

telling their children if they misbehaved, I would arrest them.

Parents: Please don't use me to threaten your kids. Had your child become lost, they would have hesitated to approach anyone dressed like me for help. It's terrifying enough to be lost in a crowd of people, loud noises and frightening rides without having a place of safety to go to.

The people in the orange shirts should be a beacon of hope for your kids, not the people to fear. Next time, point us out and tell your kids if they are lost or need help, we are the people to provide it, along with a sticker and a smile! Thanks!

Mayra Martinez
Eugene

SLICE OF THE GOLD

For Woody, Pete and Jim Hill: Proud to be in the SEIU and glad to see that paying my dues is going for the cause. The striking fast-food workers want a fair slice of the "Golden" arch. The only response that the National Restaurant Association could come up with was that "increasing wages to \$15 will not solve income inequality." Well it sure would be a step in the right direction. And as to the accusation that we're only in it to "boost dwindling membership" is ironic since the fundamental foundation of capitalism is to expand.

You and your kind may have won the battle of the "closed shop," but be sure many of us will continue to support the

union and erase that inequality you so affectionately mentioned in your press release.

Vince Loving
Eugene

PAINLESS EXECUTION

Like most of the civilized world, I'm against the death penalty. Even though in the U.S. 35 states have banned capital punishment, we still rank in the top five in the world for execution. China, Iraq and Iran are the top three.

The Eighth Amendment to our Constitution prohibits "cruel and unusual" punishment. Recently the stories about prisoners gasping for breath for two hours after being injected with untried cocktails

of chemicals have crossed over into the "cruel and unusual" punishment zone.

If we are still going to put people to death, let's at least make it swift and painless as possible. Such a method exists. It's called inert gas asphyxiation. We currently use it to humanly put chickens and pigs to death. It's a simple method of filling a room or bag with helium or nitrogen. Consciousness is lost in less than a minute and a painless and peaceful death follows within a few minutes.

It's time we act like a civilized nation and ban cruel and unusual executions.

Michael T. Hinojosa
Drain

NOTES FROM THE RIVERSIDE BY MARK HARRIS

Rites of Passage

BUILDING STRONGER CHILDREN

It's summer, and that means rites-of-passage time when I do workshops for African-American related youth on preventing addiction and problems related to sexuality, whether or not you're under the influence. I combine 21st-century knowledge with 25th-Dynasty wisdom, i.e. African Old School. It's about keeping your spirits, your wits and your body safe, as well as safeguarding those around you.

It comes down to and improving upon "Who raised you!?" Among my peeps, that phrase usually means you had absent or questionable home training. Or, conversely, you had good home training and you "actin' like you ain't got no sense," aka Motherwit.

Watching the UO basketball player sexual assault situation, rites of passage and "Who raised you?" come to mind. I played in my mind, "What if they (males and females) were my kids?" A source told me the athletes played hooky from a structured rites-of-passage program to go to that party. If so, I'm thinking maybe the approach wasn't African Old School/Motherwit enough.

It's probably not reasonable to expect the UO and Eugene-Mayberry to replicate Black Old School, but neither they, nor the young woman, can go back "home."

My exemplars for black basketball player behavior are Paul Robeson, my father and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. They exemplify that college athletics is merely a gateway through an intellectual life, into one of service and activism.

Kareem recently wrote in *Time* magazine: "You can't go home again ... Wolfe, who took that title with permission from writer Ella Winter, used it to mean that after we leave home and are battered about by our adventures in life, we are changed. And in our

disillusioned mind, 'home' becomes a romanticized symbol of our innocence, in which we dreamed limitlessly and were loved unconditionally."

Speaking of losing innocence through battering adventures, if two guys take one woman into a bathroom in someone else's house while one stands outside as lookout, and one acknowledges that he wouldn't want what was done in that bathroom to happen to his mom or sister, is it shooting beyond their conceptual arc that this woman should be treated as if she is a daughter, a sister, a potential mom? I'd say they knew they were doing wrong, by anyone's standards. To say they're being lynched ... white folks ... please.

Paraphrasing Frederick Douglass, it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults. Having raised daughters and sons in this community who've avoided being either targets or perpetrators of sexual assault (but who have not avoided being racially targeted), I have tried to pass on the collectivist adage I was raised with: When you are out in society you are not there representing yourself, you are representing us (black Americans specifically, and the best of humanity generally). So hold yourself to a standard of behavior better than those around you, particularly when they're acting like they ain't got no sense.

What role should the UO community take in its culturally competent *in loco parentis* avatar, in raising what the Old School Black Community would call an upright strong black man? A dangerous black man, i.e., law-abiding, intelligent, articulate, activist, armed with a college degree?

I'm glad attention is being paid to the experience of the victim, without overt regard to her race. But whatever

privileges a woman might have because of her race, her gender often makes her an unprotected target, prey to white men and "honorary" white men like certain black male athletes who are not held to culturally specific aspirational standards of behavior.

A salient set of questions for women of any race or gender expression is how do I detect whether this person will harm me? It's not like serial rapists of any race in college settings can't simulate being harmless, before abruptly turning on you.

My kids (and the vast majority of LCC rites-of-passage kids) have so far successfully avoided being criminals, perpetrators or victims of sexual crimes, or even accused of such. Our upbringing prepares us against inevitable targeting either as a victim or a perpetrator. We are taught to make appropriate adjustments in character and action as if we're an active target.

My hope for the "sister" in this incident is that she comes back strong, like Maya did from similar circumstances, saying, "Every human grouping, whether it's just two people, a family, people in the neighborhood, people in the city, in a nation, a tribe, a species; people live in direct relation to the heroes and the sheroes they have."

I have relatives who were actually lynched; I was raised with Emmett Till as a cautionary tale. A black man married to a white woman was lynched in Eugene (half his body was found in the Willamette). I'd say the use of the term "lynching" is made by people whose families weren't targets of actual lynching, therefore their home training did not include how to conduct yourself as if you were a target.

Black women living in Eugene during the time of that lynching faced rape, broad-daylight-attempted kidnapping and abduction, racial attacks and had no recourse to police, nor could they appeal to the district attorney to prosecute, as the Eugene Klan was quite active yet less overtly violent than in Mississippi.

Mark Harris is an instructor and substance abuse prevention coordinator at LCC.



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