



The Torch

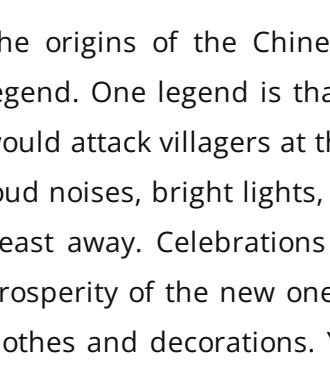
Lighting the way for Diversity, Inclusion and Student Culture

January 2023 Issue | *Insight to Keep You in the Loop at EGCC*

january



Lunar New Year [Chinese New Year]



The Lunar New Year is an annual 15-day festival celebrated in China and Chinese communities around the world. It begins with the new moon that occurs sometime between January 21st and February 20th according to Western calendars. Festivities last until the following full moon. The holiday is called the Lunar New Year because the dates of celebration follow the phases of the moon.

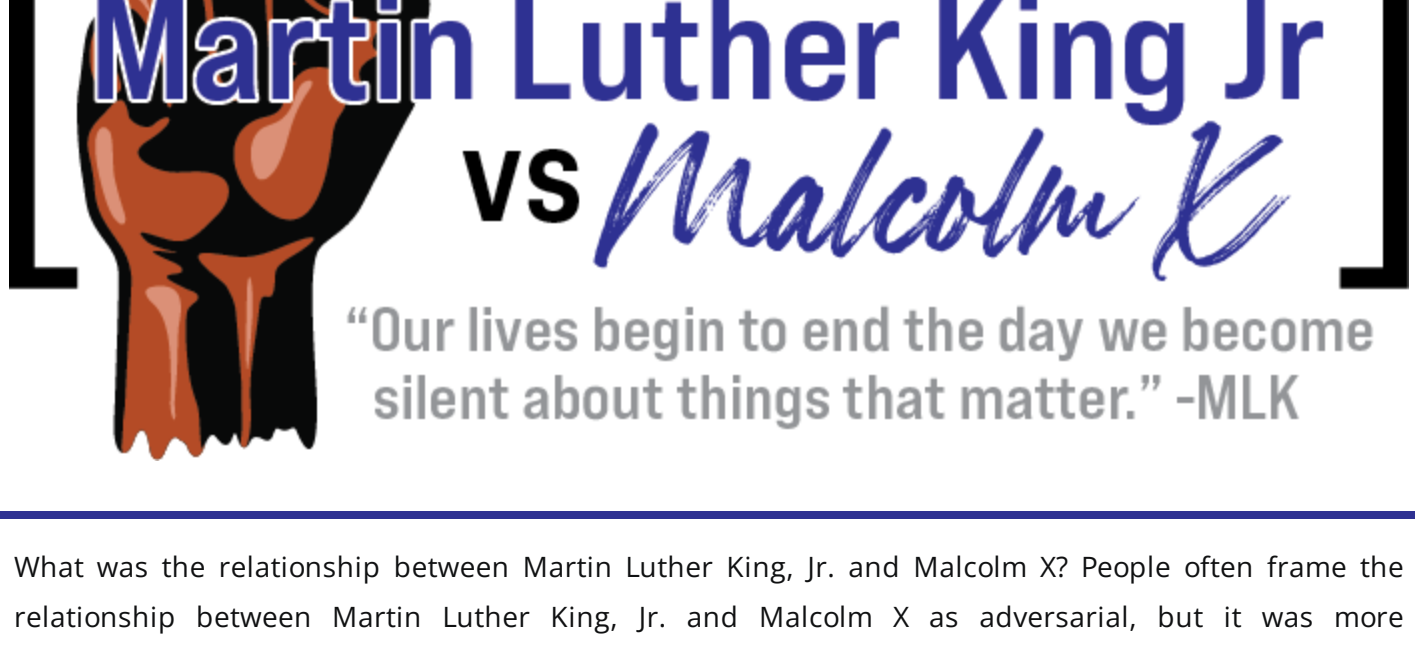
The origins of the Chinese New Year as it is sometimes called, are steeped in legend. One legend is that thousands of years ago a monster named Nian ("Year") would attack villagers at the beginning of each new year. The monster was afraid of loud noises, bright lights, and the color red, so those things were used to chase the beast away. Celebrations to usher out the old year and bring forth the luck and prosperity of the new one, therefore, often include firecrackers, fireworks, and red clothes and decorations. Young people are given money in colorful red envelopes. In addition, Lunar New Year is a time to feast and to visit family members. Many traditions of the season honor relatives who have died.



