OPINIONS

SIDELINES

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT VOICE

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Sidelines

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OPINION

Racist's image finally removed

In some areas of the world, time seems to trudge along at an extremely slow pace.

The United States is one of those places.

Our government is quick to applaud the democratic assurgence in East Europe, but falters when assessing basic civil rights here at home.

MTSU also seems to be another of those places.

But recently, a glimmer of hope was shed for MTSU when the university finally decided to remove the relief sculpture of Nathan Bedford Forrest from the outside wall of the Keathley University Center.

This small accomplishment was realized only after the persistence of pressure groups on cam- ... formed chapter of the

KEATHLEY UNIVERSITY CENTER

A word from the Editor...

Welcome back, General Forrest

During Christmas of 1989, our university saw fit to remove a relief "medallion" of Nathan Bedford Forrest. They were concerned that many students were offended by the representation and indeed many were. This newspaper, under a different editor, took up the issue and boldly supported the move to erase General Forrest's name from virtually every aspect of the university

We are taught in today's politically correct world to be sensitive to the concerns of others. I am. My intention is simply to bring this issue to the forefront of discussion so that, laying politics aside, the issue can be discussed rationally and sensibly. However, many will accuse me of being racist. That is simply not the case. I have many Black friends and DO NOT judge people by the color of their skin but rather "by the content of their character." Growing up, my parents taught me to respect all people, regardless of race, as created equal in the eyes of God and man. They also taught me to take a stand.

As a concerned student of this university, I believe that we need a mascot. As editor, I intend on printing the following picture of General Forrest until one of two things happen:

1. This university recognizes a real mascot or returns to this original "Raider." Or...
2. I am removed as editor of this paper

Send letters of support or disagreement to Box 42. Due to our concern over this matter, we will gladly give press to ALL sides of the issue.

We need a real mascot



JASON WHATLEY
Editor

Whether speaking of "The Volunteers" or "The Fighting Irish," most major universities have a mascot or nickname which symbolizes the great spirit and dedication of its students and alumni. A mascot often becomes a reflection of the excellence and tradition of a university as it embodies the hopes, the dreams and the high emotions that separate that university from every other. We are "The Blue Raiders" and our mascot is "Ole Blue."

Our university has had several other mascots during its' time, though. During our earlier years, we were called by several titles, such as the "Teachers," "Normalites", or even "Pedagogues".

In 1934, the *Daily News Journal* held a contest to finally give our football team a "specific" nickname. Entries were sent in from all over but the $5 prize went to a Middle Tennessee football player named Charles Sarver. Mr. Sarver suggested that we call ourselves the "Blue Raiders." The name, he said, was borrowed from the Colgate Red Raiders. The name stuck and this "common man's" university finally had a mascot.

There was a slight problems though. What exactly was a Blue Raider? No one knew until in 1945 President Q.M. Smith instructed Public Relations Director Gene Sloan to use a symbol of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest along with the nickname. Apparently, a connection was made with "Forrest's Raiders," the famous cavalry unit which taunted the invading Northern armies for four years during the War Between the States.

The fighting spirit of the immortalized Southern general seemed to be just what the students and alumni needed to rally behind. Not long after that, a student arrayed in a Confederate uniform would emulate General Forrest by riding up and down the sidelines on horseback during home games. It became a tradition - something this school needed.

The mascot continued galloping off through victory and defeat along the sidelines and behind the end zones until the mid to late '70s. It was then that concerns for connotations of Nathan Bedford Forrest's' Raiders arose. Many people believed that since General Forrest helped found the Ku Klux Klan, the mascot was offensive to

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Is President Clinton's plan a cure or a curse?



WARREN WAKELAND
Staff Writer

Normally I would not have listened to President Clinton's health care address last Wednesday night. I personally believe this man is a pox on our country, and that it will take decades to eradicate the disease that four years of his policies will create. But I know an instructor here to whom this speech was very important. She has a young son with medical problems that have financially strapped herself and her husband. So I watched this speech and took notes so I could discuss it with her.

Boy, was I disappointed.

