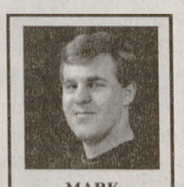
Like baseball for politics

Orioles owner trades commitment to win for Cuban political stance, unfair labor practices



MARK PASSWATERS

Since their inception in 1954, the Baltimore Orioles have had a tradition of winning in a classy manner. The "Oriole Way," as it is known, developed such Hall of Famers as Brooks Robinson, Jim Palmer and shoo-ins Eddie Murray and Cal Ripken.

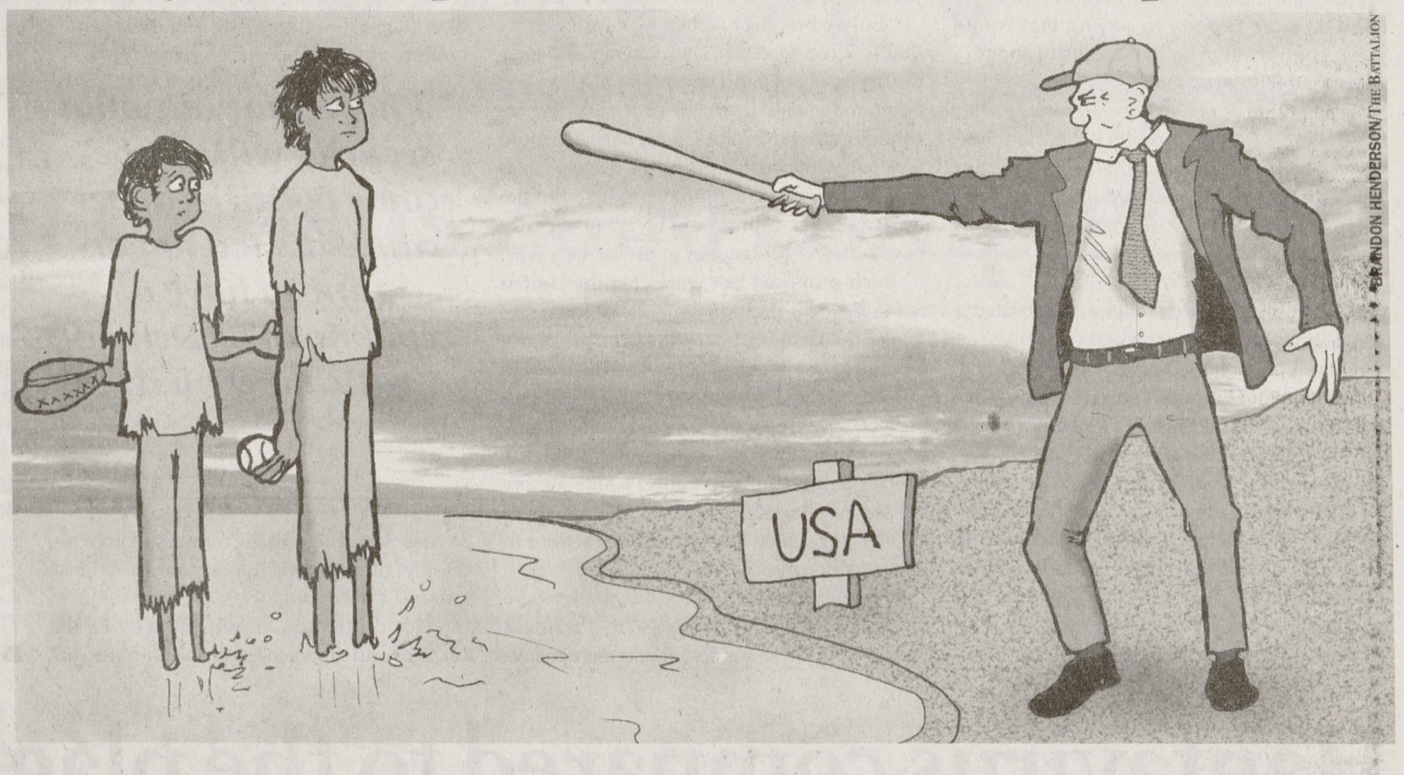
Unfortunately, the "Oriole Way" has taken on a totally different meaning since local lawyer Peter Angelos bought the team in 1993. Angelos has scrapped the Orioles' commitment to winning by developing players and replaced it with the attempt to buy championships, which has backfired miserably. Brooding, underachieving malcontents like Albert Belle and Roberto Alomar have, in the recent past, marked Angelos' reign.

