

Mob mentality led to another ugly riot

For the second time in three months, officers of the Eugene Police Department were called to disperse dangerous mobs of University students. Is there a trend here? We hope not.

A near-riot in the West University neighborhood erupted late Friday after police broke up a crowd of 400 unruly party-goers celebrating Cinco de Mayo. When the cops showed up, they were met by a barrage of bottles and beer cans. Five people, including three University students, were arrested.

Friday's mob action was reminiscent of the snowball fight that got out of hand between Walton and Hamilton dormitory complexes last February.

Like the snowball fight, this incident started out innocently enough. It was a typical weekend; students ready to blow off steam after midterms went to parties. A rumor got out that Peggy Frasse's party at 1394 Ferry St. was open, and a large crowd showed up to crash it.

Unhappy with all the uninvited guests, Frasse called the police. After her neighbors also started to complain, the squad cars rolled in. And then the crowd went berserk.

By no means should the EPD be blamed for the reaction their arrival provoked. The police were doing their job, and every indication is that they did it professionally.

The party hosts, such as Frasse, should also not be blamed for the incident. There were at least four parties in the neighborhood, but the hosts did not invite all of the 400 people who showed up. Apparently, they did what they could to keep the situation in hand. (It has been noted, however, that off-campus parties have gotten larger and noisier since the University's ban on fraternity keg functions, as many observers feared. With the one year anniversary of the ban coming, it's time to reassess the policy.)

The blame rests with the partiers. While their violent actions are intolerable, we assume these people are not normally hooligans. They are probably average students. One of those arrested in the melee was the son of a state senator.

Instead, it seems that we have witnessed two examples of textbook mob psychology. Blessed with the anonymity and protection afforded by a large crowd, an individual gets caught up in the moment and acts in ways we wouldn't normally expect from him or her. That seems to be the sheepish explanation offered by two of those arrested, University students Shelly Hannah and Dain Paulson.

If this is indeed the explanation behind these two riots occurring so close to each other, there seems to be no reason to expect another one soon. We hope that's true.



Vandalism isn't the way to further cause

Activists and supporters of important causes certainly have the right — and the need — to speak out. But there are such things as proper forums, and we believe that the sides of University buildings are not places for discussion.

During recent demonstrations by animal rights supporters and Gay Pride Week, there was a marked increase (excuse the pun) in the amount of graffiti on walls and sidewalks. Around campus, one sees "Gay Pride" written out in black spray paint, or red paint representing the blood of animals on the steps of Johnson Hall.

These added scrawls join an unfortunate number of renderings already screaming for visual attention. There's the usual call for the U.S. to leave El Salvador alone over by the library. At Allen Hall, one can read the latest word on capitalism as equaling slavery. It's not all political — there's also the just-plain-stupid desecration of the statue of the Pioneer Mother; somebody painted "Punk" across the marble base. It's time for all this to stop.

Grffiti is not a sanctioned tactic of either the Students for the Ethical Treatment of Animals or the Gay and Lesbian Alliance; apparently, some foolish loose cannons have

started their own private crusade. We call on them to stop it.

The fact is that such acts of vandalism only distance the University community from these concerns. That's certainly the case with us. We support gay and lesbian rights, and have some sympathy for the animal rights movement. But this graffiti really bugs us.

There's also some hypocrisy in the vandalism. Whoever wrote "Gay pride" and "Come out" didn't feel proud enough to sign his or her name to these works of protest, and we doubt that he or she will ever come forward to admit to them. They were literal black marks on the effectiveness of this year's Gay Pride Week. And while the animal rights coalition struggles to be accepted as a valid moral and intellectual movement, the graffiti campaign reduces the campaign to one of gut-level guerrilla warfare.

The graffiti artists have some valid, important concerns — ones that are big enough to be heard without foot-high red and black letters. It's the message that's important, but the medium is too. Vandalism turns people off, and makes them unreceptive to the causes it would promote.

Letters

Repulsed

We have found the most recent Camel cigarette ad extremely offensive because of its depiction of violence against women and its treatment of women as sex objects. The previous ads, in which women were seen as rewards for masculine achievements were very insulting, but the newest ad, which has appeared in Rolling Stone, has sunk to new depths.

The new advertisement suggests some rules to follow to become a "smooth character." One of the rules explains, to men, "How to impress someone at the beach." Point number one of this rule is: "Run into the water, grab someone and drag her back to the shore, as if you've saved her from drowning. The more she kicks and screams the better."

The man is being told to ignore the woman's protests about being dragged out of the water, which devalues a woman's control over her own body. Is the next step rape? We think it is. Does this also per-

petuate the myth that when a woman says "no" she means "yes?"

We are urging everyone who is repulsed by these ads to write to the RJ Reynolds Industries to urge them to discontinue these ads. Their address is: 1100 Reynolds Blvd., Winston-Salem NC 27102.

By doing this we can send a message to the RJ Reynolds company, and all advertisers, and let them know that we are tired of their use of sexism and violence towards women to sell their products.

Michael S. Springer
Debbie Pierson
Eugene

Mistaken

I am responding to Robert C. Kenneth's letter (ODE, April 27). Well, Rob, it seems like you've really figured out the Greek system. Yes, there is drinking in the Greek system, unlike the rest of the University; we don't believe women belong anywhere but in the

home; we would certainly never think of letting a person with a different skin color or religion into one of our houses; and we hate all people with different sexual preferences. We would never think of supporting one, like giving him/her the Greek endorsement (Tim Hughes — 1988 Incidental Fee Committee). And I almost forgot, we talk like we have styrofoam for brains: "fer shur, reely cool, like, I don't know."

It appears you have jumped the gun a little, Rob. Your letter contained few facts and only one lopsided, unfair side to the story. What about each of the 27 houses' philanthropy projects for charity? What about the Greek involvement on campus: IFC, ASUO, EMU Board, athletics ...? A few facts like these would show a more truthful side to what we have put a lot of time and hard work into.

It is a shame your letter was not written in a more positive manner. After all, it is not the Emerald's position to be a personal nag sheet. As college students, people expect us to be mature — we are young adults.

As a graduate student, you probably understand this, "dontha" think?

Spencer Rubin
Theta Chi

True spirit

It's, like, reely amazing how well Robert C. Kenneth (ODE, April 27) ya' know, like captured the true spirit of the Greek system!

Kenneth reely has his facts straight. Greeks a bunch of racist, sexist, homophobic, alcoholic snobs? Absolutely! And it's true that all of the Greeks I know have a heinous speech impediment, myself included, and obviously only Greeks use slang terms.

And since you think it's "reely cool" that Greeks care about what misinformed cynics like you think about them, maybe you should redirect your negative energy and open your mind. Although it's humorous sometimes and maybe there is some truth to people's accusations of Greeks, it is getting

boring hearing uninformed people criticize something they know very little about.

I mean, maybe it's like, time you realize what Greek life is, like, reely all about, ya' know?

December Holt
Delta Delta Delta

No right

In response to Michael Cross's letter (ODE, May 1) concerning the weaknesses of pro-choice defenders: You, as a man, have no right to tell me, as a woman, what I can or cannot do with my body. I respect your opinion and believe wholeheartedly in the right for you to express it. However, I don't agree with your attempts to impose (as opposed to simply stating) your views onto others, especially concerning a topic you will never experience, such as being pregnant and/or giving birth to a child.

Andrea Eighmey
Business
Monday, May 8, 1989