Our President did what he does best Wednesday night. He told everyone what the problem is but offered no viable solution.

Let's hit the highlights in his six ideas for reform - Security; Simplicity; Savings; Choice; Quality and Responsibility.

Security. The President believes that everyone should have comprehensive benefits. He did not mention what these benefits would be, save to compare them to Fortune 500-level benefits.

He also wants everyone to have a "Health Care Security Card" and even displayed one. You show the card, you get it fixed. Now isn't that special.

He also mentioned that Medicare should be maintained and it should cover the cost of prescription drugs. If this is what he wants, why has cutting $405 million from Medicare to help pay for the plan even been discussed?

Simplicity. The President mentioned that there are over 1500 insurers with hundreds of forms, and stressed how much of doctor's time is taken up by filling out these forms.

He wants to simplify government rules about health insurance and create one standard insurance form for everyone. To do this he will need incredible cooperation from the health insurance industry.

The only time the insurance industry works together is when they raise rates. To have them all use the same form would be comparable to having every fitness center in this country equipped the same way. Won't happen.

Savings. The President believes reform must produce savings, and he is right. He mentioned his own budget and

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Mascot controversy coming back to surface...

From Page 8

many students at the university. Thus, in order to not offend, the mascot was evolved into "Ole Blue;" a cartoon-like dog. The change was dramatic and obvious.

Since that time, the university has attempted to distance itself from any symbolance of the General and with him, the old Confederacy. During Christmas break of 1989, under pressure from the NAACP and other civil rights groups, a relief sculpture of General Forrest was removed from the outside wall of Keathley University Center. While most students were predictably apathetic about the matter, many were understandably angered.

Today, anyone caught mentioning General Forrest or anything remotely reminiscent of the Old South is branded as a racist or a bigot with no regard for history or truth. The facts are that while General Forrest did help found the Ku Klux Klan, its' purpose was very different at that time. Originally, the "Klan" was founded to combat the harassment and mistreatment by such carpetbaggers as William Brounlow. It was not designed to be a "hate group" against any race - Blacks, Jews or any other. In fact, by the mid 1870s, General Forrest himself disbanded the organization when reconstruction officially ended. Another organization then formed and assumed the name and "costumes" of the original organization. It was this "Klan" which remains as the racist organization of today.

As a Southerner, I am proud that my forefathers fought to preserve their land and protect their families. While I fully understand that not all Southerners fought for such an honorable cause, I also understand that not all Northerners did either. Many immortalize Northern General William T. Sherman as a military genius. I agree. He knew how to fight a war and understood that "war is hell." However, how often do people forget about the 100 mile swath of destruction he ripped from Tennessee to the Atlantic Ocean. How often do people forget about how many of his men raped Southern women and how General Sherman himself ordered a "scortched-earth" policy which consisted of stealing the food of Southern citizens and burning their farms.

No one can say that General Forrest, or any other man or woman of that time period, was 100 percent pure in his intents. All that can be said is that he fought valiantly to protect his country and that many Southerners still remember him as a hero.

History tells us that General Forrest fought against unbelievable odds. He was outnumbered - sometimes 10 to 1. His men were hungry and often short on ammunition. Nevertheless, the "Raiders" pressed on, fought valiantly, and won despite the odds.

Our Blue Raiders are very much like General Forrest's Raiders. They represent a university with students from every part of the country and the world who are united here in Murfreesboro for a common purpose - to win and get ahead in life. They represent a university that while often looked down upon by "SEC" or Division 1-A schools, still competes and wins despite overwhelming odds. The Blue Raiders know what it is like to press on, even when many say they don't have a chance. They are winners.

While "Ole Blue" is a nice old hound, he doesn't represent the spirit and determination to excel that we need at MTSU. We should bring back General Forrest as our mascot, or vote on a new mascot, as the Master Plan suggests. With the inevitable move to Division 1-A, we need a mascot, a nickname, that the students and alumni can be proud of and rally behind. As a university, we should have the courage to select and stand behind a mascot that inherently stands for more than a just a name, but a tradition.