Now Angelos has taken the Orioles and made them a political statement. Angelos has decided that in order to show his support for President Clinton on the Elian Gonzalez issue and to demonstrate his own view that sanctions against Cuba should be lifted, the Orioles will not sign any Cuban player who has defected to the United States. Not only is Peter Angelos showing himself to be a monumental idiot, he is cheating his team out of the ability to sign quality talent.

If Angelos wants to hold political views, he should be allowed to do so. However, he should not be allowed to use his team as a bully pulpit to enforce his views.

Peter-the-not-so-Great needs to be taken from his ivory tower (where he somehow thinks the Orioles are competitive) and made to see what he is doing. Baseball, while it may now be considered a business, is still primarily a sport. No team, not even the Yankees, should be considered a political entity. Angelos has, insanely enough, made the Orioles out to be not the "Team that has Cal" but the "Team that loves Castro."

Last year, the Orioles played a two-game series — one in Havana, one at Oriole Park at Camden Yards — against the Cuban national team, which it embarrassingly split. The first game was played in Havana, and Angelos sat and gaily chatted with Fidel Castro the whole time. And now, the Orioles owner is going to arbitrarily decide that those people who defect from Cuba in attempt to be free are not deserving of a chance to make a living? Such activity has a name, and it is not a pretty one. Peter Angelos is guilty of appeasement. If Angelos wants to hold political views, he should be allowed to do so. However, he should not be allowed to use his team as a bully pulpit to enforce his views.



BRANDON HENDERSON/THE BATTALION

As he has shown in the contracts to which he has signed lousy players, Angelos has money to throw around. The Democratic party would be glad to take it and listen to his desires. Major League Baseball (MLB), on the other hand, should swiftly act to shut this man up. Angelos, ironically enough, made his money as a labor lawyer.

As a result, he should know fully well that Cubans who defect to the United States are automatically given asylum and the same rights afforded American citizens. If he says the Orioles will not sign these players, he is guilty of unfair labor practices. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that no employer, be it the Baltimore Orioles or the Dixie Chicken, can bar an American citizen from working because of race or background.

However, since Angelos' actions are in line with the opinions of the Clinton administration and Attorney General Janet Reno, Oriole pitcher Sidney Ponson has a better chance of winning 30 games this year than Angelos has of being forced to eat his words. The American people, however, can do something, and so can MLB.

If citizens are sick and tired of President Clinton and others buddying up to a ruthless dictator like Castro, they should show their disgust. The Orioles are the easiest target on the horizon, and boycotting their games would be quite effective. Besides, the fans would hardly be missing a quality product. Ripken and pitcher Mike Mussina are the only two players on the squad worth noticing, and both will probably be elsewhere next year. A quick collapse of a ball club owned by a twit who thinks he knows better than the Founding Fathers would be a form of justice.

Commissioner Bud Selig has the ability to censure Angelos and — with the help of other owners — actually take the franchise away from him. Though it is highly unlikely that this will happen, Orioles fans and supporters of human rights everywhere would rejoice. Many long-time Orioles fans are thoroughly disgusted by what Angelos has done to the franchise.

The Orioles went from classy contender to overpriced joke much too quickly. To see their owner attempt to help dictate America's foreign policy is just too much.

Hopefully, every Cuban who makes the big leagues will tear up the Orioles, and Angelos will be forced to watch.

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

Resendez sentence not 'insane'

SUNNYE OWENS

Angel Maturino Resendez, "the railroad killer," despite his plea of insanity, was convicted of capital murder earlier this month in Houston. He confessed to 10 more murders and is being linked to many more criminal acts. Despite having already convicted Resendez, the court is considering reviewing his sentence. However, Resendez is a sane individual and should not be granted a review.

Throughout Resendez's arrest and conviction he showed no signs of insanity, according to many health professionals and police officials interacting with him at the time. Defense expert Dr. Ramon Laval said, "The 40 year-old Mexican drifter suffers from severe personality disorder" but is not insane.

Dr. Melissa Ferguson, a psychiatrist at Harris County jail, where Resendez is being held, said she "detected no severe mental illness upon Resendez's arrival, July 14, 1999." In fact, all of the psychiatrists who interviewed Resendez said he was a charming, intelligent individual without any indications of insanity. If it is clear to the experts that Resendez is sane, why should his sentence to be reviewed, possibly allowing him to be taken off death row?

Resendez shows no signs of remorse and presents a danger to society. If granted a review, Resendez could be granted parole in 40 years. The courts cannot let this happen. As a society, we must not excuse evil with the insanity plea.

