

# Beating the Odds



"Smoking is bad for you! Stay away from drinking! And don't even think about using drugs." These often repeated assertions aim to instill essential values into youths, and it seems like they have been taken to heart. In the past decade, smoking and substance abuse have witnessed a steady decline. Drug and alcohol-related deaths of prominent individuals unsettled the public and the rise of a technological innovation has aided smokers hoping to beat their addiction. After years of struggles, the new generation may be moving into a bright future in control of these vices.

ELTON HO Staff Writer

Dramatization



## A Drop in the Dependency

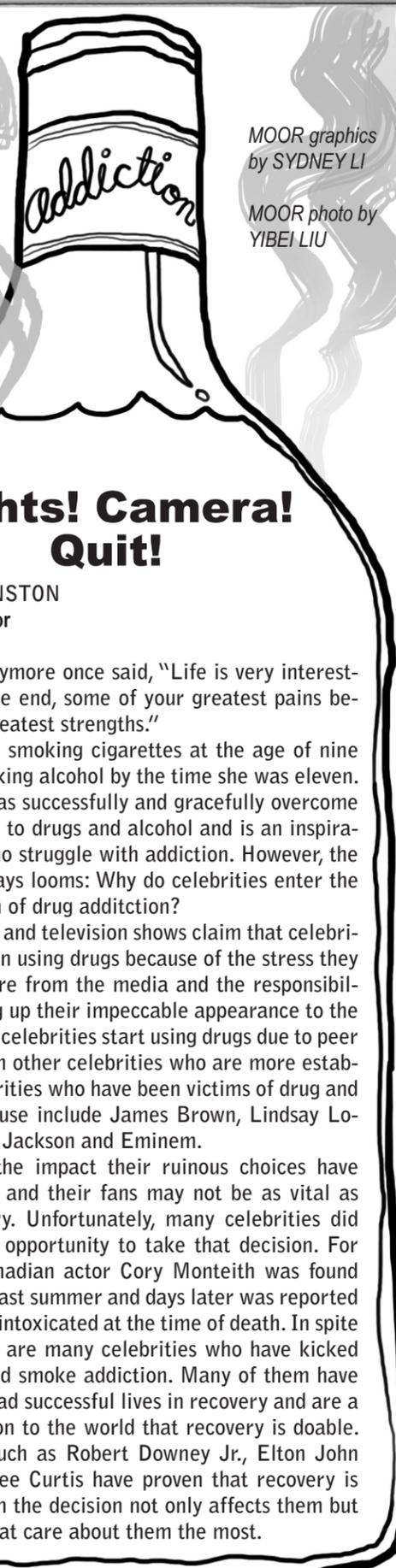
REBECCA ZENG Staff Writer

Almost every student is warned not to take drugs or smoke cigarettes. Statistics, shown through PowerPoint slides and lectures, warn us against the dangers of drug use. However, recent studies by HealthDay News claim that less than 20 percent of Americans still smoke cigarettes. This is progress, considering that in 1990, 25.5 percent of Americans were smokers. In addition, according to HealthDay, increasing tobacco prices is the most effective way to reduce smoking.

At school, students learn that smoking is a villain in the world of innocent children. Teachers and program advisors tell students that smoking will damage lungs and lead to lung cancer. According to the National Cancer Institute, cigarettes contain at least 69 chemicals that can cause cancer, as well as the other 181 harmful chemicals within tobacco smoke.

In addition, the alcohol consumption among young students has also declined. According to the Potsdam State University website, a survey showed that high school seniors who consumed alcohol at least five times within the previous two weeks have decreased from 41.2 percent in 1980 to 23.2 percent in 2010.

Approximately 5,000 youth under the age of 21 die each year from alcohol abuse, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. This is not surprising, considering the fact that alcohol consumption is the third leading cause of global disease and injury.



MOOR graphics by SYDNEY LI

MOOR photo by YIBEI LIU

## Lights! Camera! Quit!

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Features Editor

Drew Barrymore once said, "Life is very interesting [...] in the end, some of your greatest pains become your greatest strengths."

She began smoking cigarettes at the age of nine and was drinking alcohol by the time she was eleven. Barrymore has successfully and gracefully overcome her addiction to drugs and alcohol and is an inspiration to all who struggle with addiction. However, the question always looms: Why do celebrities enter the downhill path of drug addiction?

Magazines and television shows claim that celebrities engage in using drugs because of the stress they have to endure from the media and the responsibility of keeping up their impeccable appearance to the public. Some celebrities start using drugs due to peer pressure from other celebrities who are more established. Celebrities who have been victims of drug and substance abuse include James Brown, Lindsay Lohan, Michael Jackson and Eminem.

However, the impact their ruinous choices have had on them and their fans may not be as vital as their recovery. Unfortunately, many celebrities did not have the opportunity to take that decision. For example, Canadian actor Cory Monteith was found unconscious last summer and days later was reported to have been intoxicated at the time of death. In spite of this, there are many celebrities who have kicked their drug and smoke addiction. Many of them have gone on to lead successful lives in recovery and are a shining beacon to the world that recovery is doable. Celebrities such as Robert Downey Jr., Elton John and Jamie Lee Curtis have proven that recovery is possible when the decision not only affects them but the people that care about them the most.

## E-effects of E-cigarettes

E-cigarettes have recently become popular for regular smokers and teenagers. They were invented and patented by Herbert A. Gilbert in 1963 but were never sold or commercialized. Chinese pharmacist, Hon Lik, later started to sell e-cigarettes for the company Ruyan.

E-cigarettes supposedly help regular smokers quit smoking. While traditional cigarettes contain tobacco that increases heart rate and increases asthma, some liquids in the e-cigarettes contain no nicotine while others can contain strong doses. However, many health agencies, such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), have not studied the effects of pure nicotine and do not know if it is safe. However nicotine in e-cigarettes and in tobacco are equally as addicting. Nicotine is a type of stimulant found in plants and can cause side effects that increases blood pressure and heart rate. The long term effects of nicotine use is still unknown.

"As for long-term effects, we don't know what happens when you breathe the vapor from e-cigarettes into the lungs regularly," Director of Science and Trends at the American Cancer Society Thomas Glynn said, according to ABC News.

According to the American Cancer Society, e-cigarettes currently are not regulated or restricted by age, which appeals to teenagers, especially because of the flavored products targeted to them.

Over the last two to three years, the e-cigarette market had gone up to a \$1.7 billion dollars industry. Wells Fargo predicted that in 10 years that the e-cigarette industry will grow as big as the tobacco industry, if not bigger.

While studies are still being processed, e-cigarettes remain a popular trend among smokers and nonsmokers. Battery-operated e-cigarettes — which are not federally regulated — have picked up steam (no pun intended) in recent years as a less harmful option for cigarette smokers.

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