Any thoughts on our mascot? Send your opinion to Box 42. We want to hear from you!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

State of Tennessee should pay back the federal government

This letter is in response to Scott Hamilton's "Southern patriot proud of his heritage" in the *Sidelines* Sept. 16 issue. Mr. Hamilton believes the South is still an occupied territory of the North. Mr. Hamilton, I suggest that you write your congressman and demand that the state of Tennessee pay back every penny it has received in these departments:

Agricultural Conservation Program, Child Care Food Program, Food Stamp Bonus Coupons, National School Lunch Program-Cash, Supplemental Food-Women,Infants, and Children, Water and Waste Disposal Grants, Commodity Loans, Economic Emergency Loans, Conservation Operations, Forest Manage,Protection, and Utilization, Meat and Poultry Inspection, Short-Term Export Credit Sales, Business and Industrial Loans, Farm Operating and Ownership Loans, Periodic Censuses, Civilian Pay, Military Active Duty Pay, Military Construction Contracts, Military Service Contracts, Military Reserve and National Guard Pay, Military Retired Pay, Basic Educational Opportunity Grant Program, Educational Deprived Children, Handicapped Preschool and School Programs, Direct Student Loans, Law Enforcement Education Program, Rehabilitation Services-Basic Support, Alternate Fuels Production-Resource, Advanced Nuclear System-Energy Technology, Breeder-Energy Technology, Coal-Energy Technology, Environmental Research, Magnetic Fusion Energy Technology, Uranium Enrichment-Resource Applications, Weapons Activities-Defense Program, Alcohol Formula Grants, Cancer Cause and Prevention Research, Community Health Centers, Family Planning Projects, Medical Assistance Program, Medicare, Social Security-Disability,Retirement, and Survivors Insurance, Supplemental Security Income, Public Housing Assistance Program, Operation of the National Park System, Comprehensive Employment and Training Programs, Unemployment Benefits, Allowances, and Compensation, Interest on the Public Debt, Civil Service Retirement and Disability Fund, Postal Service Fund, Veterans Disability Compensation and Pension and Tennessee Valley Authority Grant Fund.

Only then can I agree with you that Tennessee would be an occupied territory. But until you get this bill paid, Tennessee is a State Of The United States Of America!

GREG HOENIE
BOX 8091

While standing on a moralistic soapbox, our children die of AIDS

I am relieved to have been informed as to the identity of the "mystery writer" of "Interim President Clinton makes a bad choice for Surgeon." I am compelled to write about Mr. Fletcher's philosophies.

As a mother of twin boys who are the most precious people in my life, I believe that I am teaching my sons appropriate behaviors that will enable them to become responsible adults and kind people. I disagree with everything Mr. Fletcher wrote; however, the one issue which concerns me the most is the issue of safe sex.

I am a person who chooses to take a realistic approach to life, and I honestly think that it would be pointless to teach my sons abstinence. Abstinence is a very positive concept; however, everyone does not practice it regardless of their upbringing. I would like to pose a question for Mr. Fletcher, "Had you rather go to your child's high-school graduation, or go to your child's funeral?"

We can not afford to stand on a moralistic soapbox and watch our children die of AIDS. If I knew that driving to the store at midnight to purchase condoms would save the lives of my sons, I would do it without regret. Consequently, I don't think that either of us would burn in hell, and I am most certain that I could sleep better when I got back home.

ALICIA MARTIN
BOX 1931

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following letter was sent to Dr. Walker and printed upon the writer's request.*

Dear Dr. Walker,

Thank you for the new shuttle buses on campus. However, I (and my fellow riders) would like to bring to your attention the further need for:

* More buses to cover the existing route and to make the rest of the campus accessible
* Covered bus stops

Another issue which I think deserves your attention is the increase in parking costs this year for family housing. If this were a prime parking area close to classes, there might be justification for such a large increase. These are <u>not</u> prime parking spaces, however, and I cannot justify paying an extra $20 for parking. My family has two cars, so for us to be able to park close to where we live we would have to pay fifty dollars. That's enough to feed my family for a little more than a week! We were forced to get the $10 permits, resulting in a walk of at least three hundred feet to our apartment! It feels as though those of us who live in family housing are being punished. Five or ten dollars more a year would be reasonable.

