zeroed in on the house his eyes darted, looking for house numbers. An ambulance arrived first, and Edwards pulled up behind it.

Edwards didn't know it yet, but the worst was about to happen.

A fraternity member stood on the porch, ready to show emergency responders inside. He was the one who made the 911 call.

A 20-year-old pharmacy major had passed out into the arms of a friend who didn't even know the woman's last name. Her gag reflex was gone; she could choke her own vomit.

Following a pair of paramedics, Edwards entered the house. Their footsteps were loud over the wood flooring, amplified by the barren walls in the dining room.

The woman sat, slumped, at a long wooden table, a male friend beside her, his arm around her back, propping her up.

The paramedics descended on the woman. "What's your name?" one of them shouted at her.

There was no answer as she lapsed into unconsciousness.

The paramedics lowered the girl to the floor, sitting her upright. They couldn't lay her on her back. If she wasn't going to choke on her own vomit, they'd need gravity on their side.

Edwards' role now was to support the paramedics. He ran to grab equipment from the ambulance, then began gathering information, working to establish a timeline and determine if foul play was involved.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ALCOHOL POISONING

What to look for:

- » Person is unconscious or semiconscious and cannot be awakened.
- » Cold, moist, pale or bluish skin.
- » Slow, shallow breathing with 10 seconds or more between breaths.
- » Vomiting while "sleeping" or passed out, and not waking up after vomiting.

What you should do if you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning:

- » Get help. Call 911.
- » Do not leave the person alone. Turn the victim on his/her side to prevent choking in case of vomiting.

What you should not do:

- » Don't assume the victim will be OK sleeping it off.
- » Don't let fear about how the victim might respond tomorrow prevent you from acting and getting help.

Source: Purdue University Student Wellness Center

INDIANA'S LIFELINE LAW

In 2012, after a push by Purdue University student leaders, Indiana legislators passed the Lifeline Law, which provides immunity for the crimes of public intoxication, minor possession, minor consumption and minor transport to people who reveal themselves to law enforcement while seeking medical assistance for a person suffering from an alcohol-related health emergency. In order to receive immunity, the person must demonstrate good faith by completing all of the following:

- » Provide full name and any other relevant information requested by law enforcement officers; and
- » Remain on the scene until law enforcement and emergency medical assistance arrive.

Source: www.indianalifeline.org

A ROUTINE WEEKEND

Local emergency rooms were calm last weekend, but that isn't always the case. Read the story at jconline.com/exhale.

"Find out anything you can," a paramedic called to Edwards. "Alcohol, drugs, whatever."

Edwards stepped into the hallway, pulled out his notebook and pen and began peppering the male students with pointed questions.

He focused on the woman's friend first.

"When did you arrive?" "Where did you come from?" "How long has she been like this?"

"Probably the last hour," the friend said.

Edwards determined that the woman stopped drinking about 11:30 p.m. He was told she'd had seven to eight glasses of wine. Whether that was the truth, or how big those glasses were, Edwards couldn't know.

Edwards relayed the information to the paramedics. Two firefighters rushed in and dumped more medical equipment on the table.

The woman started vomiting again, but she did not appear to be breathing. Paramedics swept her mouth with a suction device, clearing the vomit.

Another layer had caked the front of her shirt.

Quickly, the medics guided a tube down her throat, attached the bag and started breathing for her.

In the hallway, some men sat on the stairs. Others stood, unsure what to do. They looked tired and scared.

Edwards continued with the questions. Then the police officer paused.

"That was a good call, you guys," Edwards said of their decision to call 911 for help.

One of the young men shook his head. "I've never seen someone go from that — she wasn't clammy. She was breathing fine. All of the sudden, it snapped. She seemed fine right up until ..."

The paramedics loaded the woman onto a stretcher and then rolled her toward the ambulance, which headed for St. Elizabeth East.

Edwards watched from the entryway. He continued his questioning to establish her identity; the girl had no ID. But once the woman was safely in the hands of paramedics, the police officer's job was completed.

"When we get dispatched to an alcohol poisoning, it's usually just a very drunk person," Edwards said. "This was alcohol poisoning. You could see by her color — she was done."

By Monday morning, the woman had been released from the hospital. When contacted days later, she declined to be interviewed.

W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the police

THE BLUE LINE

Officers balance arrests, safety and try to take a step back



Capt. Gary Sparger, right, and Sgt. Jason Philhower of the West Lafayette Police Department talk with a Breakfast Club participant, dressed as Harry Potter, who tripped while trying to leap over a wall. His punishment — not counting the face-down landing — was a lecture, not a citation. PHOTOS BY JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER

By Ron Wilkins / rwilkins@jconline.com

A man slouched in the shadows on the sidewalk, illuminated by light spilling from nearby café windows and a streetlight. With his chin tucked to his chest, he didn't move, oblivious to where he was or whom he was with. / "It's his 21st birthday," the man's friend yelled to West Lafayette police Sgt. Kevin Flynn, who was patrolling the Chauncey Village area about 2 a.m. Saturday. "I'm taking him right back to my apartment."

"Make sure he gets there. All right?" Flynn replied.

If that same scene had played out a decade ago, the 21-year-old drunk — and likely those with him — would have been on the way to jail for public intoxication. But the days of rounding up inebriated students for the sake of clearing the streets have given way to new police practices — and students better educated on ways to avoid a run-in with police.

"We were having massive arrests, massive parties, roving groups of kids that were just going from party to party," West Lafayette Police Chief Jason Dombkowski said. "We would have huge problems at apartment complexes."

"Back in those days in the '90s, we would have raids trying to keep the peace — a lot of injuries."

"It's just a lot different than it used to be."

After he was elected in 2007, West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis, a former Lafayette police officer and assistant police chief, insisted that officers put students' safety first.

"The issue here when students consume is safety," Dennis said. "That's sort of the mindset that we changed."

"We know, because of that age category, that they're going to drink. ... It's the natural age of experimentation. How we deal with that is exclusive to us. We feel that safety is the No. 1 priority. If a student who is of legal age consumes alcohol and is on his or her way home, we feel that it's important that they get there."

For some, however, getting home comes via a trip to the hospital for treatment and detox.

Early Sunday, police encountered a drunken 20-year-old woman lying in an apartment complex hallway in the 200 block of South River Road, her hair in a pool of vomit.

An officer asked her to sit up. She struggled to hoist herself upright but couldn't stand and could barely speak. Police called for an ambulance. After a trip to the hospital, she made it home safely, police later said.

Such calls are typical in near-campus areas, but West Lafayette police don't stop their regular patrols just to focus on

student antics. There's a city to patrol, and on home-game weekends, it means overtime for officers to cover city and near-campus calls. All totaled, the city spends about \$40,000 a year on overtime for home games, but Dennis pointed out that 90 percent of that is for traffic control.

An hour earlier, police received word of a loud party close to campus. As officers pulled up, dozens of revelers quickly vanished into the night or retreated indoors.

Flynn issued a warning citation to the party's host. It was another example in which the police could have come down hard on students but opted to leave a citation and move on.

Eye on behavior

Police generally want to avoid an arrest that might taint a student's resumé when it's time to go job hunting after graduation, Dennis said. But that doesn't mean they hand out free passes for underage drinking, disorderly conduct, vandalism or criminal behavior.

One young man who snatched his ID from an officer's hands early Sunday and tried to run away, for example, bought himself a trip to jail.

Where do officers draw the line among letting people have fun, keeping the peace and enforcing the laws?

"A lot of it is by what they're doing," West Lafayette police Sgt. Jason Philhower said as the homecoming Breakfast Club crowd started to line up at 6 a.m. outside the Neon Cactus. "If somebody is stumbling bad, (we'll) stop them and make sure they know what they're doing."

If the student is cooperative, officers will ask him to call a friend or a cab.

"It's not like the old days when you're

stumbling, you're going to get hooked up," Philhower said.

One Breakfast Club reveler sat at a table on the north side of Jake's Roadhouse, fighting to stay awake. As he started to nod off, his body slumped forward, jerking him back to semiconsciousness.

Philhower tapped him on the shoulder and asked, "Do you have a phone?"

Without saying a word, the man pulled out his phone, showed it to Philhower, then put it back in his pocket and nodded off.

Philhower tapped his shoulder again. "Call your friends," he said, raising his voice. "Have them come get you. You've had enough."

Within a minute, a buddy was there to help him get home.

Not surprisingly, police frequently

check IDs to make sure the students they are dealing with are adults.

Usually, it's a student's behavior that alerts police to a potential problem. That was the case for the Harry Potter impersonator who proved that wizards can't really fly.

Dressed in a Hogwarts school robe, the student leaped over a bench, then a low wall outside Jake's, but his foot snagged, and he landed face-down on the sidewalk. He sprang to his feet, hollering and boasting of his stunt.

