

# Campus staff prepare for increased alcohol use during October

Cody Loy

Cloy@unca.edu - Contributing writer

This month, many UNC Asheville students will see alcohol education-related materials in their residence halls. UNCA staff did not choose the timeframe for this initiative at random.

“Universally speaking, October is the highest month for alcohol violations across the board for all schools,” said **Derek Plumb, community director for West and South Ridge residence halls.**

UNCA set aside Oct. 22-25 as National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week in conjunction with the Boosting Alcohol Consciousness Concerning the Health of University Students Network.

“Just about every year, I can confidently say that October is the month (with) higher numbers of students getting caught underage with alcohol, students being transported to the hospital because of overindulgence or overuse of alcohol. It’s pretty much standard that we (at Residence Life) adjust our standards, that we know that October’s going to be a high-use month,” said Plumb, a Grand Rapids, Mich. native.

In October 2011, nine alcohol violations occurred on campus, compared to just one in the previous month, according to university statistics.

“Nobody really has the golden answer of why (October has the most violations). A lot of people have their assumptions or their own speculations. They’re like, ‘Well, Halloween’s in there. It’s about eight weeks or so after students have cemented into their friendships. They start to push the buttons and know what they can get away with. They start to know where all the parties are at,’” Plumb said.

During National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week, UNCA’s health and counseling center sponsors a program called, “Think Before You Drink.”

“A big purpose of ‘Think Before You Drink’ is educating people. If you’re going to (drink), at least know what a shot looks like. Know how big that is. If you’re going to go out in a group, have a plan. Know how you’re going to get there. Know how you’re going to get back. Be safe. Have a buddy, whatever it takes,” said **Barbara Galloway, counselor and substance abuse coordinator at UNCA.** “I think we have a significant enough problem that usually has to do with inexperienced drinkers who are getting themselves in trouble because they really don’t know what they’re doing.”

Sigma Nu, one of UNCA’s fraterni-

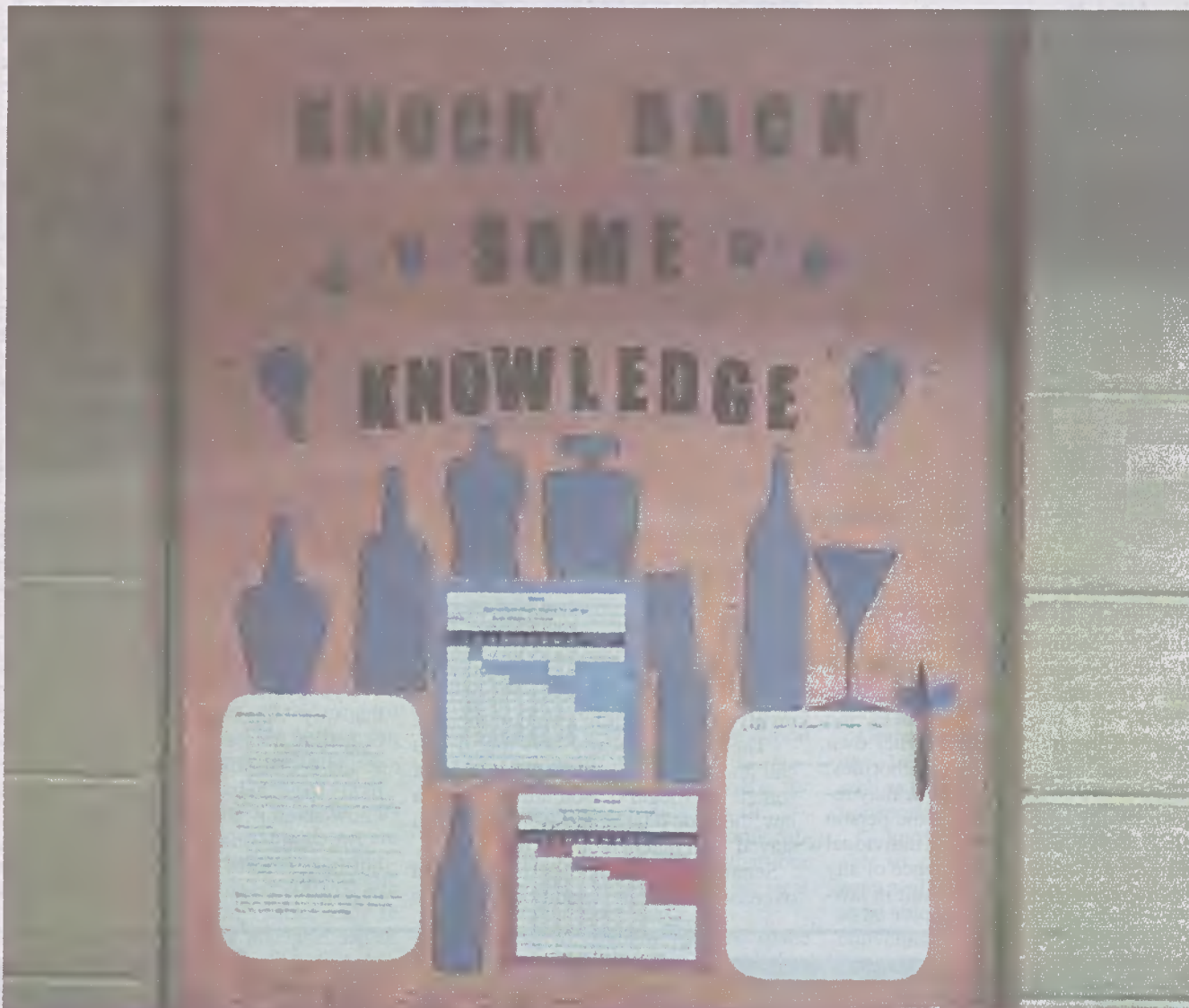


Photo by Cody Loy - Staff writer

Resident assistants react to high reports of alcohol use during the month of October with an educational poster.

“Just about every year, October is the month (with) higher numbers of students getting caught underage with alcohol, students being transported to the hospital because of overindulgence or overuse of alcohol. It’s pretty much standard that we (at Residence Life) adjust our standards.

— **Derek Plumb**  
Community director for  
South and West  
Ridge Halls

ties, seeks to keep drinkers as safe as possible, according to **Josh Owen, eminent commander of the organization.** Sigma Nu hosts an annual Halloween party open to all students.

“There are citations given out every year (at the Halloween party), because we can’t really control what other people do before they get on the bus, but once they’re there, they’re safe, and if anything does happen, we definitely have the corrective plans in place to deal with that. If someone gets sick at a party, then they’re immediately taken to a hospital,” Owen, 21, said.

According to Owen, these guidelines and policies, including having police officers on the shuttles to ensure nobody becomes ill, are in place to prevent alcohol abuse.

“The two (UNCA) fraternities couldn’t necessarily have a party together and have alcohol,” the Saxapa-

haw native said. “We can’t host an event at a tavern.”

Despite these regulations, Owen said people still overindulge.

“I’ve seen people drink too much, but I’ve never seen (that) handled badly. I’m pretty sure most people are very aware of what they’re doing. It is a dangerous situation sometimes,” Owen said.

Many students come to UNCA because of Asheville’s beer-centric culture, according to Plumb.

“I think there’s a perception of a lot of incoming freshmen of, ‘Oh, it’s Asheville,’ and so all the perceptions about Asheville get attached to being a student at UNCA, and I think that in the first few weeks, if students decide to indulge in anything illegally, they quickly find that we have a police force just like everybody else that handles things just like (they) would anywhere else,” Plumb said.