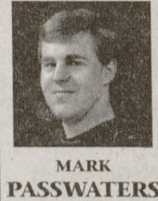


Giving fans the red card

Riots by English soccer fans easily prevented with crowd control, alcohol consumption limits



MARK PASSWATERS

Gaze into the fractured looking glass, gentle reader, and see ... Oct. 28, 1995, the undefeated and ranked Texas A&M football team continues its quest for a Big 12 South title by defeating 4th-ranked Kansas State 24-13 at Kyle Field. Aggressors celebrate the victory by trampling Kansas State backers to death and burning the Dixie Chicken to the ground. The odds of this happening, of course, are about as great as those of Al Gore taking the White House over the incumbent, President Bill Clinton.

Some members of the English upper crust think a match played in the United States would cure their problem. Then, if the bad games from England tried to cause trouble with bottles and sticks, they could be confronted by people with guns. Stacking drunken vandals up like cordwood outside of the Los Angeles Coliseum is hardly an appropriate solution to a domestic problem.

Most soccer stadiums in the United Kingdom are small by U.S. standards, seating between 35,000 and 45,000 people. Not surprisingly, the demand for tickets outweighs supply and people try to break in. The result usually has stadiums filled to twice the capacity, and people are crushed to death yearly trying to get in or out.

It is plain to see that this is not acceptable. Instances of people — including pregnant women — climbing over razor wire to get into a stadium are not only humiliating to the nation, but they put great numbers of people at risk. The English government must take steps to ensure that, when the stadium is filled to capacity, no one else can get in. If the government must station riot police or armed guards around the outside of the stadium, so be it.

Alcohol consumption must also be controlled. Many riots in England take place before the games because fans are already more bombed than Baghdad. While there is no way to ensure everyone comes to the game sober, closing pubs and limiting alcohol sales on the days of matches could cut down on the number of drunks. While throwing back a pint or 10 is a time-honored English tradition, the danger caused by such rabid drunks at matches merits a reassessment of alcohol sales. It would probably not be difficult for the House of Commons to agree to a measure that would subsidize pubs and alcohol distributors for the losses accrued being closed on game days — especially if

such measures cut down on damage and loss of life.

Of course, the most obvious thing to do would be to remind fans that soccer is merely a game, even when the national team is out on the field playing against what fans consider some good-for-nothing Eurotrash. However, it would appear that such logical measures would not get through to people who show their joy by burning down their own houses. As a result, it has been left up to others to protect society from such stupidity.

Countries in Europe and around the world are afraid to play England, and it has nothing to do with the talent of the English teams. It has everything to do with the fact that nations do not want unruly English fans on their soil. The best way for Great Britain to cut down on such national embarrassments would be preventing hooligan behavior at soccer games in England. Then England can once again be known for its great soccer play and not for the actions of its fans.

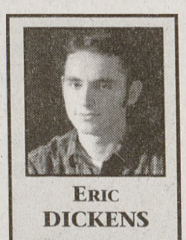
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Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

Apologies blur history of US slavery



ERIC DICKENS

On July 4, the *Hartford Courant*, one of the largest newspapers in Connecticut, dedicated its top story not to the celebration of the nation's independence, but the lamentation of individuals' captivity. The paper published a front-page story apologizing for its practice of running personal ads for the sale and capture of African-American slaves from the paper's foundation in 1764 through the early 1800s.

This story was front-page news for the *Hartford Courant*, but it is just the latest example in a recent trend of apologizing for the sins of the father's father's father. In March, Aetna Inc. issued an apology for writing insurance policies to cover slaves as property prior to the Civil War. Likewise, President Clinton has said that he would consider making an official federal government apology to the descendants of African-American slaves.

While Clinton said such an apology would help bring closure for the entire nation, the push for the Aetna Inc. and the *Hartford Courant* "I'm Sorry"s has a distinctive New England accent. Spearheading the investigation into several companies' backgrounds with slavery is Nadia Farmer-Paellmann — a 34-year-old law school graduate from New York who is descended from a South Carolina slave who escaped freedom. Farmer-Paellmann started investigating corporate archives to find out what happened to the "40 acres and a mule" promise made to freed slaves.

