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High school auditorium should stay alcohol-free

Now that Key West high school has a new, spacious auditorium with lots of parking, we suppose it was inevitable that someone would float the idea of allowing alcohol (beer and wine) to be served in connection with evening or weekend performances unrelated to school activities.

This idea was a trial balloon launched out of the blue at a recent Monroe County School Board meeting, and we're happy to be able to say the balloon deflated immediately.

The auditorium is a real asset for our community, and we certainly approve the idea of making it available to the public when it is otherwise unused by the school. But booze should not be allowed for any reason, under any circumstances.

First of all, it sends the wrong message: School properties must remain drug-free and alcohol-free. Moreover, school facilities paid for by taxpayers have no need to provide inducements that compete with theaters and other entertainment venues.

The fact is, producers of shows who occasionally book the auditorium do so because it can seat up to 1,000 people -- far beyond the capacity of the Red Barn, the Waterfront Theater and even the handsomely refurbished Tennessee Williams Theatre on the campus of the Florida Keys Community College.

Size, meaning capacity, is the high school site's big advantage and its attraction to producers and their agents. Whether or not alcohol is served is irrelevant.

-- The Citizen

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