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# COMMENTARY

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## Editorial

### We can't let victory riots turn into tradition

After their victory over Indiana in the NCAA Championship basketball game Monday night, University of Maryland fans were ready to celebrate. They opted for what seems to be becoming a traditional celebration — a riot.

As a result of all the "fun," 18 people were arrested and at least eight found themselves in the hospital. What's worse, Maryland held a similar riot Saturday after their Final Four win over Kansas.

Maryland isn't the only school to receive media attention over riots. Other universities, including the University of Arizona and the University of Colorado, have experienced similar "celebrations."

After-game riots are obviously irresponsible and detrimental, but the effects are far more serious than a few broken windshields or burnt trash cans.

The uproar is not only a waste of time, energy and resources, but it is also dangerous. Maryland fans were hospitalized for injuries such as deep cuts and burns.

Violent celebrations also put another dent in college students' already-tarnished reputation. Do excited fans really want to perpetuate the image of students as irresponsible alcohol-guzzlers? If they want to be taken seriously, students, as well as non-student fans, should find more responsible ways to trumpet wins or lament losses.

Intense emotions surrounding significant wins and losses are understandable, but violence is not.

## Editorial Policy

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

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## Letters to the editor

### Volunteer to be a part of democracy

Coral Snell's letter to the editor urged students to get involved and register to vote ("Students need to get involved," ODE, March 13). This is especially important with so many ballot initiatives for November that will affect a person's future, such as Health Care For All Oregon's proposal to get rid of the middleman and self-insure everyone in Oregon for health and dental care according to their ability to pay.

Another important ballot initiative is campaign finance reform, which will ban corporate contributions and regulate organizational expenditures in candidate contests. People will then have a voice.

Volunteers for these initiatives offer you the opportunity to participate in government and also have voter registration forms. A few minutes of your time can change your future, and a few hours volunteering can give you a real feeling for our participatory democracy.

Ruth Duemler  
 Eugene

### Backing Israel is backing oppression

Every year, 3 billion of your tax dollars go to fund Israel's war machine. Is it any surprise that our leadership has few harsh words for Israel's current oppression and terrorism of Palestinian civilians?

We are quick to deem the suicide bombers terrorists, while supplying the Israelis with increased artillery weapons that have been used for decades to overtake Palestinian land. And we are surprised that the despair of the Palestinians leads to suicide bombing.

In past editorials, it is obvious that we, as a nation, are afraid to call an oppressor an oppressor when we may be deemed anti-Semitic. It is time we realized that a bully is a bully; that Sharon's oppression of the Palestinians — because he has the power and the backing of the United States — is similar to the oppression experienced by the Jews in the not-so-distant past.

The issue here is not whose oppression is worse. The issue is that oppression, in any form, is wrong.

By continuing to back the Israelis while they terrorize innocent civilians, we aid and abet oppression and terrorism. Look up the definition — it is that simple.

For more information on the conflict and ways to help, contact International Solidarity or write to your senators and representatives.

Matthew Nelson  
 post-baccalaureate student

### Credit card companies are the real evil

On more than one occasion, both Iran and Iraq have called America "The Great Satan." Sometimes you have to wonder. Case in point, consider the following.

Friday, Jan. 25, in the Riverside, Calif., Press-Enterprise newspaper: "Credit card vendors delugging students with credit card offers."

What could be more contemptible than corporations luring young people into indebtedness? There are cases where students have taken their own lives after realizing the extent of their debt. Is anyone concerned? If they are, they're keeping very quiet about it.

I'll take it a bit further.

What about the absolute greed in its purest form that credit card companies engage in daily, charging interest rates which go beyond 25 percent? Think about it. Some charge as much as 28.9 percent! I see it as nothing less than legal loan-sharking.

These are deplorable things and should not be allowed. But why aren't universities, the colleges, our leaders and our churches coming forward and speaking out in a united voice against it? By their very silence, their unconcern is deafening.

And then, as every year before, the politicians have raided the Social Security's trust fund — cleaning it out for the war machine now feeding so voraciously. Mouth those words over to yourselves: Trust fund.

When trust is a law — a federal law — and misused and bent and ignored, it is not merely wrong, it is a national disgrace.

B.G. Noe  
 Hemet, Calif.

## Police, university also share blame for riots

(U-WIRE) COLLEGE PARK, Md. — In this space over the past three years, The Diamondback has scolded students for illegal behavior after athletic events. We've supported police and promoted alternative celebrations.

But on Monday night, the actions of University of Maryland students, city residents, county police officers — and the absence of preparation by the university administration — were equally disgusting. Once again, fans taunted police, destroyed property and ignited bonfires. Not excusable. Once again, county police waited to disperse crowds until the fires raged and the fans gained confidence. Not excusable. Once again, the administration failed to provide worthwhile alternatives to rioting. Not excusable.

We hear frequently that illegal behavior

should not be tolerated. But complaints of police inciting crowd violence are dismissed as immature. Why? Maybe because most media outlets sit by a police scanner and write stories based on official accounts, a few student quotes and disappointed alumni comments. Several Diamondback reporters were on the frontlines. One, standing still and taking notes, was hit by five pellets in less than a second. A Diamondback photographer was shot in the head Saturday night after the Kansas game.

On Monday night, the police did incite violence. No doubt about it, officers egged on some people and aggressive behaviors on both sides of the line led to fights, as The Diamondback reported Tuesday. There is no reason officers should be firing indiscriminately toward the crowd. We keep hearing police

say a few dozen baboons are tainting healthy celebrations with illegal behavior.

But why, then, do police herd away every fan, including the discerning and the innocent, with gunfire? Why not warn fans first with a megaphone? Why not go in on horseback, as they have in the past? Showing no restraint, county police charged the masses with pepper and tear gasses. The violence, like that of Saturday night, did not run rampant until after police attempted to disperse thousands of people. When pushed back to the College Park Shopping Center, the focus of some fans shifted to police as the inebriated battled the ill-tempered.

This editorial is courtesy of The Diamondback at the University of Maryland.