

Setting the record straight: in memory of Malcolm X

May 19 was Malcolm X's birthday, 77 years ago. May 23, the Black Student Union aired audio information in the amphitheater about a man who should be honored. As I expected, not everyone shared this thought with me. One man spoke at me about his views.

"We've been hearing this rhetoric all day. ... Turn that shit off!"

I did not even see his face. While the owner disappeared, his angry words lingered in the air. Though directed at Malcolm X, they insult every person whom Malcolm X fought for by disregarding his efforts as mere garbage. They remain with me as a bitter reminder that the American public has an incredibly distorted view of one of

GUEST COMMENTARY

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the most influential leaders of the civil rights movement.

Unfortunately, many people who do not understand my history — no, our history — are in charge of telling it. Ignoring the full picture, history becomes sprinkled with half-truths, until distortion becomes prevailing thought. To quote Jude 1:10, "... These men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand." Malcolm X is one of the most misunderstood black men in the United States. Make no mistake, among other

things, Malcolm, a black supremacist of sorts, called white people "blue-eyed devils" and hated their race. Ironically, many of our revered white leaders held similar beliefs about black people. The difference is that Malcolm X never advocated lynching or brutality, nor the withholding of the humanity of an entire race. And let us not forget that, unlike the leaders who decided that I was three-fifths of a person, Malcolm X holds virtually no place in our history books.

But that doesn't justify his racism in my mind. So why do I revere Brother Malcolm as a man and a leader?

He transformed his life, honoring and loving God the best way he knew. When he realized he was following the wrong path, he was

man enough to change his actions. Discovering true Islam altered Malcolm's outlook. On being a racist, he said, "Once I was, yes. But now I have turned my direction away from anything that's racist."

While I am a Christian, I believe that through his faith and love in God — Allah — Malcolm X honestly sought the truth and found his grand purpose in life. Most of all, Malcolm X recognized that he had to be willing to die for the freedom he so loved. In the end, he paid that ultimate price.

Still, Malcolm X is considered an extremist for believing it "criminal to teach a man not to defend himself when he is the constant victim of brutal attacks." Malcolm is "un-American" for denouncing

the draft of black men to wars to protect world democracy, when our nation would not protect the democracy of our black men within our own borders.

No, Malcolm X was not a radical; he was responding to the atrocities that were once, and in some cases still are, a part of America.

I am not asking you to like Malcolm X. However, I challenge you to learn the history of this country in its entirety. I'm not a revisionist; I am only doing my duty to set the record straight — in memory of Malcolm X and all those, of all races, who fought for my God-given right to be here today.

C. Kawezya Hutchinson is a junior journalism major.

Letters to the editor

Riot not representative of all students

As we approach the end of the academic year, I write to offer congratulations to students for their many accomplishments, particularly for the strong academic performance so many have achieved. There are record numbers of students earning Dean's List recognition this year. Hours of campus and community service have enriched our campus' governance conversations, brought participation opportunities to students and guided many student-organized programs and activities.

As students complete their final examinations and undertake summer activities, I hope they'll take a minute to recognize their many accomplishments and the quality of the learning experiences they have been part of this year.

Unfortunately, a few members of

our community were recently involved in weekend campus disturbances in the blocks west of campus. These unruly incidents were illegal, dangerous, costly and were an embarrassment to our community. I join the many students who have criticized those involved for their immature and illegal behavior and who have reminded us that the few students who engaged in this behavior are not representative of the University student population.

We've worked with neighborhood residents for years on strategies for successful social functions without excessive or illegal alcohol use and without levels of noise or property destruction that bring the police to students' doors.

I hope students enjoy their summers, and I look forward to seeing students at commencement or back on campus next fall. Thanks for a great year, and thanks for continuing to make responsible choices as members of our campus and broad-

er Eugene-Springfield community.

Anne Leavitt
associate vice president
for student affairs and dean of students

Dry fraternities won't solve drinking problem

Currently, fraternities on this campus are under abnormally high pressure to follow the social policy we are given, combined with the next year being a dry year for all fraternities. There are less — if any — fraternity parties lately. Nonexistence of fraternity parties leads to incidents like the May 31 riots on 17th Avenue and Patterson Street.

Let's face it, if fraternities can't party, that doesn't mean that the general student population won't. They will still go to overcrowded house parties in Eugene.

Fraternities on this campus number 15. They are large houses able to contain around 100 partygoers. If fraternity houses were able to have parties without the fear of

harsh penalties and decisions made with very circumstantial evidence, the result would be a drastic reduction of overcrowded house parties in this town. The parties would remain inside, removing the eyesore of intoxicated youths on the lawns of other houses around Eugene.

Due to the fact that fraternities are easily identified, these parties would be regulated by people who are legally liable for any problems that occur. This would ensure that parties are kept safe as they can be.

To curb underage drinking, more emphasis should be put on doing a better job in high school; it's too late to stop our age group. The students of this University will still party and continue to cause events like May 31 if they are forced to fear the cops in overcrowded houses or apartment complexes.

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Poll Results:

Every week, the Emerald prints the results of our online poll and the poll question for next week. The poll can be accessed from the main page of our Web site, www.dailyemerald.com. We encourage you to send us feedback about the poll questions and results.

This week's poll question: What do you think of "Akbars Garden," the structure in front of the Student Recreation Center on 15th Avenue and University Street?

Total votes: 64

It's beautiful art — 21.9 percent, or 14 votes

It's ugly art — 15.6 percent, or 10 votes

It's not art — 6.3 percent, or 4 votes

It's a waste of space — 26.6 percent, or 17 votes

Don't know/don't care — 29.7 percent, or 19 votes

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