Police stepped in, sat him down and sternly talked to him. Problem solved.

That's a sharp contrast to law enforcement techniques that Philhower saw when he joined the department in 1996. Students still drink, but their behavior

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]



Sgt. Jason Philhower checks on an intoxicated man outside Jake's Roadhouse.



West Lafayette police monitor Breakfast Club participants outside Brothers Bar & Grill.

AT JCONLINE.COM/EXHALE

 **Photos:** See the police in action.
 **Video:** "We don't have the capacity to hold everyone out here ... who is intoxicated, and we're not trying to do that," Capt. Gary Sparger says.

W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the police

has mellowed, too.

“When I first came on,” Philhower said, “it wasn’t unusual on a football weekend or a Grand Prix weekend, you thought it was a disaster on campus because of how out of control the parties were. Our joke was: It wasn’t Grand Prix until you found a car flipped over in the street.”

“Stuff like that doesn’t happen anymore. It seems like over the years, there’s still partying going on ... but for the most part, it’s nothing like it used to be.”

The change might be because city and Purdue officials educate students about the dangers of alcohol. During the fall arrival of students, city officials visit near-campus neighborhoods with welcome fliers, including information about how to host a party and not draw the attention of the police. (Hint: Keep the party small, quiet and mostly inside. Also, inform neighbors beforehand about the party so they don’t feel ambushed by the noise and crowds.)

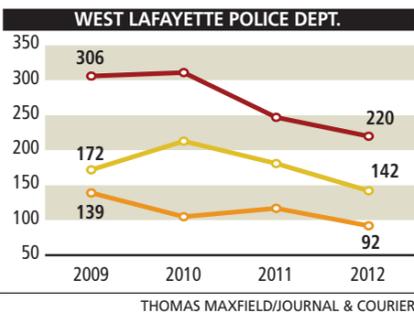
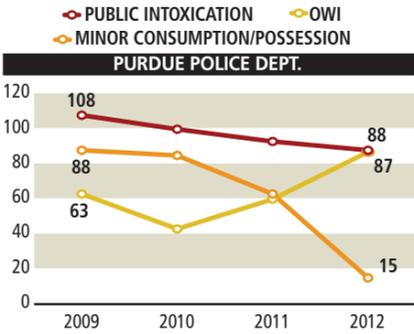
During Breakfast Club, revelers and police often seemed cordial.

“Good morning,” a young woman said cheerfully as she walked past Philhower.

“We’re friendly. We’ll chat with you,” he said.

ALCOHOL-RELATED ARRESTS

West Lafayette and Purdue police have opted for a less confrontational approach when it comes to monitoring drinking on and around campus. Combined arrests for public intoxication and possession or consumption by a minor dropped to 415 last year, 35 percent lower than the 641 arrests in 2009.



THOMAS MAXFIELD/JOURNAL & COURIER



About 8:19 a.m. Sept. 28, four women crossed State Street together, heading toward Brothers Bar & Grill. “That’s what you want to see,” West Lafayette Police Sgt. Art Choate says. “People looking out for each other.” JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER

POLICE APPROACH: NO HARM, NO FOUL

By Chris Morisse Vizza
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Staggering gait. Cups in hand. Slurred speech. Darting across streets without looking. College-age people meandering from bar to bar.

Each is a telltale sign of potential trouble that West Lafayette police officers know all too well.

Most of these obviously intoxicated pedestrians are not going to jail, and most will not face criminal charges of underage drinking.

The goal, West Lafayette Police Sgt. Art Choate said, is to keep alcohol-impaired partiers from harming themselves or others.

“We’re making sure they’re not damaging or destroying property, and that they are managing themselves,” he said.

“If they’re drinking, they’re not thinking. ... We’re here to remind them to be safe.”

Thirsty Thursday, a bar-hopping tradition, kicks off the weekend for some Purdue University students.

The initial calls for assistance during homecoming weekend involved pranks on the verge of going wrong.

At 12:05 a.m. Friday, Choate responded to a complaint of apartment occupants throwing hot dog buns at cars on Wood Street.

“There are six apartments in the building, and we can’t tell where they came from,” Choate said. “We may have to return if it

starts up again.”

From there, Choate stopped on Chauncey Street, where another officer was telling some young apartment tenants to get off a porch roof.

The sight of a second police officer prompted the revelers to crawl back inside their windows.

Choate turned down State Street to check on activities at Levee Plaza and the Neon Cactus.

At 12:20 a.m., the line of people waiting to enter the bar was relatively short and well-behaved, Choate noted.

As he slowly maneuvered his squad car through the parking lot, Choate stopped when he saw a young woman sitting on the ground.

“Are you all right?” Choate asked, knowing well that inebriated young women are some of the most vulnerable potential victims in a college community.

“Yes,” she said, as another woman and three men helped her stand.

“She’s taking me home,” the woman said, nodding toward the other female.

“I’ve got her,” added the friend.

After making eye contact, assessing the responses and studying the group, Choate gave his often-repeated advice: “Be careful.”

“That’s what you want to see,” he said later. “People looking out for each other. She has someone, a girlfriend, who is going to make sure she gets home safely.”

TWEETING THE SPECTACLE

From the night of Sept. 26 through the morning hours of Sept. 29, a team of 20 @jconline journalists fanned out across the Purdue University campus and adjacent West Lafayette neighborhoods to document what a typical drunken weekend really looks like.

Here’s some of what we found and shared on Twitter. Read more at jconline.com/exhale.



LAUREN SEDAM
@Isedam

Line for the #Cactus is super long. #Purdue students, I will never understand the draw of drinking at 7 a.m. #lostweekend Sept. 28 @ 7:15 a.m.



JOHN TERHUNE
@JohnTerhuneJC



#Purdue game starts in less than an hour. 11:06. #LostWeekend Sept. 28 @ 8:07 a.m.



RON WILKINS
@RonWilkins2

Harry Potter really can’t fly... Face plant at breakfast club. He’s OK but a little drunk #lostweekend Sept. 28 @ 8:12 a.m.

POLICE RECORDS

Online: Who was arrested during 2012 and 2013 homecoming weekends? Check out our searchable database and area crime maps at jconline.com/exhale.
Inside: You’ll find our weekly police blotter. **Page C10**



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WAITING  EXHALE

the breakfast club



It's tradition to wear costumes to Breakfast Club, an early morning drinking event at bars near campus on football weekends. "It's, like, Purdue," said Lauren Smith, a senior. "It's the best college experience. We have Halloween (multiple) times a year compared to one." JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER

DRINKING THEIR BREAKFAST

Tradition is as much about costumes as consuming

By MaryJane Slaby / mslaby@jconline.com

It was just one minute past 7 a.m. on a Saturday, but some had been awake for hours. Brightly colored Neon Cactus cups dangled from their belts, purse straps and fingertips as they stood in line outside the popular West Lafayette bar. / Robin Hood, Miley Cyrus and the Harlem Globetrotters were all there. A van full of nuns pulled up, and they joined, too.

By 7:21 a.m., the line was steadily moving as some went inside and more people headed down Chauncey Hill to join it. A group of men in jerseys joined the end of the line.

"Well," one said, "no one got arrested yet, so we're good."

At Purdue University, Breakfast Club is a home football game staple: Wake up early, dress in costume and troop to the bars surrounding campus.

It's a tradition built on outlandish costumes and early-morning drinking. Some debate if it's still as big as years past, but most say it isn't bad — just tradition.

A loyal attendee — a pink Minnie Mouse named Lauren Smith — comes every home game.

"It's, like, Purdue," the senior said. "It's the best college experience. We have Halloween (multiple) times a year compared to one."

Smith acknowledged that some may see college drinking as a problem.

"I feel like you learn to control yourself," she said. Fellow Minnie Mouse Ali Knies agreed.

"You can go get a couple (of) beers, have fun and chill. You drink and be social. You don't have to get hammered or anything," said Knies, also a Purdue senior.

Whether it's moderation or a combination of factors, Breakfast Club "may be dying a very slow death," said Ben Reiling, manager at Bar Barry Liquors on Northwestern Avenue.

"It was a lot bigger even five years ago or 10 years ago," he said. "Every year it seems to die a bit. It's gradually slowing down."

Jose Fogleman, manager at Jake's Roadhouse, won't go so far as to say Breakfast Club is dying. But he agreed that the tradition has grown

more tame.

"I've bartended here for a long time, and I've just seen a decrease in as much fighting and police officers outside as I have in the past," he said. "It seems more subdued. People aren't going out and getting more crazy."

Even so, signs of intoxication were plentiful as students went from bar to bar before the Purdue homecoming football game against Northern Illinois.

"Listen, I drink a lot," a pepper shaker said — to a nerd wearing suspenders — as she stumbled on the sidewalk near Jimmy John's.