Besides the recent reviews by psychiatrists, Resendez's background makes it clear that he is perfectly sane. Until a few months before his conviction, Resendez was known as a loving father and husband. He was a vital part of his community and led an average life. His wife told officials he was "a model husband." Usually, psychotic individuals cannot function in society, and Resendez was not only able to function in society, he contributed to it. Clearly, this is evidence that Resendez is not insane. On July 16, 1999, having just committed another murder, Resendez surrendered to police and agreed to speak to police. Although he never answered questions about the killings, the police said that Resendez was verbal and articulate. He discussed everything from capitalism to mathematics. Sgt. Tom Ladd of the Houston Police Department said "Resendez's mental capacity is just fine." As one of Resendez's arresting officers, Ladd had custody of Resendez immediately after he killed Houston-area doctor Claudia Benton. Ladd told reporters Resendez was a charismatic individual and showed no signs of psychotic behavior.

Almost all of the individuals who have dealt with Resendez since his surrender say he is mentally stable. The only way Resendez could obtain a review is if he were found insane — clearly not the case.

Serial killers are usually described as intelligent people. This is the case for Resendez, who has earned two bachelor's degrees and has been described as fairly intelligent. Interviews with the police indicate that Resendez is not only intelligent but also sane.

Resendez is a cruel and heartless individual who knew exactly what he was doing. If he were to be granted a review and was taken off death row, he would cost the taxpayers a great deal of money and would be a potential threat to other inmates.

To put it simply, he is guilty of unspeakable acts and should be put to death as soon as possible.

Sunnye Owens is a junior journalism major.

Taiwan does not deserve status as security threat

LUKE McMAHAN

One of the beauties of studying history is that attentive students of yesteryear know firsthand the mistakes made in the past, and, chances are, they will not make them again. The lessons learned from the Watergate fiasco will be forever studied by all aspiring young politicians. Never again will an administration be caught rummaging through the opposing party's offices. Likewise, the hysteria that enveloped the nation during the Red Scare and the infamous period of McCarthyism is hopefully now viewed by Americans as ridiculous, unfounded and a result of an overzealous government highly trained in the art of overkill. No need for concern now, right? The nation has learned from its mistakes and has matured into a wiser and more just being. Hardly.

Try telling that to Taiwan and the rest of the world's players who are astonished by the U. S. government's most recent success in playing the role of "school-yard bully."

Based on FBI, Justice Department and State Department reports issued to *The Washington Times*, Attorney General Janet Reno has made a new addition to the FBI's already extensive list of hostile intelligence threats.

However, the new addition is not a country well known for its terrorist involvement or for being well established in the arms trade. Taiwan, considered for a long time to be harmless, is now listed as a national security threat on the same level as Cuba, Russia, China, North Korea, Iraq, Iran and roughly a dozen other hostile countries.

The national security threat list includes eight issues, listed in descending priority: terrorism, espionage, proliferation, economic espionage, infrastructure targeting, government targeting, perception management and legal intelligence gathering.

The reasons for Taiwan's inclusion on the list are, of course, classified, but former intelligence officials, while equally confused by the government's move, have speculated that Taiwan has been included due to its efforts to gather intelligence on American technological advances.

At the risk of spoiling the government's party, several issues must be addressed.

Since communism is less threatening than it once was, the government has been spinning its wheels in efforts to find reasons to continue the spy game. Coming off the heels of a decade where technological advances were monitored and implemented daily, the name of the game has become "Keep away!" The hysteria during the Red Scare has undergone a metamorphosis and has emerged once again, this time into the Computer Chip Scare, and it is just as frightening as the former.

Another suspicious fact is that Taiwan's recent inclusion on the national security threat list comes in the wake of the China-Los Alamos National Laboratory spy scandal. Wen Ho Lee and Peter H. Lee, employees with high-level clearance at the laboratory, were accused of "mishandling" nuclear secrets and were indicted. The federal government smelled blood and pushed for an espionage conviction — a vaguely defined charge. Miscommunication between prosecutors and Justice Department officials thwarted the government's case, resulting in a short jail sentence for Peter Lee. The blame for information leaks since has been passed to the top of the food chain and recently became a large pile on Reno's desk. Criticized for, among other things, not granting wire taps to the FBI at a crucial time during the case, Reno has been labeled "soft" on espionage. If one can read between the lines, one can clearly see, in bold letters, the two words "ulterior motive."

The former intelligence community is shocked and appalled, as the rest of the nation should be. The FBI has never uncovered an espionage case involving Taiwan. According to a former intelligence official interviewed, Taiwanese agents have collected some intelligence, but nothing that warrants this move. Reno needs to step back and re-evaluate. She does not know the rules or the tactics of the game she is playing. She exhibited this fact when she publicized this information for the first time in the history of all national security agencies.

The starving jackals down at FBI intelligence have been served a three-course meal by a well-known waitress who is doubling as the attorney general of the United States of America.

Luke McMahan is a senior industrial engineering major.