



**the grand times  
and grim  
risks of  
student  
drinking**

**Steve Olson '78**

**half full and  
half empty**

**Photographs by Lisa Kereszi '00MFA**

ONE DAY LAST SPRING I emerged from a late dinner at Commons to find students dressed in white masks and black robes trailing across Beinecke Plaza. I'd inadvertently come to New Haven on Tap Night, when the secret societies anoint their members for the following year.

Tap Night has become a much more extravagant event since I went to Yale 30 years ago. Though it was a Thursday evening, a crowd of drunken revelers had gathered outside Wright Hall on Old Campus. A girl in a tutu ran by clutching a giant blow-up bottle of Smirnoff. A nearby cluster of students drank from what looked like a gas can. A boy dressed only in a jock strap and sneakers shivered in the cold. "They're just blowing off steam," a campus cop told me as he and I stood watching the festivities.

Outside Calhoun College two girls were standing in a chalk circle on the sidewalk. A tall blond girl who called herself Xena and was dressed all in black waved a plastic sword at anyone who walked through her "circle of death." "You've picked a hell of a night to

for her partner to drink. Amidst the hoots of their friends, the two struggled to keep from falling as the boy steadied himself against Tinkerbell's hips.

About 1 a.m. the group staggered down High Street and climbed into a moat outside Saybrook College. The new members of the group had prepared initiation poems, which one by one they loudly proclaimed. All the poems dwelt on drinking and on past or planned future sex acts with other members of the group. Xena had lost her poem and was too drunk to compose another. Tinkerbell wordlessly trailed after Xena; her wings were still attached but mangled beyond recognition. "It's so cold," said Xena as I helped pull her from the moat.

I SUPPOSE ALL THE DRINKING I watched on Tap Night could be passed off as innocent fun. No one got hurt, at least while I was present. Some people probably weren't as drunk as they acted, and as many people were watching the antics as were drinking. In time, many of those who got plastered that evening will

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## "You've picked a hell of a night to write a story about drinking," a girl who called herself Xena told me. "We've been drinking for hours."

write a story about drinking," Xena told me. "We've been drinking for hours." Her friend Tinkerbell, wearing lime-green tights and outfitted with a pair of gossamer wings, was already glassy-eyed and vague. "I gotta pee," she said, running toward the nearby bushes.

I left Tinkerbell and Xena to watch students cavort in the fountain outside Sterling Library, but I ran into them later. I had tagged along with some students to an apartment on the fringes of campus. The place was trashed—beer cans, discarded clothing, tattered crepe paper. The boys—loud, drinks in hand—were dressed in underpants and capes, or black leather vests and black Levis. The girls wore low-cut blouses and wrap-around skirts, or tight jeans and tee shirts.

Xena and Tinkerbell were there. Tinkerbell had a dark stain down the front of her tights and her eyes were glazed and uncomprehending. But she gamely agreed to provide a male partner with a body shot. First she poured salt on her shoulder, which her partner licked from her skin. Then she lodged a shot of tequila in the waistband of her tights and bent over

probably look back on the proceedings with fondness, or at least with a slightly regretful nostalgia.

For many people, learning how to drink is part of a college education. I drank, occasionally to excess, when I went to Yale in the 1970s. So did my dad, who graduated in 1955. Drinking has a long and proud history at Yale. A glass of wine at the master's house, a flask of peppermint schnapps at a football game, a red cup at Mory's—they're all classic Yale College memories. Bladderball was still played when I went to Yale, and I fondly remember drinking screwdrivers one Saturday morning and joining an equally intoxicated crowd to flail at that absurd ball. Except for one episode at a Harvard game, I remember my college drinking as benign and, usually, enjoyable.

But now that I'm a parent rather than a student, at least some of the drinking I saw on Tap Night struck me as risky and forced, not carefree. The men in that apartment were obviously calculating their odds of getting laid. Many of the kids were going to be hung over the next morning. People drank with a wild determination, as if engaged in some sort of contest.

Lots of alcohol gets consumed on college campus-



es. According to surveys done in 1999 by Harvard's School of Public Health, 80 percent of college students drink, even though the majority of students at liberal arts colleges like Yale are below the legal drinking age. More than a quarter of college men and about ten percent of women average ten or more drinks per week. Two in five college students were flat out drunk sometime over the past two weeks.