"You clearly don't," he replied.

Across the street, a family with two small daughters — one in a stroller — looked for the University Spirit store as a runaway bride sprinted past them, the scent of alcohol trailing behind her.

"During the week, students have a lot of time to work and study hard, but it's the weekend," said a "nudist on strike" named Nick Palumbo, a junior. "It's time to have fun."

Sure, some students may "overdo it," he said. "But it's not everyone."

Fogleman agreed. "It's a lot more tame and chill out at Breakfast Club. It's still a good thing, just not as crazy as it used to be."

Outside Jake's Roadhouse, Purdue student Colleen Neary introduced her parents, Christina and Tom Neary, to the fun.

"I've never gotten up this early to drink in my life," Christina said. "I think it's excessive ... starting this early. I think some kids can handle it and some can't."

Robert and Mary McGraw of West Point watched the antics while eating breakfast outside Greyhouse Coffee & Supply Co. They said they notice the ones who've gone too far — but those are few.

"I don't think it's dangerous. We've seen some who have partied too much, but in general, it's just fun," Robert McGraw said. "It's the best free show in town."

Contributing: Mikel Livingston, Lauren Sedam and Taya Flores/Journal & Courier



The top of a vehicle gives Purdue students Will Kelly, left, and Keagan Dunville a view of a portion of the tailgating crowd before the football game. Tailgaters gather in several locations before trooping into Ross-Ade Stadium. Well, some go in. For others, the game is just enjoyable background noise. BRENT DRINKUT/JOURNAL & COURIER



West Lafayette police Officers Kevin Flynn, left, and Arthur Choate talk with a man who was cited for illegal consumption of an alcoholic beverage. MICHAEL HEINZ/J&C



Breakfast Club participants scream into a cellphone outside Jake's Roadhouse about 10:24 a.m. Sept. 28. JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER



Breakfast Club participants show their IDs at the door to Brothers, a bar in the Village, about 9:37 a.m. Sept. 28. JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER



A Breakfast Club participant staggers into State Street and gestures to drivers about 9:36 a.m. Sept. 28. The city installs barricades to discourage such pedestrian behavior. JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER



Purdue police Officer Ryan Edwards performs a breathalyzer test. MIKEL LIVINGSTON/JOURNAL & COURIER



Where and how should a crash-test dummy, uh, crash? This Breakfast Club participant, a Purdue graduate, chose face-down on tables outside Qdoba Mexican Grill on State Street hill. JUSTIN MACK/JOURNAL & COURIER

AT JCONLINE.COM/EXHALE

Video: "It's tradition," says Breakfast Clubber Samantha Tarrant.

Photos: J&C photographers capture the early morning festivities.

EyeSpy: These girls are bananas — and other costumes you don't want to miss.



Journal & Courier reporter Justin Mack attended Breakfast Club as a luchador. INSTAGRAM PHOTO PROVIDED BY RACHEL ORLOFF

THE VIEW FROM INSIDE

Breakfast Club still rocks, just not as hard

By Justin L. Mack / jmack@jconline.com

Why am I dressed like a masked luchador at 6 a.m.? / That was the question I kept asking myself while waiting in the Neon Cactus parking lot for my fellow Breakfast Clubbers — a Greek goddess, a crash-test dummy and a walking doughnut, among others — to arrive. / That and, "How am I going to pull this off?"

The last time I attempted to participate in a homecoming Breakfast Club was in October 2007, during my final fall semester as a Purdue University undergrad.

That was six years ago. I'm no washed-up alum, but somehow, at 27, the idea of waking up before sunrise to wade through a sea of drunken, costumed students didn't seem as appealing as it once did.

Believe it or not, the pep talk I needed came from 63-year-old George Schmidt and 76-year-old William Dolick, two former Boilermakers I met in the Cactus line. They've been partying at the break of dawn for decades.

Schmidt, decked out in a retro Purdue jacket and a leather football helmet, had no trouble explaining why Breakfast Club was worth the hassle.

"We love it because of the fun that everybody has, the costumes and the food!" he said, hoisting a paper tray of complimentary tater tots passed out by Neon Cactus staff.

After the Cactus, my companions and I made stops at Jake's Roadhouse, Harry's Chocolate Shop and Where Else? before finally settling at Brothers Bar & Grill for some much-needed elbow room at a pool table near the back of the bar.

Annoyingly long lines stretched outside the door of each establishment, and bouncers did their best to keep impatient patrons from forcing their way in.

Inside, the action was standard issue. Except for the costumes and the occasional sunlight peeking through the windows, nothing really distinguished it from a typical Friday or Saturday night in the Village.

A few alcohol-fueled shoving matches broke out, but most combatants were too inebriated to do any real damage or even remember why they were fighting.

A highlight of the morning occurred inside Brothers. Someone dressed as Rick Grimes from "The Walking Dead" bought about a dozen shots and stumbled away from the bar. The shots didn't remain unclaimed for long.

Outside, a few Spartans jumped on

top of the barricade and let out a brief battle cry before police officers across the street shot them a sharp glance. The soldiers dismounted, and no handcuffs were required.

The spirit of the event is alive and well, but as we bounced from bar to bar, my initial thought was that Breakfast Club isn't quite what it used to be.

When I arrived on campus in 2004, Breakfast Club was a Midwestern Mardi Gras that consumed the Village.

Listening from the window of my Young Hall dorm room on Saturday morning, I could hear students chanting "Boiler Up!" and butchering the lyrics to Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

This year, things peaked fairly early and petered out quickly. By 11 a.m., about half the crowd was filtering out of bars in search of normal clothes, a hot meal and a nap.

Two guys who put napping above all else surely became Twitter and Instagram celebrities by Saturday afternoon. Surrounded by empty beer cans, an energy drink and a laptop bag, they slept on the front walkway of an apartment off Northwestern Avenue.

Their snores drowned out the sound of camera phones capturing their collapse from every angle.

I tried to wake one to get a name and ask how their morning went. As I adjusted my wrestling mask to call out to him, he tossed and turned before smiling and nodding off again.

I doubt that he'll remember all of it, but I'm sure his morning went just as planned.

The spirit of the event is alive and well, but as we bounced from bar to bar, my initial thought was that Breakfast Club isn't quite what it used to be. ... This year, things peaked fairly early and petered out quickly.

W A I T I N G  T O E X H A L E

the parties

PARTY HOUSE

Plenty of action to be found away from the bars, too



Purdue University senior Nicholas Hoevenor, left, and alumnus Jermaine Reed play beer pong during a house party in West Lafayette. BRENT DRINKUT/JOURNAL & COURIER

By Justin L. Mack / jmack@jconline.com

At a house party on Vine Street, Purdue University alum Dominique Harris picked up a pingpong ball, closed one eye and bent his knees before launching a potential game-winning shot. / It bounced off the edge of the opposing team's last standing Solo cup. / "It's like a free throw shot. ... It's all about the follow-through," Harris shouted after releasing the ball. "Y'all got lucky on that one."

For many current and former Boiler-makers, the ideal way to spend homecoming weekend is away from the long lines and rowdy crowds that spill out of the doorways of campus bars on busy weekends.

Make no mistake: House parties can, on occasion, get just as crazy as Chauncey Hill on a Saturday night.

During homecoming last weekend, students swapped stories about an "epic" house party near Salisbury Street that attracted hundreds of students just a few weeks earlier.

"It was like (the movie) 'Project X,'" laughed senior Liz Howard. "There were so many people that I wasn't really sure who was throwing it. To whoever threw it, great party!"

On this homecoming Saturday, party-goers outside a home on Vine Street hoisted their cups and yelled at passing motorists to honk and yell "Boiler Up!" If the driver obliged, all would cheer and take a swig.

On the front lawn of a South Chauncey Avenue apartment, Joel Horowitz, a former Boilermaker back on campus for homecoming, took a smoke break.

Inside, students and alumni were having a few drinks before heading to Brothers Bar & Grill and Where Else?

After lighting a cigarette, Horowitz lifted his baseball cap and wiped sweat from his brow. He said about 20 people were talking and dancing in the living room, which prompted him to escape for some fresh air.

"We won't be out (at the bars) very long ... have to get some sleep for Breakfast Club in the morning," he said.

Howard, the senior, made brief stops at two house parties Friday night before heading home. About a dozen friends were planning on meeting at her apartment with the goal of staying up all night and rolling their celebration right into Breakfast Club on Saturday morning.

Obviously, having a few drinks was on the agenda for the night, but Howard said "getting wasted" takes a back seat to catching up with friends.

"That kind of big, crazy party can be great, but you can't do that all the time," she said.

Farther west, along the streets that

are home to Purdue fraternities and co-operatives, bass sounds reverberated and lights flashed through windows where parties were in progress. Not all were whooping it up, however.

