



FANCY A FLIGHT?

ONE NORTHERN MICHIGAN BREWERY CHALLENGES YOU TO PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS WHEN IT COMES TO BEER TASTING. ARE YOUR BUDS UP TO THE CHALLENGE? **A2**

POLL

For many Americans, liquor is a quicker way to poor health



A record high percentage of U.S. adults, 53%, now say moderate drinking is bad for their health, up from 28% in 2015. AP file

Alcohol consumption hits a new low, with only 54% saying they drink.

Linley Sanders Associated Press

Fewer Americans are reporting that they drink alcohol amid a growing belief that even moderate alcohol consumption is a health risk, according to a Gallup poll released in August.

A record high percentage of U.S. adults, 53%, now say moderate drinking is bad for their health, up from 28% in 2015. The increase in doubt about alcohol's benefits is largely driven by young adults — the age group that is most likely to believe drinking “one or two drinks a day” can cause health hazards — but older adults are also now increasingly likely to think moderate drinking carries risks.

As concerns about health impacts rise, fewer Americans are reporting that they drink.

The survey finds that 54% of U.S. adults say they drink alcoholic beverages such as liquor, wine or beer. That's lower than at any other point in the past three decades.

The decline in drinking has been more pronounced among women — down 11 percentage points since 2023, to 51% — than among men — down five points, to 57%.

The findings of the poll, which was conducted in July, indicate that, after years of many believing that moderate drinking was harmless — or even beneficial — worries about alcohol consumption are taking hold. According to Gallup's data, even those who consume alcohol are drinking less.

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The federal government is updating new dietary guidelines, including those around alcohol.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, government data showed U.S. alcohol consumption was trending up. But other government surveys have shown a decline in certain types of drinking, particularly among teenagers and young adults.

SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS SHIFTS

This comes alongside a new drumbeat of information about alcohol's risks. While moderate drinking was once thought to have benefits for heart health, health professionals in recent years have pointed to overwhelming evidence that alcohol consumption leads to negative health outcomes and is a leading cause of cancer.

Younger adults have been quicker than

older Americans to accept that drinking is harmful, but older adults are coming around to the same view.

About two-thirds of 18- to 34-year-olds believe moderate drinking is unhealthy, according to the poll, up from about 4 in 10 in 2015. Older adults are less likely to see alcohol as harmful — about half of Americans age 55 or older believe this — but that's a substantial increase, too. In 2015, only about 2 in 10 adults 55 or older thought alcohol was bad for their health.

In the past, moderate drinking was thought to have some benefits. That idea came from imperfect studies that largely didn't include younger people and couldn't prove cause and effect. Now, the scientific consensus has shifted, and several countries recently lowered their alcohol consumption recommendations.

Earlier this year, the outgoing U.S. surgeon general, Vivek Murthy, recommended a label on bottles of beer, wine and liquor that would clearly outline the link between alcohol consumption and cancer.

The federal government's current dietary guidelines recommend Americans not to drink or, if they do consume alcohol, men should limit themselves to two drinks a day or fewer while women should stick to one or fewer.

Gallup's director of U.S. social research, Lydia Saad, said shifting health advice throughout older Americans' lives may be a reason they have been more gradual than young adults to recognize alcohol as harmful.

“Older folks may be a little more hardened in terms of the whiplash that they get with recommendations,” Saad said.

SEE POLL, A3

HIGHER EDUCATION

College names leader and vows an ‘honorable closure’

Siena Heights University did not give a reason for the departure of its previous president.

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ADRIAN — The small Catholic college in southeastern Michigan slated to close its doors after this school year will end its century-long history with a new president.

Siena Heights announced Cheri Betz as its new chief administrator on Thursday.

According to the university, she was named Siena Heights' executive vice president in 2024.

As president, she'll oversee all academic and operational functions in Adrian, its online education platform and its service catering to incarcerated students in correctional facilities.

Betz replaces Douglas Palmer, whose announcement of Siena's future closure this summer rocked the university's alumni and campus communities.

Siena Heights did not give a reason for Palmer's departure. However, Harry “Dusty” Steele, chairman of Siena's board of trustees, said the board was grateful for Palmer's service.

“The board of trustees is fully confident that of Dr. Betz, with her experience and deep commitment to the university, will bring meaningful impact across all aspects of the (university) community and beyond,” Steele said.

Betz's appointment was reported to come with support of the General Council of the Adrian Dominican Sisters, which founded the university in 1919.

“We are delighted that Dr. Betz has said yes to assuming the role of president of Siena Heights University,” said Elise D. García, prioress of the Adrian Dominican Sisters. “Dr. Betz has a depth and breadth of experience and love of Siena to lead students, faculty and staff with joy, intelligence and sensitivity through a very challenging final year that could also be richly rewarding.”

SEE HIGHER EDUCATION, A3

Siena Heights University announced Cheri Betz as its new chief administrator on Thursday. MLive.com files



900 American flags stolen from Michigan Tech's 9/11 memorial

The display is sponsored by the Young Americans for Freedom.

Brandon Champion bchampio@mlive.com

HOUGHTON — Students are looking for answers after about 900 American flags were stolen from a 9/11 memorial at Michigan Technological University.

The memorial organized by the U.P. school's chapter of Young Americans for Freedom annually includes 2,977 flags, one for each person who died during the terrorist attacks, being placed on a lawn across the street from Wadsworth Hall in Houghton.

But according to WLUC-TV in Marquette, a large number of flags disappeared within an hour of the group leaving the memorial about 6:30 a.m. on Thursday.

Chapter President Donald Chapman told the TV station he's puzzled why anyone would want to destroy a 9/11 memorial.

“I mean, it's really not especially political at all,” he said. “We just have American flags out here and we're just commemorating a national tragedy in which American citizens died.”

The university released a statement after the thefts.

“We are aware of the American flags on Walker Lawn stolen early this morning from the memorial tribute to the victims of the September 11 terrorist attack,” it said. “This act of vandalism on a symbol meant to unite us all is deeply disappointing. We are work-

ing to identify those who committed the vandalism and will hold them responsible for their actions.”

The Houghton Police Department also is investigating.

The memorial was one of several tributes planned at Michigan Tech on Thursday. Members of the school's Air Force and Army Reserve Officers Training Corps programs also honored the victims with a silent watch at a memorial on campus.

“As they stand guard, we encourage everyone to reflect on the sacrifice made by victims, first responders, and others who have been impacted by the events of 9/11,” MTU said on Facebook.