Further, an issue which affects my family and many other students who attend the university regards child care. I am three months pregnant. When my baby is born I will be forced to take it to class with me because child care is not provided for newborns to three years. There is, however, child care for three to five year-olds on campus. It seems that it would be very simple to add this much needed service to the list of benefits a student receives when she or he pays tuition. There are education, nursing, home economics, and social work majors on campus who would make great student workers for a daycare facility, while providing an opportunity for internship.

The final item is housing. There are a number of families living in family housing in dire need of another bedroom. For example, I know of a family with three children, eleven, four, and two, all living in a tiny two bedroom apartment. My feelings go out to the eleven year old. He is at the age where he needs privacy, and he's having to share his room with two significantly younger children. There seems to be enough room at the rear of family housing to build two three-bedroom buildings.

These items are important to many students on campus. Your prompt and sincere attention would be greatly appreciated.

SHANNON SEA
BOX 42

Confederate flag represents racism, even if it is your heritage

I know, I know. Everyone is sick of the Confederate flag issue, but there are some statements that have been made in previous issues of this newspaper that made me feel the need to speak out.

First of all, I believe that people are free to display whatever symbols they want to in their own homes and on their property. A group also has the right to use a symbol to represent their organization. However, when it comes to displaying a symbol in a public place such as a school that is supported by taxpayers money or on a state flag, if the display is offensive to any taxpayer it should not be allowed there.

I agree with Jay Travis' statement that if we ban one symbol then we must ban others, but I do not see how he can compare the Confederate flag to the symbol "X." These symbols stand for totally different things. The Confederate flag offends many people because of the message it speaks. Symbols are created for a purpose, to represent a thought or way of

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Health care program bad medicine for Americans...

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the 11 percent increase in Medicaid costs and said "We cannot continue to do this." Then why was the budget passed?

He said that health care premiums are 35 percent higher for small business than for big business, and that we must allow small business to compete in price and quality of insurance. He called it "giving the same market bargaining power" to small business.

This is absurd. A company with 40 employees cannot have the same bargaining power as a business with 10,000 employees because they aren't going to spend the kind of money that the bigger business will spend. Insurance companies would go bankrupt in this scenario.

He also wants to end the paperwork mountain and cut down on fraud and abuse within the health system. Good idea.

How do you manage fraud and abuse without a police force? Not everyone is as honest as our President. And what of the cost involved in cutting the fraud and abuse? Enormous.

Choice. The President wants to give everyone a choice among three different plans, and if you don't like the plan you choose, you can change plans. Talk about paperwork!

He also wants to give doctors a choice of plans, and give them the ability to work in several different plans at the same time.

What happens if his nurse makes a mistake with your records? The nightmare scenarios are endless. Ever have a problem with a bill payment not getting to the proper place? Imagine what could happen if your bill for a knee operation got put in the wrong plan. Working with the government on this could take months to straighten out.

Quality. The President wants to emphasize research in the health system. He also wants to create a report card on the individual health plans available so we will be able to easily tell which plan is best for us.

This is a good idea, but these plans will have to be incredibly more simple than the plans the insurance industry offer now. Health care just isn't that simple.

Responsibility. The President seemed to feel this is the most important part of the equation. He wants the insurance industry, doctors, lawyers, and everyone else involved to get along with each other. He calls it ending the practice of driving up costs for the consumer.

He wants to end the problem of having teens on our city's streets being better armed than the police. he calls it the "cost of violence."

These are both envious ideals, but possibly unrealistic. As long as people are unhappy with treatment, there are going to be malpractice lawsuits and high costs involved. As long as handguns are legal, teens will be better armed than police in every urban area of our country, and 16-year-olds will continue to be gunned down at ATM machines.

The President also mentioned something very distressing to me. He said that people who currently have no insurance must pay a portion of the cost. he said that everyone must be covered, and that employers must insure employees even if the employees do not want insurance.