Last school year, according to Journal & Courier archives, three fraternities were placed on probation for making alcohol available to minors.

One fraternity, Beta Theta Pi, was closed in November for the entire academic year after officials received a complaint of hazing and alcohol use. In April, its suspension, which was set to end May 4, was extended to Jan. 5, 2015.

Harris, 25, said his first campus house party experience came courtesy of a fraternity.

He didn't go to many parties in high school, so the packed, sweaty basement

dance party more than met his 18-year-old expectations.

"It was awesome. ... I'll admit, I had my first beer at a frat party my freshman year. I won't say where though," he said. "But I don't think it's that way for everyone, and it wasn't like I felt like I had to do it. So, no, I don't think that students feel like college means drinking."

"For every freshman kid like me who thought he was some bad-ass by having a beer in the basement of a frat ... there were probably a bunch of kids studying who didn't drink at all. Everyone is different."

DRY HARBORS

Frat, co-op join those who have fun without drinking

By Lauren Sedam

lsedam@jconline.com

In the dark basement, bodies clad in togas writhed beneath black lights. It was the eve of homecoming, and the air hung hot and sweaty.

Out back, guys dressed as Roman soldiers stood next to a table with red Solo cups lined up in a pyramid. Ke\$ha's "We R Who We R" poured out of the speakers.

"Tonight we're going har har-har ha-ha-hard," she sang.

It was the epitome of college, and it could have been any party anywhere. The only difference was that those soldiers were watching water pong, not beer pong — and here at Fairway Cooperative, there was no alcohol.

Though the popular image of college often centers on four years of drunken revelry, that's not always the reality. At Purdue University, some venues that are traditionally thought of as alcohol oases are going dry, and there are other options for students who want to have fun without getting drunk.

"Everyone thinks when they come to college there's alcohol everywhere and the only parties you can go to will have people passed out," said Stephen Sells, vice president of Fairway. "But we're proving that's not true."

At the house, which is rooted in Christian values, President Zach Garrett said members take a pledge that they will not drink in Tippecanoe County during college, whether 21 or not.

Fairway passes that message onto the

wider campus with its open, sober parties each semester. Though the cooperative doesn't look down on those who choose to drink, Garrett said, the idea is to show that you can have fun without alcohol.

"Our main goal is to provide a positive alternative to some of these freshmen in the dorms," he said.

Setting examples

The opportunity to set an example also drew fraternity Alpha Kappa Lambda to make a major change last semester, President Greg Muenchow said.

The house wasn't forced to do it, but after seeing the grade-point average for

▶ ANOTHER OPTION

Video: "You see a different focus on what the members are here for," says Greg Muenchow, Alpha Kappa Lambda.

the men in Purdue's Greek system lag behind that of the general student body, its members decided to become dry.

"We just wanted to try to be a positive part of the change on campus and a positive part of Greek life," Muenchow said.

The atmosphere has totally changed, social chairman Hayden Higgins said. Members who are of age can drink elsewhere, but the new policy eliminates the temptation to head down the hall to drink and put off homework, he said.

Though it isn't what many might expect from a fraternity, Muenchow said, they're already seeing results.

"It has the potential to become a very positive influence on campus and at large."

Students who aren't involved in Greek or cooperative life have options, too. The Purdue Student Union Board and Recreational Sports promote alternatives with intramurals, movie showings and events that last from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. about once a month, PSUB President Justin Felton said.

The events are aimed at redefining the college experience by promoting friendship, scholarship and having fun without alcohol, Felton said.

"There's more to college than just going out," he said.



Intended sarcastic meaning aside, the "I don't get drunk. I get awesome" T-shirt might be perfect for dry houses, including Fairway Cooperative and Alpha Kappa Lambda.

JOHN TERHUNE/
JOURNAL & COURIER

W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the football

WHAT GAME?

For some, tailgating is the attraction

By **Mikel Livingston**
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Purdue police Officer Kevin Balzer and Tippecanoe County sheriff's Deputy Donald Miller just had to laugh.

On Saturday morning, they roamed the Purdue parking lots and intramural fields in a golf cart, keeping a close eye on the tailgate crowds gathered for the game.

As they meandered down a choppy gravel road through the O Lot, a student dressed in a full-body Tigger suit wandered into the road.

"There's that kid again," Miller said. They watched as the man took exaggerated steps toward the France A. Córdoba Recreational Sports Center. "Definitely drunk," Balzer said.

Earlier that morning, they'd seen the man texting in the middle of an empty field. They could tell he'd been drinking, but he wasn't hurting himself or anyone else.

"What are you supposed to be?" Balzer called as they drove by. "I'm waiting for my tailgate group,"

Tigger replied, answering a question Balzer hadn't asked.

It's one of a handful of snapshot scenes from tailgate Saturday at Purdue. All in all, this homecoming Saturday was a pretty tame affair outside the stadium.

"We try not to ruin anybody's day," Purdue police Sgt. Song Kang said. "But when they get out of control, we have to step in."

Balzer and Miller park their cart a hundred yards from a mass of students milling about and dancing to loud music while flags fly overhead. Some students stand on the empty flatbed used to haul the speakers.

It isn't long before a student comes over to speak to the officers. Immediately, they grow suspicious of the student's intentions.

"I just came to say hi," the student said. "Everyone's having fun here. Obeying the laws of the land."

After engaging in awkward small talk, the student heads back to the party. The officers wonder what he was up to.

"Everything's got a purpose," Miller said. "Whether he had a recording



Kevin Cady cooks bacon and eggs while tailgating near Ross-Ade Stadium. Tailgating setups and menus vary widely. PHOTOS BY BRENT DRINKUT/JOURNAL & COURIER

device or whatever. Maybe he was trying to feel us out."

But the student and his friends aren't out of control, so Miller and Balzer remain outside observers. In fact, homecoming weekend may be more tame than most game days, offering an atmosphere tailored to alumni and families.

Homecoming has become a college reunion for Katherine Merkle and her friends. The Indianapolis resident and 2004 Purdue graduate met up with old friends for a few drinks before watching the Boilermakers lose to the Northern Illinois Huskies.

"We go to the game. Sometimes if it gets a little depressing, we will leave early and come back" to the tailgate, Merkle said.

For others, the game is just enjoyable background noise to the college football environment.

That's the case for Lafayette native Justin Lucas, who showed up at 8 a.m.

ready for a long day of eating and drinking.

"Usually nobody goes into the game," Lucas said. That would be different if the Boilermakers were more competitive, he added. "We just kind of sit out and party all day, drink, lunch, breakfast."

Last week, Lucas invited a Huntington Bank co-worker, Ryan Kingma, to join the festivities. It was Kingma's first experience with college game day.

"When I first got out here, it was unbelievable how many people are all involved and get together in this and have a good time before the game," Kingma said.

Contributing: Sam King/Journal & Courier.

SEQUESTERED

Football team spends night off campus before home games

By **Mike Carmin**
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As the campus comes alive the night before home games, the Boilermaker football team is safely tucked away in a downtown Lafayette hotel.

This isn't uncommon at Purdue or other Division I schools. Coaches sequester players away from the temptations of campus nightlife in an attempt to keep them focused on the next day's opponent.

That doesn't mean players aren't curious about what's going on as social activities around campus gather steam.

"A couple of guys wonder what would life be as a normal student, but I feel like every other person would think what life would be as an athlete," said fifth-year senior Kevin Pamphile, an offensive tackle. "I wouldn't change anything. I enjoy being a football player. It's fun. On game day, I feel so excited and pumped."

Pamphile and other players don't feel as though they're missing out on what else college has to offer.

"It's all business, because we have big games on Saturdays," running back Akeem Hunt said. "Nobody is worried about anything."

What happens in the team hotel the night before a home game? Very little.

The team and support personnel arrived about 7 p.m. on the Saturday before the homecoming game, after the Boiler Bridge Walk and dinner at Lafayette Country Club. Players have the option of watching a movie

in a meeting room, but most remain in their rooms. Parents, family members and girlfriends stop by and visit in the lobby.

At 9 p.m., coach Darrell Hazell holds a team meeting for about 15 minutes. Prior to the Northern Illinois game, former Boilermaker fullback and NFL player Mike Alstott delivered a speech. A snack is available — hamburgers on this night — before lights out at 10:30 p.m.

Hazell played college football at Muskingum University in Ohio. His first taste of such night-before rituals came when he was an assistant coach at Western Michigan.

"They've been doing it forever," Hazell said.

Before Hazell's arrival, players stayed in the Purdue Union Club Hotel the night before home games. Hazell moved the location to Holiday Inn City Centre.

