

OHIO GOVERNMENT

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Guns in bars mixing well

Initial hubbub turns to ho-hum one year later

By Alan Johnson
The Columbus Dispatch

A year after the sound and fury over a state law allowing concealed guns in bars and restaurants, there has been silence.

Almost no incidents have been reported involving concealed-carry permit holders, and there has been no spike in violence as predicted by some opponents concerned about the volatile mix of alcohol and guns.

The impact is difficult to assess, however, because law-enforcement and state agencies do not formally track violations involving guns in bars. But those on both sides of the issue agree all is calm, so far.

"There was a lot of hubbub about it on both sides ... then almost immediately it just got quiet," said Scott Heimlich, owner of Barcelona Restaurant in Columbus and president of the Central Ohio Restaurant Association. "In restaurants, we have not had any incidents."

Heimlich has a sign posted in his restaurant forbidding people from carrying guns on the premises, but he has received little feedback from customers one way or another.

Jim Irvine, chairman of Buckeye Firearms Association, says the lack of incidents in the past 12 months is vindication to him that "they're wrong, and we're right, again."

"We're talking about saving people's lives and being able to protect our families," he said. "There's been a bunch of shootings in bars, which is not uncommon. But it's not concealed-carry licensed owners."

Irvine said the number of concealed-carry permit holders in Ohio continues to go up. He attributes that in part to the passage of the guns-in-bars law. "I would guess some people got a license and began carrying regularly because they can carry in a restaurant now," he said.

Senate Bill 239, passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Gov. John Kasich last year, took effect Sept. 30, 2011. It allows Ohioans with concealed-carry gun permits to bring their firearms into establishments that serve alcohol — as long as they are not themselves drinking and the facility doesn't forbid firearms. Lawmakers held weeks of contentious hearings at which concealed-carry supporters sparred verbally with anti-gun groups and law-enforcement officials.

One notable case occurred last fall in Deer Park about two weeks after the new law took effect. Chad O'Reilly, 25, a concealed-carry permit holder, was arrested after threatening to kill another customer with his gun in a bar. In addition to other charges, police tacked on illegal possession of a firearm in a liquor establishment because O'Reilly had been drinking while he had a gun in the bar, a violation of the new law.

Sgt. Rich Weiner, a spokesman for Columbus police, said he is not aware of any incidents in the city involving concealed-carry permit holders in bars and restaurants in the past year. "We haven't seen anything out of the ordinary, and that's good," he said.

Toby Hoover of the Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence agreed that the new law has had little impact.

"I don't think it tells us a whole lot," she said. "Our whole objection still remains that we're putting more guns out there in public, and most of the public are not comfortable with that decision-making."

"Easy access to a weapon is obviously going to make it more likely for incidents to happen with a weapon. I'd rather not be sitting in a restaurant next to someone who's carrying."

More Ohioans are getting the 12 hours of training and undergoing background checks required to get concealed-carry permits.

The state does not track the total number of permit holders, but firearms supporters say the statewide number is 301,000 and rising.

Linda Walker, a concealed-carry instructor certified by the National Rifle Association, said she has seen a big increase in the number of women taking firearms training. Most of her classes now have up to 50 percent women, she said.

"Over the years, we've seen a transformation in the thought process on gun ownership," Walker said. "There is an awareness that women's self-defense is very personal."

Asked whether she brings her gun into restaurants, Walker replied, "Absolutely I do."