But Farmer-Paellmann has turned her investigation into a witch hunt, trying to shame corporations into donating money to a restitution trust fund she hopes to establish for all African-Americans. Farmer-Paellmann and the companies from which she has managed to extort an apology are taking the wrong approach to dealing with America's history with slavery and its lingering effects on society.

Americans must never forget history's ugly lessons and should let those lessons guide the present and the future. But digging through companies' trash cans for past mistakes merely throws mud at the corporation's name and reputation. Nobody wins, and nothing is gained from proving what common sense should already prove: The businesses of yesterday conducted their affairs as the economy dictated.

As Ira Berlin, a professor of African-American history at the University of Maryland, said, "I don't know of any newspaper which took a stand against taking advertisements for slaves unless they were [abolitionist] papers that were committed to ending slavery." Pointing out that the *Hartford Courant* ran personal advertisements for slaves is not surprising or racist — it was the norm.

Slavery was so ingrained into the national economy and social atmosphere that slave advertisements were probably no more controver-

sial than advertisements for tobacco or flyers for gun shows are today. Just because something is deemed wrong now does not mean that those standards applied 200 years ago. Companies like the *Hartford Courant* and Aetna Inc. should not have to, nor feel obligated to, apologize for conducting the business of the day, even if that business was a horrible wrong that only a few private sectors spoke out against.

Pointing a finger at two Connecticut companies, Aetna Inc. and the *Hartford Courant*, shows slavery was part of the entire nation's economy, the North's and the South's. Accordingly, singling out just one or two companies at a time as promoters of the nation's slave economy is a gross misrepresentation of history. Farmer-Paellmann has dug up slavery dirt on a number of other companies, many of which no longer exist. Aetna Inc. and the *Hartford Courant* simply have the misfortune to continue to be in operation and are therefore targets of demands for coerced apologies.

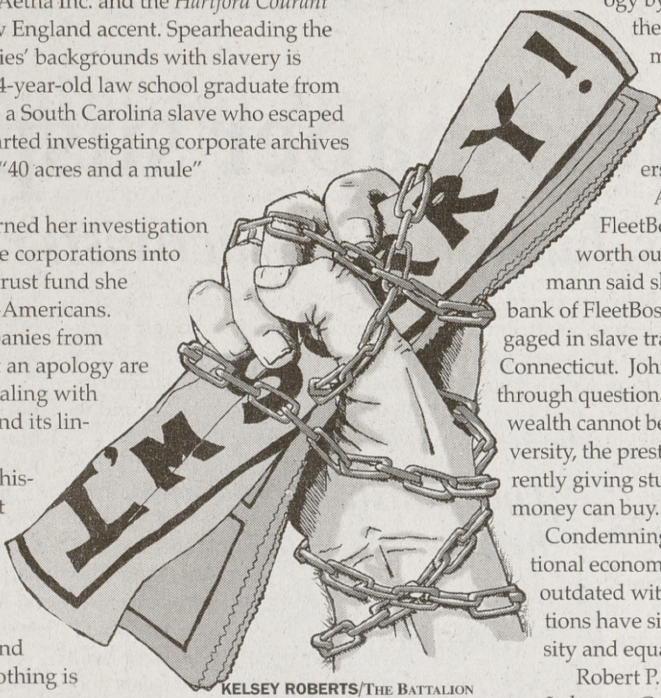
Both these institutions have since evolved with the times and have fully adopted the cause of fighting racism. Aetna Inc. followed its apology by stating its commitment to equality in the workplace and listing anti-racism community projects it supports. Likewise, the *Hartford Courant* now advertises local anti-racism events and serves as a public forum for reporters and editorial writers of diverse racial backgrounds.

Another of Farmer-Paellmann's targets, FleetBoston Financial Corp. has since proven its worth outside of the issue of slavery. Farmer-Paellmann said she found evidence that a predecessor bank of FleetBoston's was founded by a man who engaged in slave trading in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and Connecticut. John Brown may have earned his wealth through questionable means, but what he did with his wealth cannot be overlooked. Brown founded Brown University, the prestigious Ivy League university that is currently giving students of all colors the best education money can buy.

