

Oregon Daily
Emerald
Editor in chief: Laura Cadiz
Editorial Editors: Bret Jacobson, Laura Lucas

Perspectives

Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
Room 300, Erb Memorial Union
P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
E-mail: ode@oregon.uoregon.edu
On-line edition: www.dailyemerald.com

Party Fowl

The Eugene Police Department proposes fining both landlords and tenants of residences that provoke police response to large, disruptive gatherings

Why is it that a few rowdy young people spoil the image of all college students?

First it was the rioting of years past. Even though a minimal percentage of University students were involved, the University campus and students were targeted for the "let's all get along" message a few weeks ago, which the Emerald supported.

Now we have a proposed ordinance in front of the Eugene City Council that would fine landlords and tenants of continuously rowdy residences.

This negative attention is due. This fall, Eugene police are issuing a staggering number of citations for parties, including alcohol violations and those for noise. The problem has become so large and so frequent that the Eugene Police Department proposed the ordinance, which would fine both the landlords and tenants of residences that attract police response and where police issue more than one citation on more than one occasion within 60 days. The ordinance also has a size stipulation: The party must have more than 10 people present to fall under the law.

What that effectively commu-

nicates is that the problem with parties lately is size and frequency. The ordinance is not targeting small gatherings where of-age people drink and have some fun.

Thus said, those residences that monopolize police response and, in effect, tie up police time, should pay more for the inconvenience it costs police and other citizens who might find police scarce on a Friday or Saturday night. As Eugene Police Chief Jim Hill said, "I don't think the community should pay for continuous response to parties." (ODE, Nov. 9)

The fine, which could be \$5,000 at the extreme, according to Sgt. Rick Gilliam, would hold rowdy party-throwers accountable. They should be held responsible for attracting the large numbers of people and failing to control parties they have started. And it's not as if they wouldn't have been warned. The fine only applies if the police come to the same residence for the same reason twice in two months.

This responsibility goes with the territory. If you can't handle the fine, don't throw the party.

What is objectionable about

the proposed ordinance is the burden it places on landlords. The eviction process for ousting unruly tenants is fraught with timely legal barriers, which place a landlord in a vulnerable position. Also, landlords who are often absent or those who try to control their tenants are unfairly punished. The liability for rowdiness is the responsibility of the tenant, not the landlord.

Let's put blame where it belongs: on people who insist on disrupting the general peace and who can even put their partygoers in unseemly situations by throwing big parties. Those partygoers who don't live at the residence who also cause problems are already held responsible. They are fined.

And if individuals who cause disturbances or break the law can be fined, so can those who control the setting in which the disturbances occur.

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

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"This may be the most significant win we've had here because of where we had been. It took a lot of strength and courage for the team to come out and play like they did."

— Oregon head volleyball coach **Cathy Nelson** on her team's magnificent, record-losing-streak-breaking win over Oregon State last Saturday. Kudos and "thumb up" for never saying die. ODE, Nov. 8.

"You didn't just pay lip service to the goal of overcoming the division of Europe and Germany."

— Former German Chancellor **Helmut Kohl** honoring former President George Bush's efforts to remove the Berlin Wall during the Cold War. The wall was taken down ten years ago yesterday. The Register-Guard, Nov. 9.

"I haven't really talked to him about that."

— First Lady **Hillary Rodham Clinton** responding to questions regarding whether her husband will live in their new New York residence after leaving the White House. Newsweek, Nov. 15.

"Many important people in the world don't care about the environment as long as they make money. We need to realize that if we keep polluting our environment, it won't be worth living in."

— **Eric S. Stechmesser** in a letter to the editor of Time magazine, Nov. 15.



Giovanni Salimena Emerald

GIUVANNI SALIMENA