All this drinking exerts a huge toll. Out of 8 million college students aged 18 to 24 in the United States, more than a thousand die each year because of their drinking, Boston University researchers estimated in 2002. They die from auto accidents, alcohol overdoses, drowning, falls, and asphyxiation. Five hundred thousand—one in 16—are injured, many in ways from which they will never completely recover. Six hundred thousand are hit, raped, or otherwise assaulted. More than 150,000 drop out of school in part because of their drinking; others see their grades drop and relationships suffer.

No one knows if Yale students drink more or less than the national average. A careful survey has never been done. Yale officials are not eager to divulge—or in some cases even to gather—information about the consequences or extent of drinking at Yale. The most

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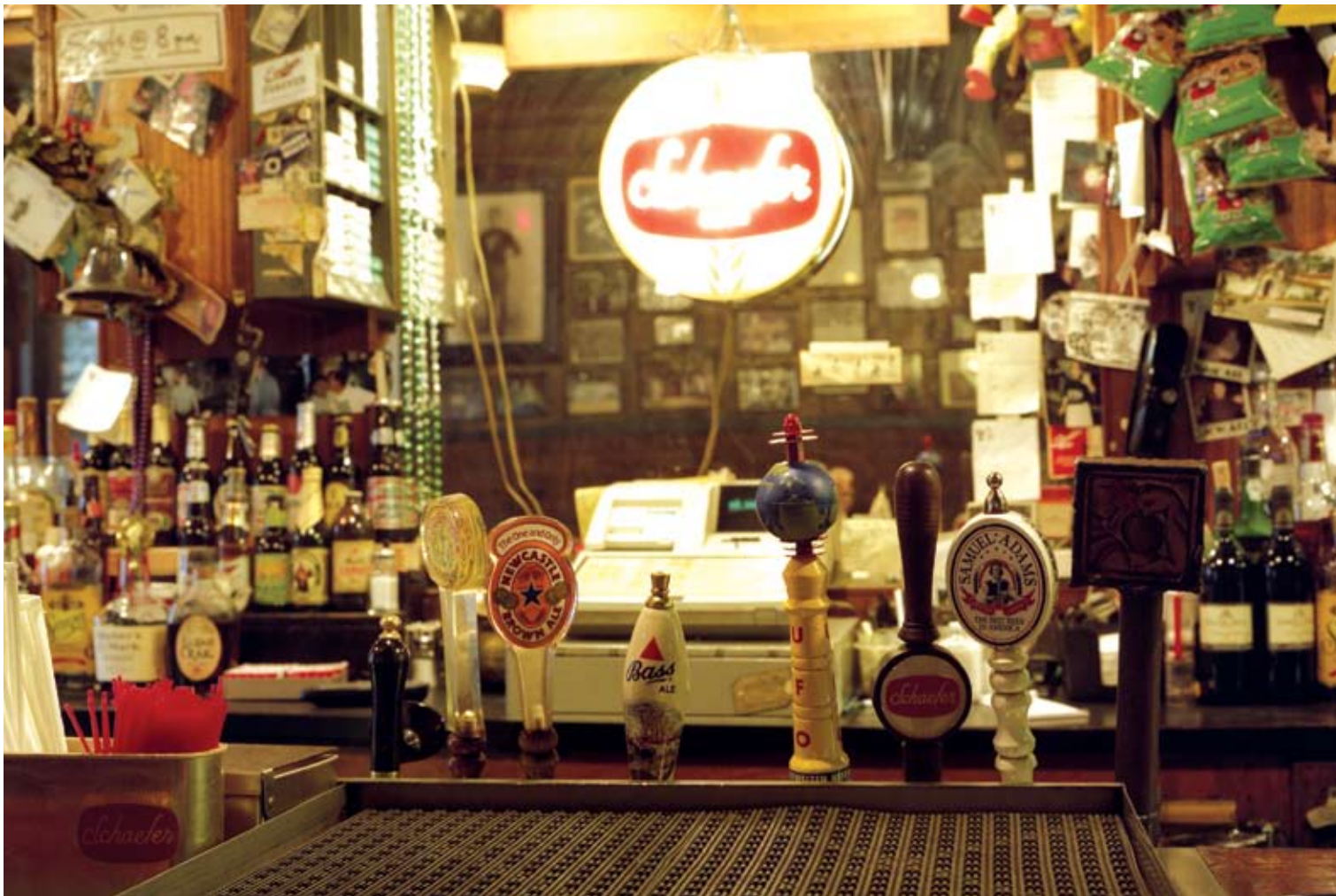
STEVE OLSON '78, a National Book Award finalist in 2002, is the author, most recently, of *Count Down*.