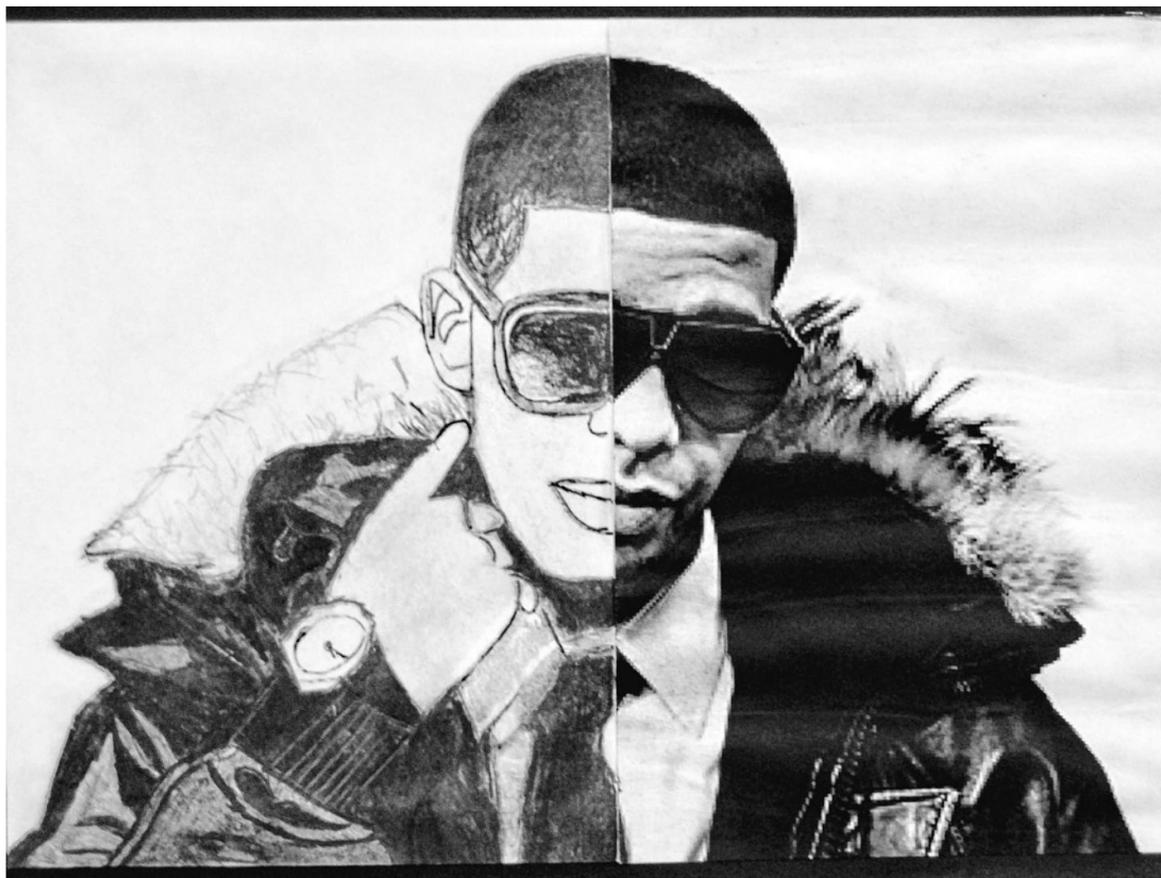


Exhibit features work of imprisoned youth

Associated Press



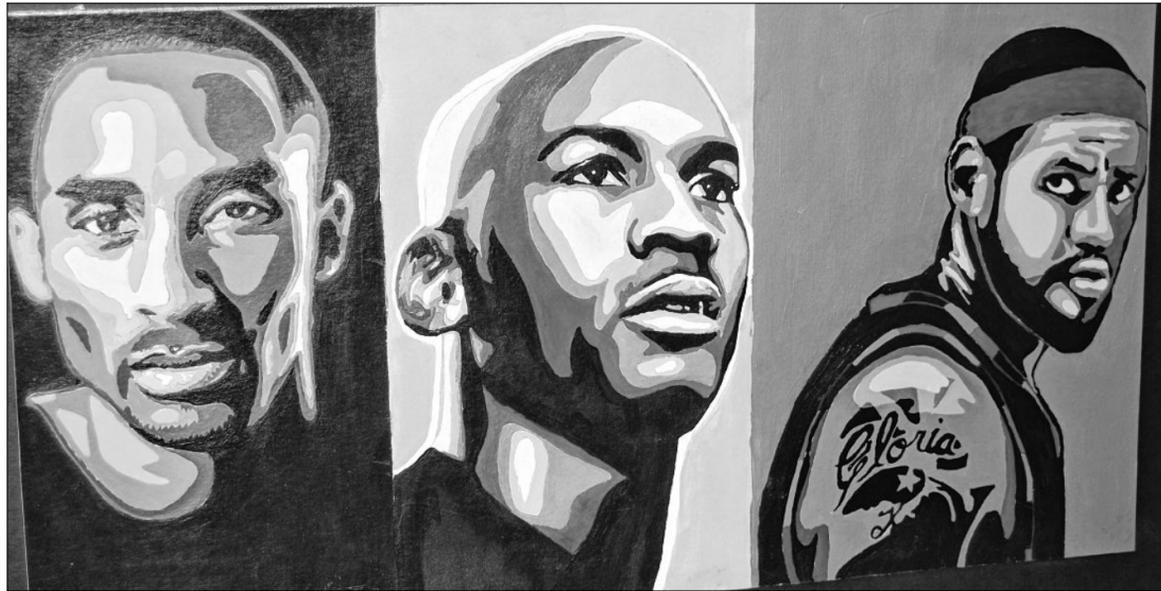
COLUMBUS — An art exhibit last week featured creations by juvenile inmates imprisoned in the state's youth detention centers.