Being the most important among the traditional Chinese festivals, the history of the Chinese New Year Festival can be traced back to about 3,500 years ago. It has evolved over a long period of time and its customs have undergone a long development process. In 1912, the government decided to abolish Chinese New Year and the lunar calendar but adopted the Gregorian calendar instead and made January 1st the official start of the new year. After 1949, Chinese New Year was officially renamed to the Spring Festival and was listed as a nationwide public holiday.

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Lunar New Year - Written by Julian Walker



What was the relationship between Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X? People often frame the relationship between Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X as adversarial, but it was more complicated than that.

They were raised in very different circumstances: MLK grew up in a religious family, attended Morehouse College, obtained a theology degree and a PhD, and became a Baptist minister. Malcolm X had a difficult childhood and spent six years in prison, where he joined the Nation of Islam, an organization that promotes Black superiority. (It is considered to be an extremist group by the Southern Poverty Law Center.)

Martin Luther King was an integrationist, someone who wanted to gain equality through a multiracial, non-violent approach, whereas Malcolm X was a Black nationalist who advocated for racial separatism and self-determination. After Malcolm X visited Mecca, he left the Nation of Islam and moved to a more non-violent philosophy and announced his willingness to work with mainstream civil rights leaders. However, he was assassinated soon after, in 1965. Martin Luther King was assassinated in 1968.

Malcolm often criticized MLK for his non-violent approach, but MLK acknowledged that the presence of Malcolm X in some ways enabled his campaigns to succeed. He once said, "if the white people realize what the alternative is, perhaps they will be more willing to hear [Dr. King]."

They only met in person once, in 1964, during the debate about the Civil Rights Act.

The third Monday of January is designated as Martin Luther King Day. Malcolm X Day is celebrated on the third Thursday of May or May 19th (his birthday) by the cities of Berkeley and Oakland in California.

MLK vs Malcolm X - Written by Elizabeth (Akaali) Kinsey-Leggett

february



I was 9 years old in 1986 when Black History Month was voted into existence by Congress and MLK day was first nationally observed. As a Child of the 80s and 90s, born in the late 70s I often remember the excitement that I would have even as a child when I would see someone who looked like me on tv, even if it was a cartoon. I was keenly aware that everyone on the Flintstones was white, that the only blacks on Scooby Doo were the special guests, most often the Harlem Globetrotters. Not to mention that blacks in prominent positions outside of the Black Community just didn't exist in my small Midwest community.