"When you live in a dorm, you've got people walking up and down the hallways knocking on doors and trying all kinds of things," Hazell said. "You need them to get their minds right, and that's to get them away from campus."

If Hunt wasn't secured in a hotel room the night before home games, what would he do?

"I would call my mom and talk to my mom," he said with a smile.

PLAY BY PLAY

See more photos from Purdue's homecoming game against Northern Illinois at jconline.com.



Prior to the Northern Illinois game, coach Darrell Hazell sequestered the Purdue football team in a downtown Lafayette hotel, where they watched movies, visited with friends and family, heard a pep talk and, theoretically, got lots of rest — lights out at 10:30 p.m.

BOILER UP!

It's not just students who party hard at Purdue football games. Check out our photo gallery at jconline.com/exhale.

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W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the victims



Wade Steffey's parents, Dawn Adams, left, and Dale Steffey, in March 2007 before a funeral for Wade, who died in an Owen Hall electric room. "On the surface, it looks like what happened to him was a result of impaired judgment from alcohol," Adams says. "And I just can't say if that's the case or not." FILE PHOTO/JOURNAL & COURIER



Local authorities found Alicia Smidler's car submerged in the Wabash River near the U.S. 52 overpass. Police believe her blood-alcohol level contributed to the fatal accident. MICHAEL HEINZ/JOURNAL & COURIER

A FAMILY'S TORMENT

Student's electrocution death leaves family to wonder

By Lauren Sedam / lsedam@jconline.com

Dawn Adams doesn't know for sure what happened to her son, Wade Steffey. / Steffey was 19 and just entering his second semester of studying aviation technology at Purdue University when he disappeared on Jan. 13, 2007. More than two months later, after an exhaustive search, Steffey was found dead in an electrical room at Owen Hall.

Though at least one witness said Steffey had been drinking that night, it isn't clear to Adams whether her son's death was alcohol-related, as many speculated.

"When you don't know the answer and the questions are very big, it's sometimes easier to guess and let that seem to be the reality that you live with," she said from her home in Bloomington.

Some things, at least, appear to be clearer.

After Steffey's death, the university's law firm hired Rimkus Consulting Group to investigate the circumstances of the incident.

According to past Journal & Courier reports, the Rimkus inquiry found that several witnesses observed Steffey drinking in a dorm room about 8:30 p.m. Jan. 12. He was then seen walking to a party at Phi Kappa Theta fraternity, though no witnesses saw him drinking there. Early the next morning, he made several calls, including one to an Owen Hall resident, and multiple people witnessed a man, believed to be Steffey and who appeared to be intoxicated, trying to get inside.

Adams said the night was cold and rainy, and she thinks he was trying to get his coat.

Steffey apparently tried to get in Owen Hall through the electrical room, which was determined to have been left unlocked, and he was electrocuted.

The autopsy later determined that his blood-alcohol content was somewhere above 0.08 but below a lethal limit. However, representatives for Adams and Wade's father, Dale Steffey, who sued the university, called into question the validity of those results because it had taken so long to recover the body.

Adams, however, knows how it appears.

"On the surface, it looks like what happened to him was a result of impaired judgment from alcohol," she said. "And I just can't say if that's the case or not."

Still, Adams said she had talked to her son about drinking — mostly in terms of not drinking and driving. Though she didn't know Wade to be a drinker, she said, she also doesn't think he never touched the stuff.



Wade Steffey

It doesn't matter now, she said. The tragedy happened, and nothing will change the result.

"Whatever decisions were made, they were mistakes and they were human," Adams said.

She took comfort in the fact that Wade's friends were so proactive about trying to find him when he went missing. And she said she's now more sensitive not only to the dangers of drinking but to everything young people do that's more dangerous than they realize.

"Even the best of us can make fatal mistakes," Adams said. "Young people have a feeling of immortality. And it doesn't always prove true."

COMING SOON

The family of Daniel Kline, who died last month in a car accident in which police suspect alcohol was a factor, donated Daniel's organs. A full report about his family's decision, coming soon in the Journal & Courier.

"Even the best of us can make fatal mistakes.. Young people have a feeling of immortality. And it doesn't always prove true."

DAWN ADAMS

A TRAGIC ENDING

Alcohol cited in crash that cost Purdue graduate's life

By Taya Flores / tflores@jconline.com

When it came to drinking, Alicia Smidler was responsible, according to her mother, Debra Smidler of St. Joseph, Mich. / So it surprised Debra to learn that her daughter got behind the wheel of a car after a night out drinking. / "Friends told us she had called a cab and it didn't show," Debra said.

"She was probably sitting in a car, waiting. With it storming, she just made a bad decision, and that one bad decision cost her her life."

Alicia, 24, recently had graduated from Purdue University with a bachelor's degree, having studied psychology and sociology, and she had aspirations of becoming a lawyer. On the night of May 30, she was at Harry's Chocolate Shop, according to her mother. The next morning, police found Alicia's body in an overturned car submerged in the Wabash River near the U.S. 52 overpass.

She had been headed north on North River Road, police determined, drove left of center and then overcorrected before running off the right side of the road.

Her blood alcohol level was 0.21 percent, according to the police report of the accident. In Indiana, the legal limit is 0.08 percent. The Tippecanoe County Coroner's Office determined that she drowned.

Dan Towery, president of a Lafayette-based advocacy group, Drive Sober Inc., called the crash tragic.

"It's fortunate that nobody else was killed or injured," he said. "I know it had to devastate her family. She had her whole life ahead of her, and it was gone because of making a bad decision."

"It does make one wonder. I don't know who she was with, (but) with the blood-alcohol level being that high, it's a shame that somebody didn't say, 'Hey, you're in no condition to be driving.'"

Debra said she and her husband, Fred Smidler, tried to teach Alicia the basics of responsible drinking, reasoning that she would be around alcohol when she got to college. They allowed their daughter to drink alcohol at home after she graduated from high school.

"If she wanted to have a few drinks around us, that was fine," she said. "We knew she was going off to college, and we wanted her to be prepared."

"I know kids," she added. "When parents never allow them to experience things and they go off to college, they don't realize the effects of all the things."

Debra and Fred even joined Alicia during Breakfast Club before the



"Her dog, Libby, is scared to death of storms," Smidler's mom, Debra, says. "The only reason I think she got in that car was to get home to Libby. My guess is she hydroplaned and that was it."

PHOTO PROVIDED

Penn State-Purdue football game last year.

"We acted responsibly and had a few drinks," she said. "It was more (about) going through the experience. It was fun seeing the different types of costumes. We enjoyed it."

Debra doesn't blame anyone for what happened, and she doesn't want Alicia's memory to be marred by the alcohol-related accident, calling it a "fluke."

"Her dog, Libby, is scared to death of storms," she said. "The only reason I think she got in that car was to get home to Libby. My guess is she hydroplaned and that was it."

She prefers that friends and family remember her daughter's smile, determination and true Boilermaker spirit.

"It was devastating," she said. "There's a void in my life. Every day, I get up and can't believe she's gone."

"We acted responsibly and had a few drinks. It was more (about) going through the experience. It was fun seeing the different types of costumes. We enjoyed it."

DEBRA SMIDLER

W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the university

IN LOCO PARENTIS

Purdue tries to protect students from high-risk drinking

By Hayleigh Colombo

hcolombo@jconline.com

Mitch Daniels worries about the weekend.

Will the students who filled their Thursday night with Southern Comfort and lime shots at the Neon Cactus make it home safely?

Will a party at an off-campus rental house — the kind stocked with red Solo cups and pingpong balls — become the scene of an unthinkable tragedy?

He worries, because the Purdue University president knows his campus is home to thousands of students who could have been Rachael Fiege, the 19-year-old Indiana University freshman who died in August from a head injury before her first day of classes.

"It could easily have happened here," Daniels said. Fiege fell down basement stairs at a party where alcohol was present. It is unknown whether she had been drinking at the party.

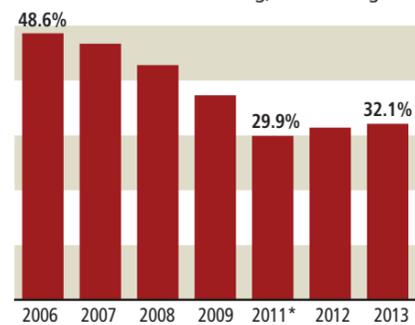
"We have accidents waiting to happen. So you just cross your fingers that they won't."

High-risk drinking on college campuses is a national problem. In Indiana, nearly one in two college students participated in binge drinking — defined as having at least four drinks in one sitting — in a two-week period, according to the 2012 Indiana College Substance Use Survey.