Condemning corporations for participating in a national economy that included slavery is a fruitless and outdated witch hunt, especially when those corporations have since gone on to further the causes of diversity and equality.

Robert P. Forves, executive coordinator of Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition, at Yale University put it best when he said, "The nation as a whole is responsible, all of us." The *Hartford Courant* and Aetna Inc. are not to be singled out and made to feel culpable for a problem that belonged to an entire nation.

Farmer-Paellmann needs to stop issuing guilt trips and adjust her goals. The war against slavery is long over, but the war against racism and inequality is still raging. Farmer-Paellmann should fight the one still worth fighting.



KELSEY ROBERTS/THE BATTALION

Eric Dickens is a senior English major.

Bush plays to NAACP crowd

Last week, Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush spoke before his toughest crowd yet. Going where most Republicans fear to tread, Bush delivered a short-but-sweet sermon to the annual NAACP convention, in which he trumpeted his "compassionate conservative" theme.

African-Americans and Republicans have generally been at odds since the '60s civil rights era, when many Republicans stood as roadblocks to progress in the fight against racism. Since then, most Republicans have regarded the black vote as a lost cause — Bob Dole, for instance, refused to speak at the NAACP's annual meeting during the 1996 presidential election, fearing he had been "set up."

In fairness to Dole and his fellow Republicans, though, the NAACP has seldom offered them a sympathetic forum. In fact, the organization has become more blatantly partisan of late, even excommunicating certain members for their support of Republican candidates. George Bush's appearance at the event was, at least on the surface, an attempt to mend these long-broken fences.

His speech was 15 minutes of ear candy — sugar-coated, but free of substance designed to disprove the common stereotype of the Republican as hard-hearted and insensitive to minorities' concerns. This tactic has brought Bush success before with Latino voters in his home state of Texas, but likely failed to gain him any new converts at the NAACP conference.

Attendees noted that his speech, full of "syrup and religion," was heavy on rhetorical flourishes but light on specifics.

But Bush's goal for this event was more far-sighted than just mollifying the NAACP crowd; this was a subtle statement to the voting public at large — black, white, or otherwise — that he is a moderate, and not a puppet of the extreme right wing of his party.

He has got a lot of convincing to do. Few who pay attention have forgotten Bush's visit to conservative Bob Jones University, one of the most intolerant campuses in the nation, during his Republican pri-

mary fight with John McCain. Bush's appearance there was designed to solidify support among a voting bloc located at the exact opposite end of the political spectrum from the NAACP — white Christian conservatives of the Jesse Helms variety.

So is Bush a hypocrite and a panderer, willing to adapt his message to placate whatever crowd he happens to be speaking to? Yes. But that is what successful politicians do.

It has long been known and demonstrated that, to win an American presidential race, politicians must cater to their party's most extreme, die-hard wing during the primary battle that decides who will be the candidate for the general election.

These party stalwarts are the key to primary victory — they are the ones who actually show up at the polls during these initial contests, while the rest of the voting public starts getting interested much later in the game.

Now that the primaries are over and Bush is the nominee, he is wise to try to broaden his message and appeal with the less-partisan public. Al Gore has been doing the exact same thing, metamorphosing from the ultra-left-wing New Dealer he was during his primary battle with Bill Bradley to a more moderate New Democrat for this general election contest.

It is a quirk of the American political process that causes this kind of see-saw pandering, and, despite the apparent contradictions in the candidates' positions, they well know that a consistent message can be their undoing.

Bush's decision to speak before the NAACP was well-considered. Even though the speech may have fallen upon deaf ears at that convention hall, word of his appearance there will resonate, at least subliminally, with a large section of the American public. All this is evidence of Bush's political maturation — from Bob Jones to the NAACP, George W. Bush has come a long way.

James Minton is a columnist for The Reveille at Louisiana State University.

... reason I'm disappointed I've been to the Olympics. I was hoping to go to five, but it didn't pan out."

— Jackie Joyner-Kersey

... track and field hopeful

... appeared full of energy

... capacity crowd of about

... could not cope with the sapping

... two years of inactivity,

... making the final in fourth

... 10 3/4, Joyner-Kersey did not

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... reason I'm not disappointed

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