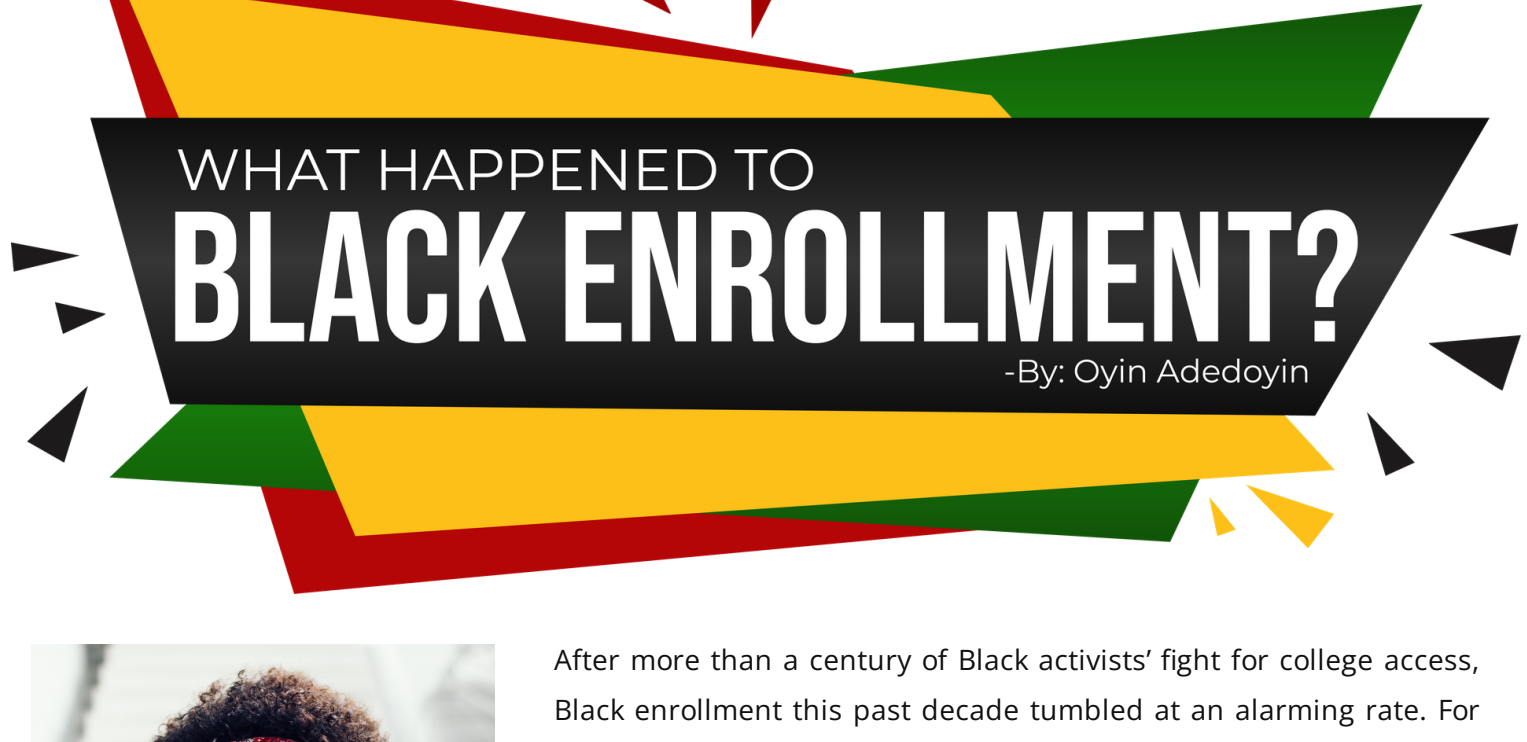
This absence from mainstream society was deafening. It let me know that my aspirations had to be managed with the reality that I saw. This barrier for me existed well into my adulthood. While I didn't even realize it at the time, I can distinctively remember the night of November 4th, 2008. I was watching the news of the newly (presumed) President elect of the USA. I watched him give his acceptance speech, and something that I never realistically believed to be possible was occurring. The person giving the speech, looked like me. For the first time I realized, looking at my young daughter playing next to me, that she would grow up in a world void of the barriers that had defined and gated my own life goals. As this realization struck me, tears began to flow down my eyes; Not because of a political agenda, nor because I supported or did not support a specific politician, but simply because the man speaking looked and sounded like me. For me, this was black history.

The history of blacks in America is not a simple one. It's not one that could be even confined to this singular article. It is one that has shaped and formed not just Black people in America, but America as a nation into who and what it is today. Acknowledging not just the atrocities of our past, but the contributions that blacks have had in this nation of ours, regardless of how it affects any of us emotionally.

Black History Month is a time set aside where we as a people, we as a nation can look back and see through it all, what has brought us to this point. As we strive to be a more perfect union, a more honorable people, and a more just society.

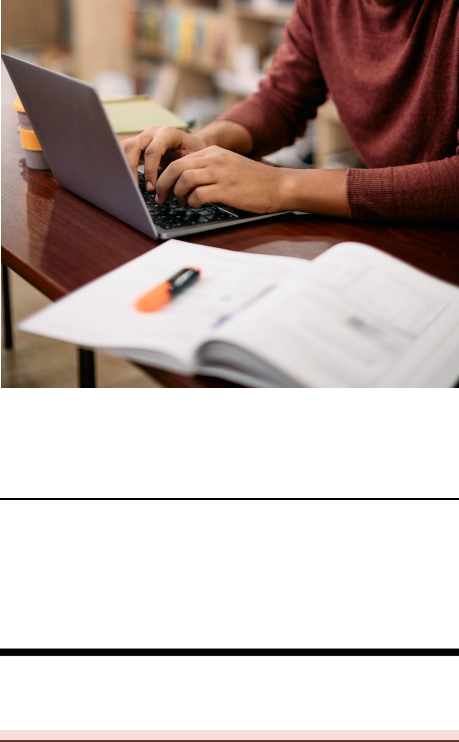
There is an African proverb that says, "If we stand tall, it is because we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors". Unfortunately, the nature the black condition in our nation has erased much of our history. However, in order to know where you are going, it is important to understand where you come from and who's shoulders, we are standing on. Knowing that we are not slaves, but the people who were enslaved is huge. It conveys and confirms the very idea of who we are, and what we are capable of. Black history in my perspective is an opportunity to look back, not with regret nor with dishonor, not with anger, but with pride, humility and vision that will allow me to look forward and understand who we as a people in this nation, and what we can yet be.