The scale of the issue at Purdue appears to be well below the state rate, with 32.1 percent of students engaging in binge drinking this year, according to a Purdue Wellness Survey that asked students about their drinking behaviors

PREVALANCE OF HIGH-RISK DRINKING AT PURDUE

After dropping for five consecutive years, the percentage of Purdue students participating in binge drinking, defined as having four or more drinks for females and five or more drinks for males in one sitting, is increasing.



*2010 data not provided
SOURCE: Purdue Wellness Survey, Student Wellness Office

THOMAS MAXFIELD/JOURNAL & COURIER

within the past two weeks.

The percentage is higher than it has been in recent years but much lower than in 2006, when nearly half of students surveyed said they engaged in binge drinking.

Purdue has employed a variety of resources — from state-of-the-art data visualization to marketing campaigns to national and community partnerships — in an effort to change the binge-drinking culture and try to keep students safe.

"We're really working together to create a safe and healthy environment for our students by reducing the harmful effects of alcohol," said Tammy Loew, Purdue's health advocacy coordinator. "It's not by any stretch of the imagination an easy thing to address on a college campus ... but it is a very important thing to address."

Despite their efforts, administrators know they can't stop a student from downing that last round of Patron shots or walking home from a party alone.

"We worry about this all the time because we know ... we know what can happen," Loew said. "We know about unplanned sex or sexual assault. We know about assault. We know that people get behind the wheel of the car and they drive."

'Preconceived notions'

Most students arrive on campus with their own ideas about the college drinking culture and party scene.

"It is a huge challenge," Loew said. "Advertising promotes alcohol as a great thing that everybody should be doing, and everyone who drinks is beautiful."

The alcohol culture can affect youths who don't attend Purdue but live in the vicinity. Kate Kerrigan, director of the Drug-Free Coalition of Tippecanoe County, said parents raising children close to the university should intervene early and serve as role models.

"When you have young people that are growing up who are exposed to a campus community, it is a concern," Kerrigan said. "I think community norms are established that say, 'This is what I'm expected to do when I go to college.'"

Keeping Purdue's sizable contingent of international students safe poses another challenge. Alcohol laws vary from country to country.

In many European countries, China, South America and some areas of India, the legal drinking age is 18. Loew said international students may not be aware they're not allowed inside Chauncey Hill bars until they turn 21, and they end up getting themselves into trouble.

"As our international student population continues to grow, you have students



There are stunts — such as hoisting a student after a touchdown — and there are accidents waiting to happen. "We're really working together to create a safe and healthy environment for our students by reducing the harmful effects of alcohol," said Tammy Loew, Purdue's health advocacy coordinator. BRENT DRINKUT/JOURNAL & COURIER

who are coming here with very different knowledge, ideas and behaviors about alcohol that we have to continue to be on top of," Loew said.

Safe to intervene

Despite a host of resources designed to curb high-risk drinking and related consequences, "There's a certain population we're not going to reach," Loew admits.

That's why Purdue, along with other Indiana college campuses and high schools, has zeroed in on promoting bystander intervention as a way to keep students safe.

That's the basic premise of Purdue's medical amnesty policy and the Indiana Lifeline Law, which went into effect last summer and provides amnesty to

someone who calls for medical help for an individual who has consumed too much alcohol — if the caller stays with the person until help arrives.

Daniels, who signed Indiana Lifeline into law as governor a few months before being hired at Purdue, said he was impressed that college students were the ones advocating for the bill.

"With regard to the group that won't listen to an appeal from the university, they might listen to the kind of students who argued that bill through," Daniels said. "We can't give up on minimizing the binge drinkers ... but as you get down to more and more of the hard-core (drinkers), the best possibility we may have is student to student."

Contributing: Justin Mack/
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DANIELS' DILEMMA

Purdue 'not immune' from binge-drinking issues

By Hayleigh Colombo

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Excerpts from a Journal & Courier interview with Purdue University President Mitch Daniels.

Question: Do you think binge drinking is a problem on Purdue's campus?

Answer: It's a very serious national issue, and we're not immune. We may be better, and I hope we're getting better all the time, but it's deeply concerning, and as we occasionally see, can lead to tragedy.

Q: (On Aug. 23) Indiana University freshman Rachael Fiege fell down the stairs at a house party and died from a head injury. Did that event affect Purdue?

A: I mean, if you're not really rocked by a just completely unnecessary tragedy like that, then I don't understand.

That's sure not the way you want the lesson learned. ... It could easily have happened here. We have accidents waiting to happen. So you just cross your fingers that they won't.

Q: In the past few years, there's been sort of a push for more community policing and medical amnesty. What's your take on that direction?

A: Ultimately, you want a higher and higher percentage of students to make the smart decisions so we don't have to deal with it through enforcement or better medical management of problems.

Q: In 2012, you signed the Indiana Lifeline Law. Explain the need you saw for that medical amnesty law. (The law allows underage students to summon help for drunken and endangered friends without fear of arrest or penalty.)

A: (Students) were worried enough — they had seen enough from their classmates — that they'd gone to the trouble to conceive and successfully advocate this bill. It really made an impression on me.

We can't give up on minimizing the binge drinkers and the chronic drinkers and abusers, but as you get down to more and more of the hard-core, the best possibility we may have is



Mitch Daniels JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER

student to student.

Q: What is Purdue's liability when it comes to ensuring a safe environment for students?

A: We have to accept the responsibility to do everything we can think of, still knowing that it just takes one really irresponsible evening and maybe a little bit of bad luck thrown in, and you've got just an unthinkable loss, a tragedy, on your hands.

Q: Why do you think it's taken for granted that, for many students, going to college equals binge drinking?

A: Well, for a big majority of our students it doesn't, but for too large a minority it does. Oh, it isn't new.

It's not laughed off the way it used to be. It's sort of like drunk driving. People used to laugh at it, and it seems crazy today. It's one of the most stigmatized behaviors, right?

I'm a big believer in stigma. When society makes up its mind that (something) is bad, a huge change happens. I do believe we're headed that direction with regard to binge drinking.

W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the ride home

TAXICAB CONFESSIONS

Raucous ride just another night for cabbie

By Sam King / sking@jconline.com

Jamie Walker tried to stay hopeful. But Purdue football's homecoming would not turn out to be a profitable night for the Locomotives Taxi driver. / From 11 p.m. Saturday to 4 a.m. Sunday, he picked up fares who grew up locally and some who came from as far away as Kazakhstan. Many were intoxicated, but some were not. / Scenes during his shift included extreme and outlandish, but it was just an ordinary night on the job for Walker, a six-plus-year veteran of the business. He is one of several drivers constantly on the move around campus.

"You kind of see a little bit of everything," Walker said, noting that for a homecoming Saturday, business could have been brisker.

About 1 a.m., an inebriated pedestrian at Northwestern Avenue and Lindberg

For the most part, Purdue's football weekend party scene seems mild enough.

It's patrolled by police, who arrested a man at Chauncey Hill about 3:30 a.m. and grabbed an inebriated man from the door at Where Else? and directed his friends to take him home.

VIDEO CONFSSIONAL

"Before 21, it's fun just cause you're young. After 21 is more fun because adults pay for everything," says Karson McCollum.

Road wandered into the street — right in front of a cab traveling 30 mph. He punched the taxi's passenger-side window but did not damage anything besides his own right hand.

Incidents like that are infrequent, but Walker has at times had to file police reports.

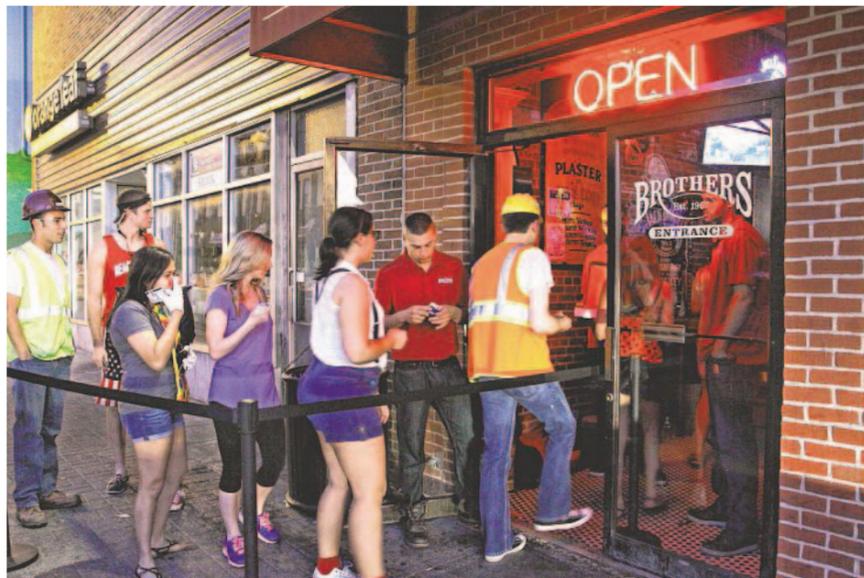
For the most part, Purdue's football weekend party scene seems mild enough.