What happened to choice? Supposedly 37 million people have no health insurance, but certainly some of these people choose not to carry insurance even though they can afford it. These people will now be forced to carry insurance. This may be unconstitutional.

How much of a chunk is small business going to have to pay in payroll taxes to insure employees that may not want it? How much are employees going to lose from their weekly paycheck that just gets them by as is to pay their share?

It is a huge mistake to force businesses to insure their employees. Make them offer insurance if you must, but even that will kill a lot of small businesses because many cannot afford the purported 7 percent payroll tax to pay for the insurance.

Through all of this big speech two things stood out to me above all else.

One is that there were no specified costs mentioned at all.

All through my notes, I seemed to keep writing one word more than any other - cost. There was not one mention of what anything in this plan or the plan itself would cost or how any of this would be paid.

Second is that the President dealt almost exclusively in generalities. No details at all about specifics like what kind of subsidy small businesses with 50 or fewer employees will get. He mentioned a tobacco tax, but not how much of a tax, or if a liquor tax would go along with it.

President Clinton once again became Candidate Clinton last Wednesday night. The big speech was simply a pep talk to the American public that informed people of all the problems we already knew about, and said "Trust us, we'll fix it."

What we got was the head coach gathering the players together before the big game to say, "I've told you what needs to be done! Now let's go out there and execute!" The only problem is that there is no detailed game plan from which to execute.

When a team can't execute, they lose. We can't afford to lose this game. Let's hope the head coach comes up with the detailed game plan pretty soon. Otherwise there will definitely be a rout.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you have an opinion on the President's health care plan, the mascot issue, or anying else, let us know by writing to Box 42 or calling 898-2815. If your opinion is rather lenthy, talk to us about writing a guest column.

This paper is for all students. So whether your from the right or the left, let us know how you feel.

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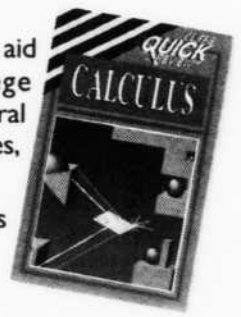
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

From Page 9

life and that can never be separated from the symbol itself. The Confederate flag was created by Southern whites to symbolize their state rights and their rights to a certain way of life which included owning slaves as property. There is no way that anyone can see this flag without linking it to slavery and all of the pain and injustice that went along with it. It is a symbol of a lot of blood shed and pain.

The symbol "X" is a totally different matter. Only people who have not read significantly about Malcolm X could compare it to a symbol that reflects hatred. Malcolm never killed anyone in his life and was never involved with violence. During the first part of his public life he was aggressive and believed that separation of blacks and whites was the only way for blacks to be free. However, before he died he had changed his mind. He had seen in Mecca that people of all colors could live together without hatred. His final message was for blacks and whites to join together, to quit fighting and to allow everyone to enjoy their freedom. When the symbol "X" is used it represents a moral, intellectual, strong man who stood up for what he believed and was humble enough to change his mind and admit that he had been wrong.

My last point about the flag issue is that their is no way to say that a symbol is only a representation of one's heritage and not a representation of what it stands for. Here is an example: if you were a Jew living in America and Arnold Schwarzeneger started wearing a shirt with a Nazi symbol on it that said "Heritage not Hatred" (his father was involved in the Nazi party) would you say "Oh he's just remembering his roots" or would you see pictures of the atrocities that had been committed against your people and link that with the person wearing the shirt?

The Confederate flag is just as painful for many people in America. You can fly it, because that is your right; but don't deny what it stands for. When you fly that flag you are making a political statement, whether or not you admit it. If you believe that life was better when women and blacks had no rights, then fly that flag. If you believe that white men should control all of the property and government then fly that flag. If you believe that Southerners are better than anyone else, then fly that flag. At least that way those of us who don't agree with you will know where you stand on the issues.

CARA COATES
A141

We want to know about CONTROVERSIAL or *intersting* topics on campus. If you know of one, please call 898-2815 or write to Box 42. Mr. Whatley wants to hear from you.

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