The joint project of the Ohio Department of Youth Services and Franklin University featured 18 works, including watercolor, acrylic and pencil drawings, mixed media and small 3D pieces.

Youth Services Director Harvey Reed says providing youth with opportunities for creative expression helps connect them with values, reflect on life experiences and be inspired to live more productive lives.

Youth Services houses about 580 youths in four juvenile correctional facilities, provides parole services from five regional sites and funds and supports more than 610 direct service programs.

"Youth Speak: Artistic Voices from the Ohio Department of Youth Services" ran through Friday at Franklin University in Columbus.



Colleges seek Californians

Ohio recruiters capitalize on budget crisis out West

By Karen Farkas
The Plain Dealer

COLUMBUS — The lack of surf and year-round warmth has not deterred hundreds of California students from enrolling at Ohio State University.

This fall the Golden State passed New York as OSU's third-highest source of out-of-state students — with 729 at the main campus in Columbus. While still a fraction of the total enrollment of 50,332 students, the size of this year's California contingent is a 13 percent increase from the prior year. In 2009, 478 students from California enrolled at Ohio's largest university.

OSU and other universities across the country, especially those in Western states, are taking advantage of California's crisis in higher education caused by state budget cuts that increased costs and reduced access.

OSU, Miami University and Xavier University have actively recruited in California for years and are the only Ohio members of the Regional Admission Counselors of California, whose membership has tripled in the last three years.

"Over the last four years we have made a targeted investment and recent-

ly hired a regional recruiter in southern California," said Dolan Evanovich, vice president of strategic enrollment planning at OSU.

Miami has had its own recruiter in California since 2010, said Michael Kabbaz, associate vice president for enrollment management.

"Prior to us being in California we would send someone out for a week-and-a-half and they would make 15 high school visits and three college fairs," he said. "Our recruiter will visit more than 100 high schools and 20 college fairs."

He said the investment will take time and he is pleased that 377 applications from California students led to 44 enrolling this fall, compared to 28 in 2010.

Until recently, colleges often focused on neighboring states for nonresident enrollment.

Over time, some schools develop a following in specific areas of other states due to alumni and word-of-mouth promotion. Each commencement at Miami, for instance, includes about three dozen graduates from Fairfield County, Conn.

In addition to California, the top states for sending students to OSU are Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York and Michigan.

But as the number of high school graduates continues to decline in Ohio and other Midwest states, at an estimated 3 percent in each of the next five years, universities that seek to attract top students need to look further afield,

Evanovich said.

OSU has identified about 10 geographic markets across the country where it plans to seriously recruit students, he said. They include New Jersey, Texas, Atlanta and Charlotte. This fall 388 students enrolled from New Jersey, 362 from Texas, 186 from Georgia and 147 from North Carolina.

"We are exploring strategic investments in Texas or the Southeast," Evanovich said, referring to sending admissions counselors there or hiring recruiters. He said it has already hired recruiters in Illinois and New York City, as well as California.

Miami increased its percentage of new out-of-state students from its traditional 33 percent to 39 percent this fall, he said, Kabbaz said.

In addition to its recruiter in California, it hired one in Connecticut in 2010, one in Chicago last year and one each in northern Virginia/District of Columbia and Atlanta this summer, he said.

Until recently, California students rarely left the state. It has two large state systems and the University of California schools are very competitive, with a high caliber of students, said Evanovich.

But this fall, tuition and fees for in-state students averaged about \$13,200 at the 10 campuses the University of California system, an 18 percent increase from last year. The cost is almost double from 2008.