serious cases—rapes, other assaults, vandalism—raise privacy issues, they say. They were unwilling to provide data on less serious events, such as the number of students who show up in emergency rooms or receive counseling. Yale College dean of student affairs Betty Trachtenberg commented, "My sense is that we're no different from any other school of our kind." Harvard, which does release these data, reported that 147 undergraduates were admitted to the university hospital for drinking-related problems in the 2003–04 academic year, from an undergraduate student body about 25 percent larger than Yale's.

Very limited surveys suggest that the rate of abstinence at Yale may be somewhat higher than the national college average of 20 percent. But drinking is a prominent part of the campus scene. On almost any night of the week a party is going on in at least one of the residential colleges. While drinking on campus is officially restricted to those aged 21 and older, underage students say that they don't have trouble finding alcohol when they want to.

Once students leave college they tend to drink less. Youthful experimentation has taught many of them where to draw the line, and heavy drinking gets in the way of jobs, families, and other responsibilities. But for some people, the drinking they do in college leads to a lifetime of drinking problems. More than 14 million Americans are addicted to alcohol or

The photographs in this article are of bars in New Haven and upstate New York. Photographer Lisa Kereszi '00MFA teaches undergraduate photography at the Yale School of Art and won the 2005 Baum Award for Emerging American Photographers.



**1836**  
Alpha Delta Phi, Yale's first Greek-letter social fraternity, is founded.

**1861**  
Mory's, a popular Yale drinking spot, is founded.

**1885**  
The Mory's tradition of group drinking from loving-cups begins.

suffer serious problems related to its use. More than half of Americans have a close family member who has or has had alcoholism.

My own father began drinking more and more heavily after he graduated. He was happy when he was drinking, usually. He loved to tell stories, watch television, and read cheap mysteries. He put me and my three siblings through college and never let his drinking influence his job—he was a good man. But he was absent from large portions of his children's lives, and many of the ambitions that he took with him from Yale were gradually drowned in glasses of MacNaughton's whiskey. He died quietly, eight years ago, at the age of 64, surrounded by his family and friends in the living room of our Washington State home, his liver a sodden mass of functionless pulp.

IN THE BASEMENT of the psychology building on Hillhouse Avenue, down a grungy corridor and behind two locked doors, is a strange sight. It's a bar, with stemware hanging from a brass rack, two neon beer signs in the windows, televisions in each corner. Everything about it seems authentic—except for the smell. It's too clean. It doesn't have that sickly sweet odor of spilled beer, cigarette smoke, and vomit that any bar hound would instantly recognize.

Students and townies come here to get plastered, for \$12 an hour. The drinks are free and strong,

served in tall clear glasses, with the alcohol carefully measured to be incapacitating. This is one of a handful of laboratory-bars scattered throughout the country, most of them in campus psych buildings. This one is overseen by William Corbin, an assistant professor of psychology at Yale.

Yale has for decades been a leader of alcohol research in the United States. Currently, Godfrey Pearlson, in the medical school, probes the brain activation patterns of intoxicated people in driving simulators. Sherry McKee, at the nicotine and tobacco research center, studies why drinkers so often smoke. Other Yale researchers are looking at personality disorders in heavy drinkers, prevention of alcohol-related injuries, and the genetics of addiction.

But Corbin's research intrigued me in part because it's so immediately familiar. "I'm trying to do research that is closer to the real world," he says. The idea is to make the setting as realistic as possible. People make different choices in a bar from when they're in a laboratory. And a drug can have different effects in different places. Heroin addicts can overdose on the same amount of the drug they've taken previously when they are in an unusual setting.

Corbin can't say much about what actually happens in his experiments, because he doesn't want to reveal his intentions to potential research subjects. But the broad objective he cites in his research papers

is to understand why people who are drinking make the decisions they do. For example, one prominent theme of his work is how a person responds subjectively to alcohol. Psychologists used to hypothesize that people drank to relieve tension, but any self-reflecting drinker knows that it's much more complicated than that. We drink out of habit, for "liquid courage," to get a buzz on, because it's expected, to experiment, or because we're thirsty. We drink for reasons we can barely fathom ourselves.

