

Students protest drinking laws

By Susan Skorupa
College Press Service

NORMAL, IL. (CPS) -- In one of the most violent episodes yet this fall of nationwide student resistance to strict new drinking policies, as many as 1000 Illinois State University students took to the streets to the streets in a seven-hour riot last month.

The young people, mostly ISU students, flocked from campus to city hall on October 4, pelting police with rocks and breaking store and office windows, officials reported.

Other protestors staged a sit-in at a downtown theater and threw rocks at police attempting to remove them.

Traffic on a nearby highway also was disrupted by partying protestors equipped with a keg of beer, observers said.

Local and state police broke up the seven-hour disturbance with tear gas about 2:30 a.m. following three arrests and a plea to students from ISU President Lloyd Wallace to stop demonstrating. Officials reported no serious injuries.

Officials also noted new city laws governing the use of alcohol and making students get permits for parties are being enforced for the first time this fall.

"There have been reports of a number of spontaneous parties with 2000 or 3000 people who take over whole neighborhoods," explains Steve Mahrt, the city lawyer. "And there are thousands of students out at night, roaming neighborhoods, drinking beer. Occasionally, a few get drunk and vandalize property."

Similar crackdowns are occurring on other campuses this fall as civil authorities move to curb off-campus partying, and enforce new drinking regulations and laws.

At the University of Texas at El Paso, disorderly conduct charges were filed against Phi Kappa Tau fraternity President Dan Sosa when the frat's neighbors complained about a noisy party.

The fraternity, which is appealing a prior disorderly conduct conviction as well as the current charge, plans to relocate.

More frequent Southwest Missouri State University police patrols are enforcing drinking regulations with a new law allowing them to arrest students on suspicion of a misdemeanor.

Thanks to recent hikes in the minimum drinking age and new regulations designed to minimize campuses's legal liability for student behavior, milder protests have erupted at Wisconsin, North Carolina State, Indiana, St. Bonaventure

and Florida, among dozens of schools, in recent weeks.

The ISU crackdown netted over 300 violators in August and September, said Normal City Hall spokesperson Mahrt. There were only 17 in May and June.

But all the violations stemmed from the city's public possession of alcohol ordinance, not

the new mass gathering law which requires permits for public gatherings of 300 or more, Mahrt reported.

"We haven't had a single party disturbance this fall," agreed Richard Godfrey, ISU director of institutional advancement and Normal mayor.

"And the frats have had no problem with the ordinance.

It's very easy to comply with."

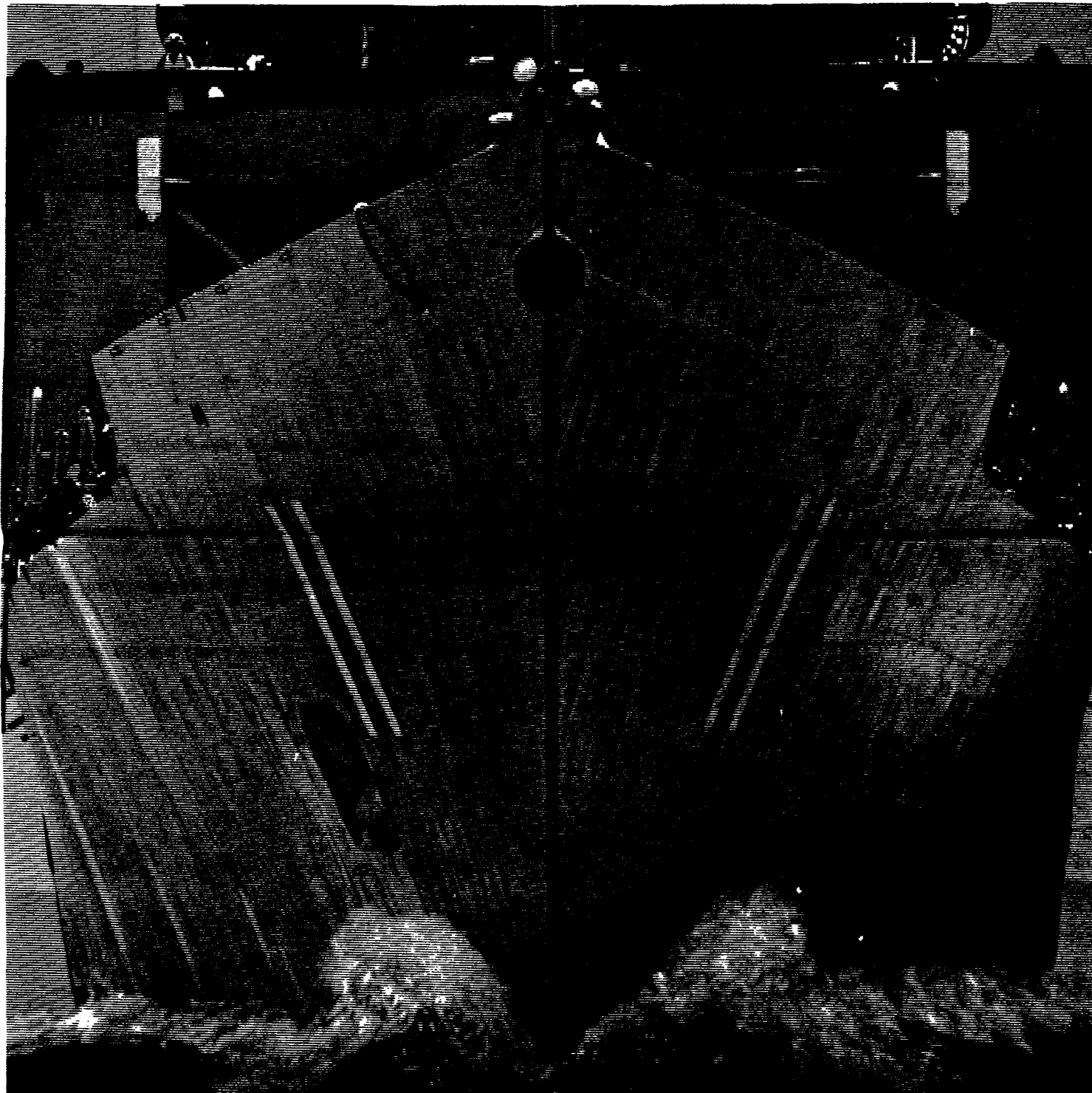
Some students questioned the ordinance's summer passage, claiming few students were on campus then, but Godfrey recalled ISU student leaders joining discussions of the measure last spring.

And the demonstration, advertised through leaflets and the campus newspaper, was not en-

dorsed by the student government, he added.

Most protestors had no idea why they were there, he maintained.

Officials are prepared for more demonstrations, but "we don't anticipate any," Godfrey said. "Some students have even suggested taking up a collection to pay for damages."



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