

What's Your "Poison"?

Looking in a yearbook provides a window to the past. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) produces the *Illio* to capture student life. A past *Illio* provides historical information to students today but brings back fond memories to undergraduates and graduates of that time. Articles and photographs fill the yearbooks with information of what happened in the previous year. In the 1974 *Illio*, Jane Karr recorded the Illinois Legislature's decision to lower the legal drinking age and how that impacted the UIUC campus. Karr builds ethos with the assumption that she is a student and her article has been edited before being published in the yearbook.

Karr's thesis, or claim, is that because underage students at UIUC had easy access to alcohol, the 1973 drinking age law minimally affected the campus. To support her claim, Karr interviewed with the Urbana-Champaign community. Karr viewed Urbana-Champaign "a haven for underage drinkers because of the lax enforcement," and she had no problem finding evidence of this (24). Mayor Wikoff, the mayor in 1973, supported the new law and stated that the large number of students "makes it very hard to enforce the law" (qtd. in Karr 24). He also did not want to have to "call a crackdown on underage drinking" (Karr 24). Her interview with the mayor supports the part of her thesis that claims that UIUC students had easy access.

To show the minimum affect the law had, Karr interviewed bars and undergraduates who were previously underage. Pete Stazzone bartended at Second Chance and said that people who have been down here for a year know that "nobody gets carded" because the bars do not care (qtd. in Karr 25). The manager of Round Robin, Kevin Sanderson, thought that the new law did not bring a significant increase in business. Undergraduates did not celebrate their new freedom to drink legally. Tim Collins told Karr that he did not "feel there has been a drinking age in Champaign" (qtd. in Karr 25).

Karr uses subtle language that makes it hard to find a warrant in her article. Overall, Karr seems to support the new law with an annoyed tone. Karr values her right as a legal adult to be able to make the decision to drink alcohol. She wants the audience, students and alumni, to join her in the celebration of the law. Karr's warrant is supported with backing. Karr uses words like *finally* and *long-awaited* to support her warrant.

Works Cited

Karr, Jane. "No More Kiddie Cocktails." *Illio*. Ed. Joe Urschel. Vol. 81. Urbana-Champaign: Illini Publishing Co., 1974. 24-25. Print.