Black History Month - A Personal Perspective - Written by Julian Walker



After more than a century of Black activists' fight for college access, Black enrollment this past decade tumbled at an alarming rate. For nearly half a century, the story of Black students in the United States was a story of success. Black enrollment grew from 282,000 in 1966 to more than 2.5 million in 2010, the result of, among other things, civil-rights activists' efforts to dismantle Jim Crow laws, colleges' adoption of affirmative-action policies, and the federal government's subsidizing of low-income students' tuition.

But from 2010 to 2020, as overall college enrollments fell, the number of Black students on campuses fell even more sharply, to 1.9 million. The pressures affecting students in general — the escalating cost of college and skepticism about a degree's payoff, for example — have been acute for Black students. And a confluence of entrenched factors, like the economic hardship in many Black communities, colleges' admissions practices, and Black students' not feeling welcome or represented on campuses, has further depressed Black enrollment.



The pandemic has made conditions significantly worse, with a disproportionate number of Black people in the last two years disengaging from college to pursue jobs, even as some historically Black colleges have seen record enrollments. While some administrators have tried, in the wake of George Floyd's murder, to fight racism on campuses, diversify their faculties, and support Black-student groups, they have not yet stanch the overall decline in enrollment.

For the full article, [click here!](#)

march



Women's History Month

I was going to take this time to feature a woman who was truly instrumental at Eastern Gateway and who has lit the pathway for other women. When I looked around to do a singular article piece, I found myself torn in what direction to take. We have had dynamic women in roles that were instrumental in the functioning at Eastern Gateway. Therefore, I cannot do this acknowledgement justice by picking just one. From the Presidency to our Faculty to our Staff, women at Eastern Gateway have made extensive strides in opening doors and paving the way for others.

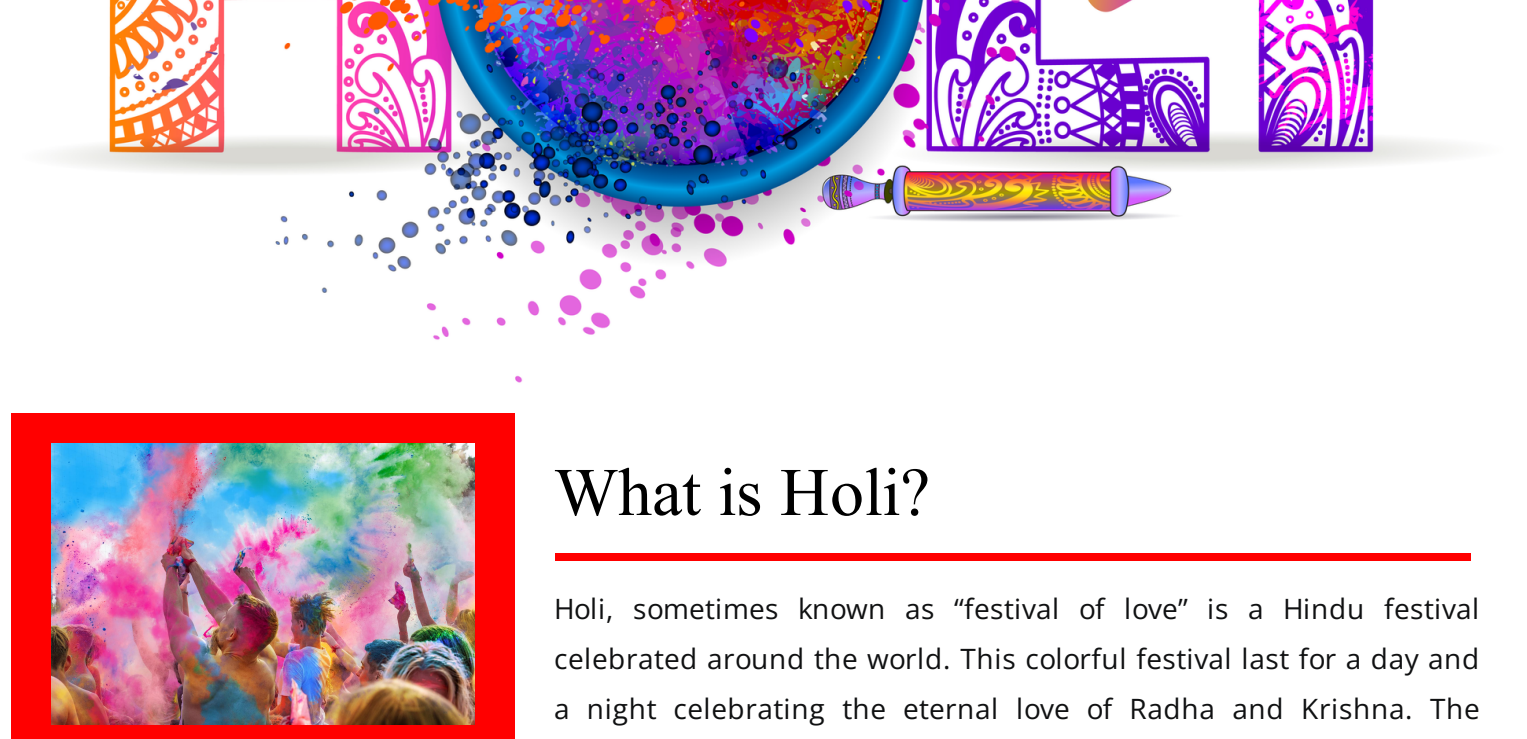
People think that women's rights are a new thing or from the 1950's and people need to understand that the suffrage movement from the first Women's Right Convention held in New York in 1847, to the "Ain't I a Woman" speech that was given by Sojourner Truth in Akron, Ohio in 1850, to the Civil War which halted some reform for women as they cared for the wounded on the battlefield, to the Ratification of the 14th Amendment in 1867, all the way to the formation of the National Association of Colored Women in 1896 - women have fought and won equality rights for future generations. I was always told that there is nothing new under the sun by my grandmother, and because these rights exist does not mean that they will not be challenged. Supreme court cases have focused on the rights of women and there is not one case in the highest court of the land that decided the inevitable rights of a man to be a citizen. For example, the 1873 the Supreme Court case of Minor vs. Happersett ruled that citizenship of women does not give them the right to vote or any political rights.