It's patrolled by police, who arrested a man at Chauncey Hill about 3:30 a.m. and grabbed an inebriated man from the door at Where Else? and directed his friends to take him home.

A woman spilled into the parking lot and vomited.

But not everyone who climbed into Walker's cab was drunk.

One of Walker's passengers, Kahley Madison, said she woke up and made cider for a tailgate. Another, Karson McCollum, said she had friends in town to not only celebrate homecoming but also her birthday. Several were excited about the future of Purdue football after seeing freshman quarterback Danny



Outside the bars, taxi drivers such as Jamie Walker are constantly moving around campus. Not much — from costumes to vomiting — surprises him anymore. "You kind of see a little bit of everything," Walker says. JOHN TERHUNE/JOURNAL & COURIER

Etling play his first game.

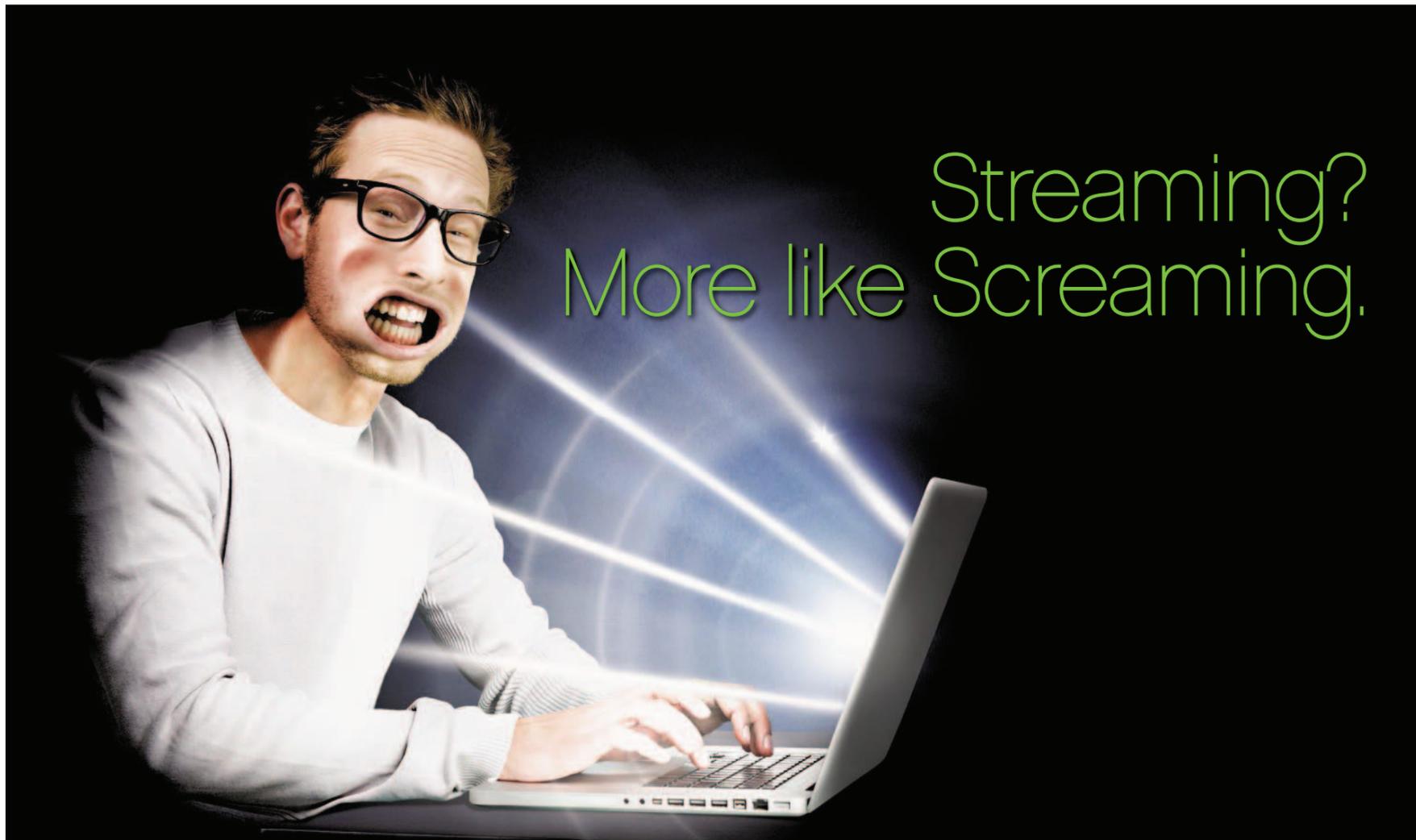
Some were more boisterous. A group of four males and a female who were picked up outside the Vault in downtown Lafayette at 11 p.m. refused to be interviewed on the record but made a promise to do so later if the same cab picked them up at the end of the night.

It did, and a brave Kyle Oxley kept true to his promise with stories of what went on inside Chances Are, a strip club in Lafayette.

Oxley and his friends, a group he proclaims as "five future millionaires," all share a sentiment that Purdue's bar scene is a mostly mild and controlled environment. For the most part, Walker agrees.

Before departing from the cab at the end of the night, Oxley offers one suggestion.

"At the end of the day, the headline should be 'Purdue students are responsible and take cabs both ways,'" he said.



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W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the neighborhoods

HOME FRONT

Near-campus homeowners seek peace with student neighbors



Rick Walker, leader of the Neighborhood Resource Team, a city-created civilian unit in West Lafayette, on Sunday morning checks out a backyard that bears the scars of a Saturday night party. The residents received a citation. MICHAEL HEINZ/JOURNAL & COURIER

By Chris Morisse Vizza
cvizza@jconline

Long-term homeowners in the New Chauncey Neighborhood are on the front lines when it comes to coexisting with Purdue University students who spend a relatively short amount of time living in rental houses.

The New Chauncey Neighborhood Association was established in 1977 in part to quell the cultural clash between owners and renters in the area east of Northwestern Avenue, north of Wiggins, west of River Road and south of Meridian Street.

Some progress has been made, homeowner Tom Kesler said.

"It is not as bad as it was when I first moved in in 1990," Kesler said. "Back then, I had a neighbor who had a party every Saturday night. The quality of life is a little better."

West Lafayette and Purdue representatives have worked with students and homeowners to increase respect and decrease property damage, which was more common 15 or 20 years ago.

But memories of vandalism and retaliation remain with residents.

"In all the years we've lived here, we had one incident," Kesler said. "We talked to a neighbor across the street about noise one afternoon, and the next morning we found the mirror on the car broken off. We continue to worry about saying anything to our neighbors after that retaliation."

Police officers encourage residents to call the city instead of approaching neighbors directly.

There are reasons to call. Loud music, late-night parties, fireworks and trash left in plain sight are the primary irritants, said Peter Bunder, 2nd District councilman.

"Now the parties move," Bunder said. "I can sit in my kitchen and watch them go past."

At the September meeting of the Campus Community Bar Retail Coalition, West Lafayette Police Chief Jason Dombkowski said the number and size of house parties this year was surprising.

On homecoming weekend — from

Sept. 27 through Sept. 29 — police responded to 264 calls for service. That was a 41 percent increase from last year's homecoming weekend, when there were 187 calls.

The volume of noise from neighborhood parties cranks up after bars close at 3 a.m., according to police and residents. During homecoming weekend, music reverberated from a rental house on Sylvia Street over to Salisbury Street and up to owner-occupied homes to the east.

At 2 a.m. Sunday, a male pedestrian on Stadium Avenue bellowed about an unfaithful girlfriend, and music pulsed from a fast-food delivery vehicle.

Trash complaints rank just behind noise. City departments and

"It is not as bad as it was when I first moved in in 1990. Back then, I had a neighbor who had a party every Saturday night. The quality of life is a little better."

TOM KESLER

West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis have been working to improve quality-of-life issues in near-campus neighborhoods.

In 2009, a year after he took office, Dennis created a Neighborhood Resource Team. The civilian unit, under the direction of the West Lafayette Police Department, consists of code enforcement, parking enforcement and animal control.

Team members work with landlords and tenants to identify and eliminate rental issues. They also make regular patrols in neighborhoods to check for compliance.

"We just simply want to see what's out there, hit it hard and let them know that (even though) it's the Sunday after a home football game, we still have expectations that you'll take care of your neighborhood and keep things clean," team leader Rick Walker said.

"There are always new faces, and there are some folks who don't know the rules, albeit, frankly, it's common sense.

"Would you treat your own home like this? No. You would clean it up."

On the Sunday morning of homecoming weekend, Walker and his team searched for obvious eyesores and cruised past the front lawns of repeat offenders.