Corbin is an expert at probing the tremulous muddle of thoughts that passes through your head when you're deciding whether to accept another drink. Do I feel pumped up or mellow ("stimulated" or "sedated")? How badly am I slurring my words? Am I impressing or alienating the person next to me? Who can I get to drive if I accept this drink? In Corbin's bar, the research assistants serving the drinks can ask patrons what they're thinking and feeling as their blood-alcohol levels rise and fall. Corbin can then compare the behavior of drinkers with their

"If we assume that teenagers and young adults drink for the effect, which they probably do, and if it takes them more alcohol to get the effect they want, then they're probably going to drink more per occasion," Schuckit says. "And if they drink more per occasion, they're probably going to hang out with people who drink more per occasion, and their bodies are probably going to develop a tolerance to alcohol. So before long they're in a vicious cycle." According to Schuckit's research, someone who can drink a lot without obvious effect is at least twice as likely to become an alcoholic as someone who gets drunk right away.

Social factors mediate the biological factors in complex ways, Corbin and Schuckit point out. After a while, people tend to associate certain places and feelings with alcohol. In fact, social expectations can be so strong that they affect biological processes, in that people can begin to crave alcohol simply when they walk into a bar. "People begin to act differently even before they begin drinking," says Corbin.

Like all good science, the research generates as

## For some people, even the thought of alcohol can generate a knee-quaking compulsion to drink.

thoughts and feelings, looking for patterns.

For example, Corbin has found that many people feel quite differently when their blood alcohol concentration is rising rather than falling (researchers refer to these as the "limbs" of intoxication). On the rising limb, most people feel stimulated, high, energized. On the falling limb, they feel sedated and heavy. Some people may keep packing away drinks just to hold onto that good feeling as long as possible.

Genetic factors influence how people feel when they're drinking. People with a family history of alcoholism appear to be especially stimulated when they start drinking and to feel less of a sedative effect as their blood-alcohol levels fall, says Corbin. The heightened stimulation is a risk factor for alcoholism. "Alcohol researchers historically have focused on the sedative effects, because of the tension-reduction model," he says. "But in a social context, people are more likely to drink for the stimulating effects."

How well people can hold their alcohol turns out to be another important risk factor for alcoholism, according to Marc Schuckit, a prominent alcohol researcher at the University of California-San Diego.

many questions as answers. For example, at what point does a positive response to alcohol edge into addiction? Other researchers have shown that heavy drinking can cause long-term changes in the chemistry of the brain. Alcohol affects the activity of opioid neurotransmitters in the brain, which are involved in the circuits that transmit pleasure and pain between neurons. That's one reason why, for some people, even the thought of alcohol can generate a knee-quaking compulsion to drink. Many researchers believe alcohol doesn't just elicit subjective responses—over time it shapes those responses.

The genetic influences raise other questions. Research shows that alcoholism runs in families, and certain genes are clearly important. Yet no obvious pattern is emerging from the increasing wealth of data on genetic variants and alcoholism. Many people with an alcoholic parent worry endlessly about the existence of some mysterious drinking gene. They think: am I destined to follow in the path of a parent? How will my own children respond when they begin drinking? But the distribution of alcohol problems seems so arbitrary. Among the immediate

members of my family, some like to drink and some don't. Moreover, their drinking seems to relate more to events in their lives than to their taste for alcohol.

Most important, how do the pieces fit together? Why are some people able to resist the blandishments of advertising, the allure of oblivion, the siren songs of their own genes while others eagerly drink whenever they can? These questions don't have good answers—at least not yet. But alcohol researchers are trying to determine who drinks and why; administrators are experimenting with policies to reduce the toll from drinking; and physicians are testing drugs that may reduce the craving for alcohol. Many of them are focusing on a group that has a special relationship with alcohol: college students.

IN 1947 THE DIRECTOR of the Center for Alcohol Studies at Yale, sociologist Selden Bacon, hired a young PhD named Robert Straus. "It was a great opportunity to get a start on a research career," says Straus, now 82 and retired from a long and productive

career spent largely at the University of Kentucky.

In 1949 and 1950—right before my father entered Yale—Straus and Bacon conducted a survey on the drinking habits of 17,000 students on 27 campuses. They entered the replies on punchcards and analyzed them with an IBM counter-sorter. "We ran that sorter 12 hours a day for a year," Straus says.