I hear theories about how women messed up the structure of America by fighting for equal rights and to that I say this: America was founded on the principle of equality and freedom for all and yet the mindsets that were closed to equality seemed to be very loud voices in America for quite some time. The beauty of being an American is the freedoms that the democracy of this country has accomplished even through the loudness of inequities, inequalities, and unfair acts of others that prolonged the victories that we hold so dear. So, to the mothers and daughters of this great land and those that lit the candles for those of us that partake in their sacrifices, I impress upon you the importance of knowing your truth in order to not repeat the damaging things of the past. Always be brave and know that the choices you make so easily were once so very hard. Thank you to the women that paved the way, for those that never saw the outcome of their sacrifices, and those that still set trends in these efforts today. We are WOMEN - hear us Roar!

Final words, thank you to Christina Wanat who took a chance on me. She is a Senior Vice President at EGCC and today we sit side by side because she encouraged me. Her selfish regard for others' success and her keenness to do what is right regardless of who is looking taught me so much about leadership. As she encouraged me, I encourage others to let their light shine. Remember greatness is not in some of us, but it truly is within all of us. Christina is a quiet wave of support and a tremendous mentor. In celebration of Women's History, I wanted to share with you all the woman that believed in me and supported me when I was a Developmental Education Adjunct and Adult Basic Education Instructor, and she was a Dean. She always considered me a colleague - it matters how we treat others. Thank you.

Please click the link below to watch Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman" Performed by Kerry Washington

"Ain't I a Woman"



What is Holi?
Holi, sometimes known as "festival of love" is a Hindu festival celebrated around the world. This colorful festival lasts for a day and a night celebrating the eternal love of Radha and Krishna. The festival of colors teaches people to rise above the caste and creed of the world, to forget old grievances and meet other with warmth and high spirits. Holi signifies the victory of good over evil.

Next Holi eve the festival begins with the lighting of a bonfire. The next day kids and adults come outside of their homes and smear bright shades of gulal on each other. Popular Holi sweets such as Gujiya, Ladoo, Burfi and Imarti are exchanged, and people dance to the beats of Holi songs and poplar folkas music.

Festival of Colors
What is Holi - Written by Brittany Stevens