At one home off North Salisbury Street, a circle of lawn chairs, a folding card table and a collection of empty beer cans covered the backyard.

Walker knocked on the door. After a few minutes of silence, he was greeted by a groggy male student whose eyes were adjusting to daylight as he stepped out onto the back porch.

After a short discussion and a few pleas for forgiveness, the student was cited for the mess.

His response, Walker said, was that he didn't know he couldn't leave chairs outside hours after their get-together was over.

"Our focus is residential, so we'll see a lot of trash and remnants of a party. ... We'll see couches on rooftops," he said. "People that normally won't put a couch on the roof ... when they're drinking and become intoxicated or whatever, that sort of liquid courage kicks in, so you see different things."

With the visibility of the team growing at a steady rate, residents know who to call when they see a code infraction or parking or animal control issue. As a result, the team is busier than ever.

For example, the team handled 1,081 nuisance code complaints in 2009. That number rose to 2,398 in 2012.

Many students also are now well aware that a visit from the team can result in a fine of \$50 or more.

"But we're not there just to be heavy and lay fines," Walker said. "What we do is important in terms of conveying a message and keeping people honest."

"And for the folks who live back here and who call this neighborhood their home, it's important."

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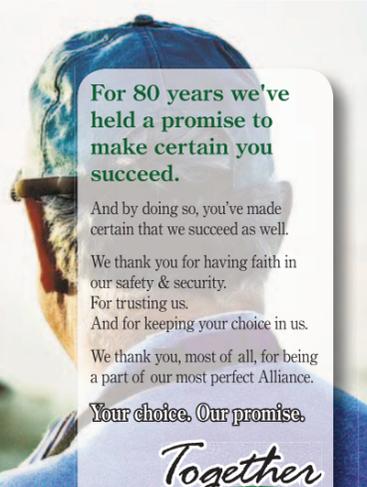
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W A I T I N G  E X H A L E

the money

\$2.45 MILLION

That's how much businesses take in on game day. How much is alcohol-fueled is debated.

By Dave Bangert / dbangert@jconline.com

It was last call for Carla Farrand. / Last call, in this case, was about 9 p.m., standing outside Five Guys Burgers and Fries in the crossover between lingering game-day foot traffic in West Lafayette's Village and the standard Saturday night action poised to start just off the Purdue University campus. / Saturday had been a long day — a brutal one for a Boilermaker homecoming, but a great one for the Schaumburg, Ill., resident and her Huskies. Northern Illinois thumped Purdue, 55-24, in a game that had ended 5½ hours earlier. Farrand said she and four friends decked themselves out in red and left home before sunrise so they could get to West Lafayette about three hours before the noon kickoff.

"We heard that we needed to come to check it out — that you guys had, let's just say, an interesting pregame," Farrand said. She figured she and her group easily dropped several hundred dollars between a mandatory Breakfast Club stop in a near-campus bar in the morning, lunch before the game, and dinner and a drink or two afterward.

"They were right," she said. "Chasing for you guys."

Simply put, there is no bigger tourist weekend in Greater Lafayette than one that includes a Purdue football Saturday.

Even a weekend featuring lesser-light opponents not named Ohio State, Notre Dame or Penn State — the kind of schools that attract enough fans to sop up most of the unused tickets at Ross-Ade Stadium — is worth about \$2.45 million before ticket revenues are factored in, according to estimates calculated by Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette, the area's visitors bureau.

Those numbers are based on some loose assumptions about how many Purdue ticket holders make hotel reservations, stick around to eat and drink, and pull into local gas stations on the way home.

"There's no other festival or event right now in our community that's doing what football does over a weekend," said Jo Wade, Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette president.

And what if, she asked rhetorically, Purdue ever scheduled six home games instead of seven?

"If you're talking about the value of it, boy, you start talking about one less game and everyone comes out of the woodwork saying we can't possibly go with that," Wade said. "Everybody and their uncle says it's their livelihood."

All that commerce packed into game day offers one clue why, even with questions hovering over the propriety of all the drinking tied to a football Saturday, the city, police, the university and local businesses work so hard to make sure a delicate balance of tolerance and enforcement is maintained near Purdue.

Follow the money

Figuring out where that \$2.45 million lands — and how much of the football Saturday economy is lubricated by alcohol — gets tougher. Larry DeBoer, an economist at Purdue and a leading analyst of state finances, said it would take a pretty sophisticated study to break that down.

DeBoer pointed instead to a University of Nebraska study done in 2005 that looked at fan spending, beyond tickets, in Lincoln during Cornhusker games. The conclusion, based on spending on food, lodging, retail, gasoline, parking and miscellaneous: Fans who lived in the Lincoln metro area spent an average of \$46.38; those coming from outside Lincoln spent \$85.29.

Those numbers are bigger than Greater Lafayette's \$2.45 million figure, which works out to \$45.15 for every one of the 54,258 people who attended Saturday's homecoming game at Ross-Ade Stadium.

How some of that cash was spread around was obvious.

Rooms at the Hilton Garden Inn in West Lafayette's Wabash Landing were long gone and selling at a two-night minimum. ("We sell out our rooms six months to a year before Purdue football weekends," said Christy Kuntz, general manager.) The wait for a counter seat at the iconic Triple XXX restaurant was about 50 people long — 10 minutes after



Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette estimates that Purdue University home football weekends bring in about \$2.45 million in revenue from hotel reservations, gasoline purchases, and alcohol and food sales at near-campus bars. MICHAEL HEINZ/JOURNAL & COURIER

kickoff. Pay Less Super Market will "try to leverage around events, and Purdue tailgating is one of those," said John Elliott, a spokesman for the grocery stores. ("Though," Elliott said, "we do better with big TV games, especially the Colts.")

On Saturday morning, two managers from Baked, a cookie bakery that opened two months ago in the Village, were drumming up clientele for their shop by passing out free samples along State Street to costumed partiers there for Breakfast Club.

"Because it's great business," said Kris Jeffries, a manager at Baked. "Everybody's out here. Everybody loves it."

Alcohol-fueled

The evidence of alcohol's economic impact on game day is no secret, either.

» As kickoff approached and Breakfast Club died down, a line outside Harry's Chocolate Shop, the oldest bar in the Village, still spilled down to the Von's shops next door.

» At Bar Barry Liquors on Northwestern Avenue, manager Ben Reiling was taking a picture of Purdue students Amanda Porter and Laura Kinser for the store's "Mt. Lushmore," a wall of shots of people in Breakfast Club or Halloween costumes. ("We're going on the board!" said Kinser, who was dressed as Oscar the Grouch.) "It's hard to say, but I'd guess we do about 1½ times (more business) on a football game Saturday,"

Reiling said.

» And maybe most telling is this from Monarch Beverage, an Indianapolis beer and wine distributor: "When you look at the bye week compared to a home game, home game revenue is up 19 percent," said Amanda Uhles, a Monarch Beverage spokeswoman. "When you compare home games to the April numbers, sales are up for home games approximately 57 percent."

In the stadium lots and in front yards in the New Chauncey neighborhood, those numbers play out.

"I didn't come here to drink, but then ... you did see the scoreboard, didn't you?" asked Charles Johnson, a Purdue fan from Evansville who met friends after the game to commiserate over a beer at a makeshift parking lot in front of a Dodge Street house.

"That's what you do," he said. "That's what we do."

Brett Highley, a 2012 graduate and former Purdue Student Government president, hit Breakfast Club Saturday morning before finding a place to watch the game on TV. The atmosphere there, including the drinking, he said, just feels normal, having lived through it during

his Purdue days.

"Most of it's convenience," Highley said. "I see on Facebook that 25 people I want to see are going to homecoming. It would be impossible to coordinate all of those people. But you go to Harry's and you knock out 15 of those people. It's where they are."

"If there was a similar event with 2,000 students and alumni, all put into one place, we'd be there."

How about the football game, itself? "Touché," Highley said. "Maybe with some wins."

Morgan Burke, Purdue's athletic director, said he gets that — how wins translate into more business in the community and potentially more attention directed at the game rather than any drinking sideshow. That was part of the calculus behind a coaching change after the 2012 season.

"Everybody likes to win," Burke said. "I think we've added to the ambiance around campus. ... If you think about our strategic plan for the city, we don't have many events in a city of this size that can bring 50,000 (or) 60,000 people together. So to me, there should be pageantry that ties the community together."

As a Northern Illinois fan, Farrand said she wasn't in a position to say things were changing at Purdue, only that she had an entertaining day — from the bar to the game and back.

"Happy to give you my money on a day like this," Farrand said. "Thanks, Purdue. Really."

BEER AND CIRCUS, REVISITED

Researcher says big-time sports, drinking still drives universities. Read the story at jconline.com/exhale.