It was the first national survey on drinking habits—one of the first on any topic. Newspapers skewered Straus and Bacon. A nationally syndicated columnist wrote: "I can tell you now why college boys drink. They drink because it is fun. Or else they think it's fun. Or else they drink because the other guys do. . . . Yale, for some odd reason (maybe they haven't got enough work to do in New Haven), would like to amass a flock of statistics."

Straus and Bacon's survey became a landmark of social science research; more than 50 years later, it is still cited in the research literature. It portrays a more genteel drinking world than today's. People started drinking at older ages, and their exposure to



Left, a Mory's cup; right, the Tang beer-chugging contest.



#### Laying down the law

Alcohol has moved in and out of Yale rulebooks over the years, reflecting fluctuating national mores. During most of the 1700s, for instance, the college laws forbade tavern visits; but no mention of alcohol appears in the late 1800s through early 1900s or in the 1970s. At right are selections from the college rules, with dates of first appearance.

**1722** "If any student go into any tavern . . . he shall be obliged to confess his fault and be admonished and for ye second offense of ye same kind be Degraded and for ye third be expelled."

**1745** "If any Scholar Shall . . . bring any . . . Strong Liquor into College . . . he shall for the first Offence be Fined Two Shillings and Sixpence, or be admonished; and for

the Second Offence be fined Five Shillings and be Degraded; and for the Third Offence be Expelled; and if any Scholar Shall Play at Swords, Files or Cudgels, he Shall be Fined not Exceeding One Shilling."

**1759** "A certain barkeeper, appointed by the President and Fellows, may have the exclusive right of selling rum, wine, or any other intoxicating beverage to

undergraduates. . . . And permission may not be granted for more than one pint, barring any pressing emergency."

**1822** "No student shall be present at any convivial meeting . . . in which wine or other inebriating liquors, are or may be introduced."

**1925** "Possession or use of intoxicating liquors in the

college buildings is subject to severe penalty."

**1964** "The bringing of kegs into any university dormitory is prohibited."

**1982** The college Regulations on Alcoholic Beverages are introduced. Provisions today include rules on bar lighting, serving students, and alcohol strength at social functions.

alcohol usually occurred in their homes. They drank beer and wine in restaurants and bars, spirits in night clubs. Today, says Straus, many kids begin drinking in middle school—or even in sixth grade—and their initial drinking usually occurs outside the home.

Only 17 percent of men and 6 percent of women drank more than once a week in the late 1940s; today, says Indiana University's Ruth Engs, more than 20 percent of all students do. About a quarter of college students did not drink at all then, compared with 20 percent today. But 40 percent of women abstained back then, whereas the 20 percent abstinence rate is now the same for women and men, and women drink more heavily now than they did then. One "striking" difference between the 1940s and today, says Straus, is that "women have caught up with men."

But the most important change, Straus says, involves the reasons people give for drinking. In his study, only 1 percent of women and 16 percent of men said that a reason for drinking was "to get drunk." Now more than a third of college students identify intoxication as their goal. "Today many people drink to get drunk," says Straus. "That's a big change."

TODAY "DRINKING TO GET DRUNK" is often called "binge drinking," but that term is controversial. Researchers at Harvard coined it in 1993 to describe the consumption of five drinks in a row by a male or

four drinks in a row by a woman. Other researchers and language purists immediately objected. "Binge," they said, implies a multiday drinking spree—what most people would call a bender. But it was a canny choice. The consumption of that much alcohol in a short period is going to produce intoxication in all but the most inured drinkers. The word "binge" makes that point in a memorable way.

It's hard to tell how new binge drinking is. The questions on surveys are different, and successive generations are more or less willing to fess up to researchers. My mom has told me that my father and his friends never drank during the week in college, but come the weekend, they drank plenty and had a good time doing it. For my father's 1955 yearbook, the senior class was asked, "On how many occasions during the past month have you taken some drinks?" About half admitted to drinking on more than ten occasions. The yearbook offered an explanation: "The reason for the high percentage of heavy drinking is that the survey was taken early in December; this makes 'last month' refer to November, which included Harvard Weekend, Princeton Weekend, and Thanksgiving vacation."

When you ask Yale students why they sometimes drink so much, their answers aren't very convincing. "We work hard, so we party hard," is one common reply, or "There isn't anything else to do here

**1920** Prohibition begins. Through the decade—spurred by prosperity and underground drinking—the number of fraternities increases from three to eight.

