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PERSPECTIVES

Community should be outraged by recent riots

Sunday's disturbance began with the good intentions of a protest and should not have become a violent outburst

AN EMERALD EDITORIAL

The blemishes on the face of the City of Eugene continue to grow in number.

As Sunday's early-morning riot following a WOW Hall concert proved, the city is not moving past senseless riots.

The concert by Seattle's Tchkung! ended at about 1 a.m. Sunday. Following the show, the band migrated to 8th Avenue and Charnelton Street and began a drum circle. According to a police report, most of the 130 concert-goers followed the band and into the street, where the drum circle lasted about 15 minutes. During the drumming, someone unfurled pro-tree banners. The band soon returned to WOW Hall to pack up its equipment.

Most of the crowd dispersed, but many stayed, "working themselves

into a frenzy," the Register-Guard said.

The riot reached its peak when the crowd moved to the site of a recent tree protest at the Fifth Street Public Market, where three trees were recently cut to make room for more construction. After vandalizing cars and businesses, harassing passers-by and police officers, and tearing down a fence at the Fifth Street Market, the crowd was dispersed by police in riot gear.

What is happening when a post-concert crowd is working itself into a distorted frenzy? This sort of behavior simply does not make sense.

Eugene is well-known around the country for its civic conscience, and it is even infamous around the country for its occasional over-the-top riot over tree cutting and other city issues.

Although the post-concert party may have originally been intended to light an activist spark under locals, it certainly did not turn out that way.

The concert, which was sponsored

by University radio station KWVA, quickly turned into a violent, nonsensical riot that left what the Register-Guard reported as several thousand dollars of damage at the Electric Station restaurant.

Protesting to save trees is one thing. Rioting for the sake of rioting is another. The string of senseless riots that have plagued Eugene in the last year is disturbing. The worst of the recent riots was on Halloween in 1997 when police dispersed the crowd with tear gas and Alder Street was left littered with broken signs, bottles and light poles.

None of these riots are representing a majority, but they are a majority enough to cause major damage and get the attention of the Eugene police and the community. It is in the best interests of the community and protesters to stay focused and avoid slipping into that habit of senseless violence again.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.



DRAWING BOARD



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Maybe Rodriguez

As athletes grow bigger and stronger, they get better. That's a logical premise that Rob Moseley used in his recent column on the great shortstops of baseball (ODE, July 28).

He may be right about Alex Rodriguez of the Mariners as the greatest shortstop ever. But it's a question that never can be answered, especially since Rob, at his age, has seen so few of the great shortstops who preceded Alex.

Among them are two as lanky as Alex, and who dominated the position in their eras: Marty "the Octopus" Marion of the Cardinals in the 1940s and Don Kessinger of the Cubs in the 1960s. They had great range and hit well enough, in the .270s.

Two things to consider about the modern game: 1) The ball

clearly has been tampered with to produce all the home runs; 2) Expansion has diluted the game, especially with some 20 pitchers who never would've made the majors in the old eight-team leagues, a factor that probably has led to the boom in home runs.

George Beres
Eugene

Alumnus remembered

I met Shin Yasui some four years ago. My remembrance of him is very vivid. We were friends for the last three years, and two weeks before his death in a car accident, I had received his e-mail message informing me about his latest plans and projects with Roma or Gypsy people in Yugoslavia.

Shin was a true Buddhist. His life work toward humanity Shin expressed with devotion, humble-

ness and impeccability. With vast compassion and knowledge of life and livelihood, he approached orphaned children, youth, elders and adults in Bosnia.

Even being so far from his homeland, Japan, Shin lived for helping humanity in the parts of Bosnia that were most affected by the war. He always found a common ground with people of different nationalities and nations.

Working with humanitarian organizations in Bosnia, Shin witnessed many devastating scenes in the war — starvation, desperation and violence. In his letters to me, Shin always pointed out how much all his work with other volunteers was growing and becoming more inspirational, with feelings of never-lost hope. I admired often the impeccability, endurance, never-ceas-

ing inner fire and love in Shin that would always take a form of action for improvement of humans' lives, no matter where he would find himself — among Bosnians, Croatians or Serbians.

Shin was one of the most poignant writers on the political and war issues in former Yugoslavia. His fluid, non-biased writing was always to me a breeze of important issues taking place in youth camps where Shin often worked. Shin had many friends all over the world — in Bosnia, in Japan and here in the United States. His strongest weapons were compassion, love and clarity with which he fought human stubbornness, violence, anger, pain and death.

Today, as I am writing this, memories and precious moments I shared with Shin are

pouring into my thoughts. My sadness is vast. If there can be any peace I may find in thinking about Shin's death, it is understanding how much Shin's short life touched hundreds of people's lives. He lived life with appreciation and value of existence, with his dreams to be of service to humanity, particularly of people in suffering.

Shin, you will always be in my heart living like a bird never ceasing to fly, with outstretched wings touching people's lives. Our friendship does not have a name nor an end.

Jasmina Gradistanac
Eugene

Editor's note: Shin Yasui was a former University student who died in early July as the result of an automobile accident in Austria.

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