

# Students and city officials ponder causes, effects of riot

By David Ryan  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Sunday morning on Alder Street and 16th Avenue, an upturned "No Bicycles, No Skateboarding" sign lay on the opposite side of the street from where it was uprooted by rioters the night before. Dozens of muddy footprints nearby were evidence of the confrontation with police, ending an hour and a half later several blocks away.

The cause of the riot is uncertain at this point. There was a fire on 16th Avenue. There was a crowd watching. There was a party. Minutes later, six rioters pulled out street signs and threw them onto the intersection of 17th Avenue and Alder Street.

What is certain is a spectrum of opinion on the riot, its causes and what it now means to the city and student community.

One person on 17th Avenue, sophomore Grant Blume, thought it was fun.

"It's all about fun," he said. "We

like to have a good time. It's a UO tradition."

West University City Councilman Bobby Lee thought the riots had become a tradition as well.

"Well, it has occurred twice so far, but in the future we hope this won't happen," he said. "It is better than what it was last year."

Regardless of its smaller size, the riot tradition is costing the larger community.

"It's an expensive tradition," Lee said. "This is tax money that we're spending to pay for overtime police officers. That could have been library money or kids' programs money."

Last Tuesday, Lee felt the student community would be protected from the riots by on-campus programs. Lee still believes the on-campus events attracted many other would-be rioters.

In the future, Lee said the city and University need a broader approach to preventing the riots than the extra police and non-alcoholic

campus activities used this year.

"Some [prevention] strategies might not have worked, but I think we need additional strategies — strategies like working with school boards, because I know a lot of the rioters were not students," he said.

Lee said he heard other ideas, such as some city officials proposing to raise the Minor in Possession fine.

Matt Olson, University student senate president, said he felt a sense of community was needed.

"I think that just generally we need to work toward a community model," he said. "I think that people need to feel more ownership. I think they should care about what's going on in the University, and not feel that they're here for a four-year party."

Many people who gathered on Alder Street Friday night felt the media — particularly the Emerald — was to blame for paying so much attention to the possibility

of another riot. Others blamed the police for being too aggressive.

Senior Anita Pinnell watched police march on the rioters Saturday night. She said the extended riot issue coverage in the Oct. 30 Emerald added more prestige to last year's riot.

"They made it the 'Halloween riot,'" she said.

Olson felt differently, centering his disgust on the presence of TV news crews, who waited on street corners to see if anything would take place.

"It's almost like they're staging the riots in a way," Olson said. "They're just looking for sensational cost-effective news."

Some people caught in the middle of police conflict with rioters felt the police were too aggressive. Toni Sciarboni and Eddie Sanchez ran down 16th Avenue after Sciarboni was pepper-sprayed by police.

"They told me to get behind the line, and they just came and [pepper-sprayed] me," Sciarboni said.

"I wasn't here more than 10 or 15 minutes."

However, Eugene police Capt. Roy Brown said police actions in clearing Alder Street were justified.

"Well, when you have rocks and bottles thrown at you, it elicits a certain reaction," he said.

Lee said he was concerned about reports of police overreaction. He said he wanted students to contact him at 343-6799 if they experienced or witnessed specific incidents of police overreaction.

Olson said individual elements have to combine to create rioting chaos.

"We need to really look at the role that we're all playing," he said. "It's not just one person or just one element that created the riot."

But the student community shares its blame, not just the rioters, Olson said.

"We can't just be pointing fingers," he said. "We all bear responsibility as part of the student community."

## Riot

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Officer Steve Williams said.

One rioter, who was later arrested, pulled a street sign from the ground and walked alone down Alder Street toward police officers who were parked at the corner of 16th Avenue and Alder Street.

This display prompted approximately 20 officers clad in riot gear to advance on the crowd from the corner of 16th Avenue and Alder Street toward Alder's 1700 block. Officers cleared Alder Street and made four arrests at approximately midnight, Williams said.

Officers chased crowd members down alleyways and attempted to remove all bystanders from the vicinity, announcing, "Leave this area, or you'll be put under arrest."

Around midnight, the Eugene Special Weapons And Tactics team arrived on the scene and headed down Alder Street toward 18th Avenue. At this time, nine EPD squad cars, 16 police officers and approximately 45 onlookers occupied the corner of 16th Avenue and Alder Street.

The SWAT team continued to advance down Alder Street, pushing

the crowd toward 18th Avenue. The police warned crowd members they must leave the area because they were in an unlawful assembly.

"If necessary, we will use gas to disperse the crowd," an unidentified EPD officer said.

Some members of the crowd did not comply with the officers and continued to uproot street signs and set off fireworks. Around 12:30 a.m., officers deployed tear gas to clear the crowd at the corner of 18th Avenue and Alder Street.

"That was crazy. Cops were throwing tear gas at people," Lane

Community College student Justin Armstrong said. "A few people were pushing a dumpster down the road and pushed down a metal trash can. One guy had a 'Dead Presidents' outfit on."

The riot left the corner of 18th Avenue and Alder Street littered with garbage, debris, smashed pumpkins and broken glass. These obstacles along with the overturned dumpster impeded traffic, leaving Alder Street closed for at least a half an hour.

After the initial tear gas was deployed, EPD officers pursued riot-

ers down to the 2000 block of Alder Street.

By about 12:50 a.m., much of the crowd had dispersed, and the SWAT team vehicle remained parked on 19th Avenue, east of Alder Street. The vehicle and officers on foot spent the next 10 minutes patrolling northbound on Alder Street, ordering remaining crowd members to leave the area.

According to EPD Agent Rob Olsen, the riot was contained by 1:30 a.m., but he noted that patrol cars remained in the area until approximately 2:30 a.m.

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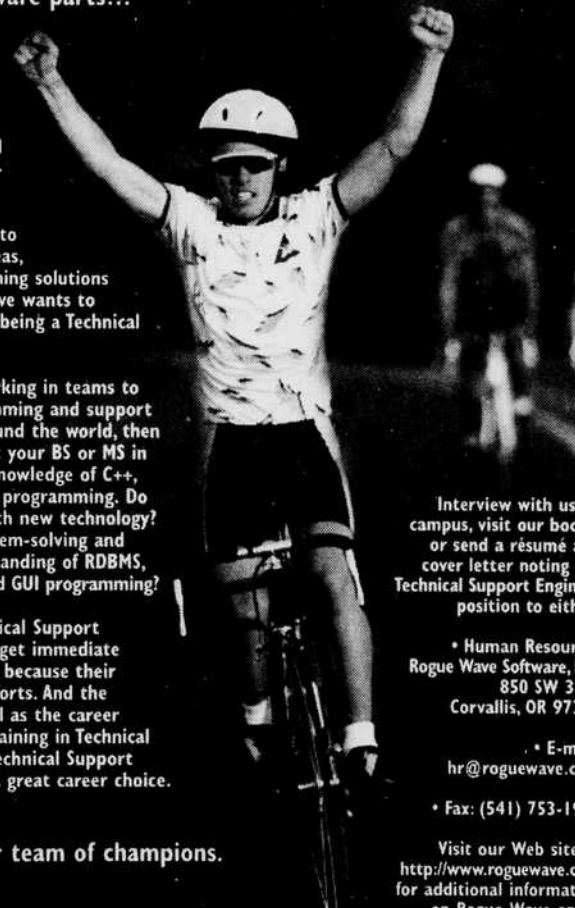
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