**April 1926** The dean-elect of Yale College testifies before a Senate subcommittee: "There is more drinking of hard liquor now than there was before Prohibition."

**June 1926** Freshmen start a drunken brawl by throwing logs and empty bottles out of their windows. Students march through the streets in their pajamas and are confronted by city police. The Class of 1926 is placed on probation.

**1930** Yale Daily News study indicates 71 percent of students drink.

on the weekends.” When informed about the risks, their responses are equally obscure. They absorb the information and they can regurgitate it on tests. But their drinking habits don’t change. “Traditional alcohol education is still a widely used approach on college campuses,” says Corbin, “but that’s one thing that research has shown does not work.”

Broader public policies, such as minimum drinking ages, alcohol taxes, and limits on availability, are more likely to affect consumption. But the effect can be counterintuitive.

When I went to Yale, the legal drinking age in Connecticut was 18. My first weekend on campus, the freshman counselors invited us to a Saturday afternoon sherry party. Dances and parties on campus routinely served alcohol, and we could go drinking in New Haven bars from our earliest weeks in school.

The problem with the 18-year-old drinking age was that it effectively killed people. As soon as states began adopting it in the early 1970s, highway fatality rates for 18- to 21-year-olds rose. Within ten years, states were raising the drinking age back to 21.

The 21-year-old drinking age creates tough problems for college administrators, says Yale College dean Peter Salovey. “From an administrative point of view, we’re unambiguous. We can’t and shouldn’t break the law. But the 21-year drinking age ties our hands in many ways with respect to opportunities to demonstrate and allow students to experience responsible and mature drinking. It forces us into a situation where we have to enforce Prohibition for the vast majority of undergraduates.”

The law does not keep Yale students from drinking, any more than Prohibition did. A walk through campus on any Friday or Saturday night reveals plenty of students with cups in their hands and many obvious places where they could refill those cups. But climb the steps to one of those parties and you’ll find almost no older people among the drinkers. The worry among administrators and researchers is that unsupervised drinking contributes to heavier and riskier consumption. Changing the legal drinking age to 21, says Straus, “gave alcohol the attraction of forbidden fruit.” According to Salovey, “If the drinking age were 18, we could create a culture of moderate social drinking rather than hidden binge drinking.”

Colleges struggle with where to draw the line. Some take a stricter approach than does Yale. Dartmouth, for example, cites many more students for underage drinking, and Dartmouth campus security records infractions and tracks problem drinkers.

A committee at Yale led by Salovey has been meet-

ing for the past year to review the college’s alcohol policies. Salovey says its report, expected in 2006, will call for some modifications but is not likely to recommend a major overhaul. “I’ve gotten the strong sense that our goals and procedures are not in need of some big fix,” he says. “Students are transported to health services or to Yale–New Haven Hospital when they are extremely intoxicated, and [later] they are required to have an appointment with the alcohol counselor. It’s a policy that maximizes the safety of our students. If we were to do something more punitive, it could have the consequence of inhibiting students from doing something for themselves or for their friends when their lives may be in danger.”

Several other provisions are in place. Incoming freshman must attend a 75-minute workshop on the connections between drinking and problems like date rape. Health Services has a full-time alcohol counselor for undergraduates and another for staff. Publications and a website provide information and a self-test for gauging the seriousness of a drinking or drug problem. Student organizations offer peer health education, and freshman counselors and college deans and masters watch for problems.

Salovey’s committee is considering some of the broader approaches advocated in recent national reports. One possibility is to create faculty apartments on Old Campus, “to reinforce a sense of civility and decorum.” The administration could work more closely with Yale fraternities that serve alcohol. Most important, says Salovey, Yale needs to try to change the culture of drinking. “A lot of students find themselves in environments where drinking is the main activity, but that’s not what they really wanted to be doing that night. We have to figure out how to create alternatives. I don’t know if it means keeping the gym open all night or creating game rooms and activity rooms. It will require us to listen to what undergraduates tell us about what their lives are like.”

ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE of campus from Corbin’s mock bar, the Connecticut Mental Health Center occupies a squat brick building surrounded by scraggly cherry trees. Middle-aged men who have come to the center to be treated for alcoholism sit outside and smoke. Haggard and sallow-skinned, they glance up at me with guilty, beaten-down expressions.

In her second-floor office, Yale psychiatry professor Stephanie O’Malley is upbeat about the prospects for treating alcoholism. Ten to twenty years ago, counseling and support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous were about the only options, she says.

For some, those options have been lifesavers, but they don’t work for everyone. Many people don’t have access to a counselor or group. Others (like my father) think that they can beat this on their own. Or they don’t want anyone to know they’re seeing a counselor, so they never go.

O’Malley works on pharmacological approaches to treatment. Earlier this year she and several colleagues published an article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on the effects of a drug called naltrexone in heavy drinkers. For some, the drug significantly reduced the number of heavy drinking episodes. “Some people didn’t find it helpful,” says O’Malley, “but others said it made all the difference in the world.”

Naltrexone is not the first drug to be used to treat alcoholism. In the 1930s, workers in rubber plants noticed that they became ill when they went drinking after work. Isolation of the compound that was causing their nausea led to the development of Antabuse, a drug that makes people sick if they

may want help limiting the amount they drink, without wanting to give up drinking altogether. More research may show whether naltrexone could help people moderate their drinking. “There’s a real need for that,” says O’Malley.

One reason people are skeptical about drug treatments, she believes, is that we still tend to view drinking as something that should be controlled through willpower. But attitudes toward alcohol are beginning to change. As people come to see alcohol abuse as a treatable disorder, the stigma associated with it will lessen. “The same thing has happened with depression. We’ve been able to offer more effective treatments, and people have seen that it’s not as if someone with depression is making bad choices. With alcohol, we’re where depression used to be.”

DURING THE MONTHS I WAS WORKING on this article, a woman driving drunk in the county next to mine killed two 16-year-old boys, a drunken argument in the parking lot of a nearby shopping center left a man

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drink. But Antabuse has not been a panacea for alcoholism. Getting heavy drinkers to take Antabuse on a regular basis is not easy, and some learn to drink right over the top of Antabuse-generated nausea.

Naltrexone works through a different mechanism. It blocks the opioid receptors in the brain, blunting the stimulating effect of alcohol. When people are less stimulated by drinking, they are less likely to drink or to drink as much. Other compounds with similar effects are being developed and tested, and as more is learned about the brain, pharmacological treatments undoubtedly will become more effective.

Using medication to treat alcohol problems has several benefits, according to O’Malley. First, drug treatments do not require a counselor, psychiatrist, or other specialist. They can be arranged by a general practitioner (though studies show that combinations of medication and counseling work best). “Many people don’t want to go to a specialty center, but they have an ongoing relationship with a health care provider,” O’Malley says.

Naltrexone and related compounds also may be especially beneficial for younger drinkers. Students

shot dead, and one of my brothers checked himself into the hospital with an acutely malfunctioning liver—the result of years of heavy drinking.

During that same period, many of my friends and family savored a cold beer on a hot day, enjoyed good conversations over glasses of wine, or had a couple of drinks to ease their worries for a few hours.

When I think about the effects drinking has had on our family, I sometimes picture alcohol as a person who has lived with us for many years. He’s a storyteller and a wit, quick with a joke or a song. He tells us not to worry so much about what’s going to happen—the important thing is to enjoy what we have right now. I like this guy alcohol, just as I’ve liked most of the alcoholics I’ve known over the years. But I know that he can be a very mean drunk.

Alcohol researchers are making progress, but they’ve taken on a very difficult task. Drinking is a complicated act. Alcohol excites and depresses. It makes people feel less like themselves and more like themselves. It gives and it takes away. Alcohol is like the mirror behind a bar. When we try to understand it, we see ourselves. [Y]

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**1953**  
The director of the Yale Center of Alcohol Studies states, “The prevalence of wild drinking in college is just a myth, and I hope we’ve succeeded in burying it forever.”

**1970**  
The lease is signed for the Graduate and Professional Student Center at Yale, home of Gryphon’s Pub.

**1973**  
Delta Kappa Epsilon, the only fraternity to survive the 1960s, closes its house on York Street.

**1984**  
Connecticut raises the drinking age to 21; off-campus fraternities begin to reappear.

**1986**  
A Yale undergraduate dies in his room of alcohol poisoning after a night of heavy drinking with friends.

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**2004**  
Harvard-Yale football game in Cambridge ends in several arrests and dozens of citations for underage drinking.

**2005**  
Yale president Richard Levin forms a university committee to review alcohol policy.

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