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# Flag Folly



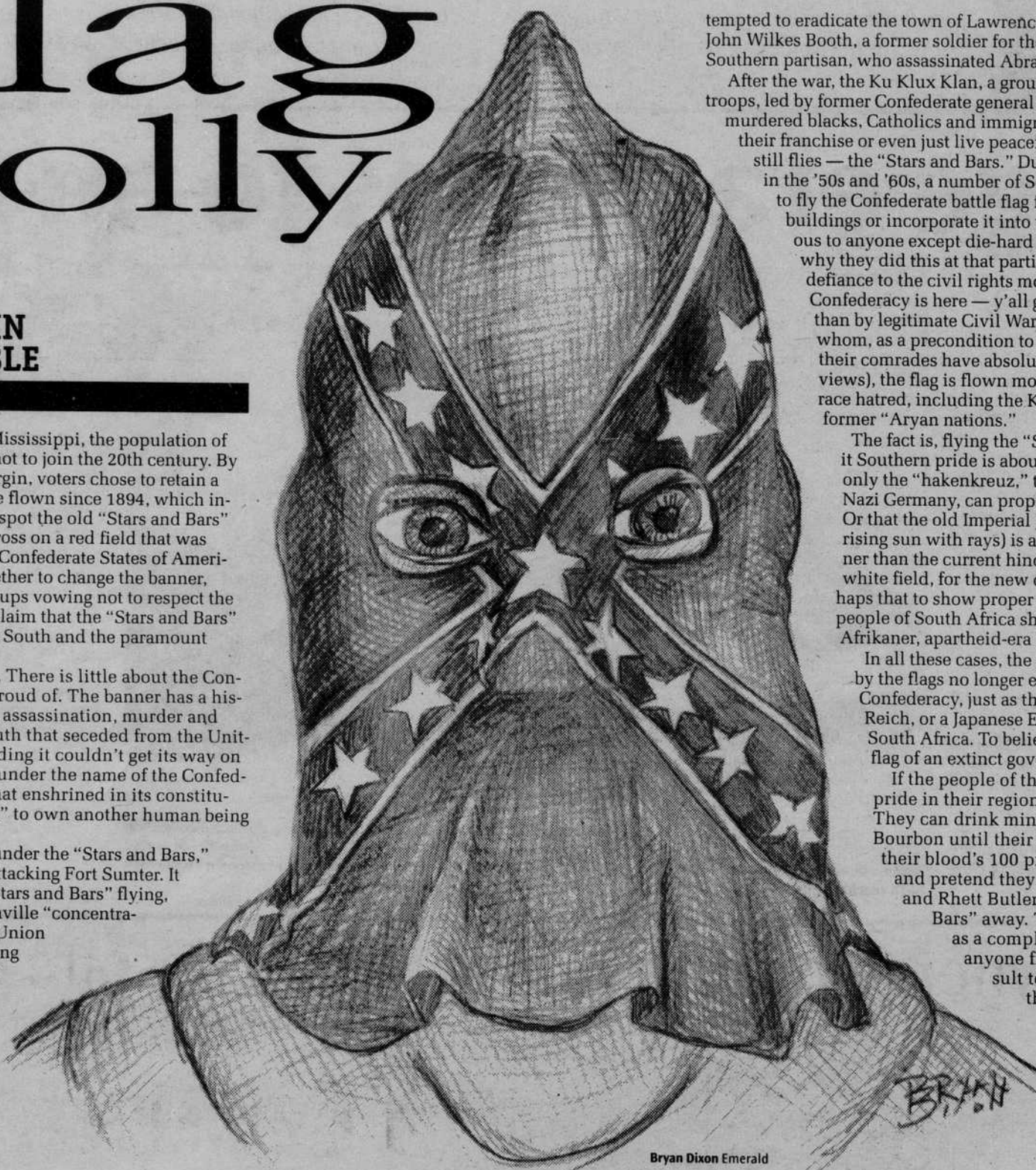
**CAPTAIN SENSIBLE**

**PAT PAYNE**

Two weeks ago in Mississippi, the population of the state decided not to join the 20th century. By a nearly 2-to-1 margin, voters chose to retain a state flag they have flown since 1894, which incorporated in a prominent spot the old "Stars and Bars" — the blue St. Andrew's Cross on a red field that was the military banner for the Confederate States of America. Debate raged about whether to change the banner, with Southern-heritage groups vowing not to respect the new flag if adopted. They claim that the "Stars and Bars" is an integral symbol of the South and the paramount symbol of Southern pride.

Let's get real here, folks. There is little about the Confederate battle flag to be proud of. The banner has a history of secession, treason, assassination, murder and race hatred. It was the South that seceded from the United States in 1861 after finding it couldn't get its way on slavery. It was the South, under the name of the Confederate States of America, that enshrined in its constitution the "inalienable right" to own another human being as property.

It was the Confederacy, under the "Stars and Bars," that launched the war by attacking Fort Sumter. It was the Confederacy, its "Stars and Bars" flying, that operated the Andersonville "concentration camp," where 30,000 Union POWs were held in appalling and deadly conditions that ultimately killed half the prison's population. It was the Confederacy, under the "Stars and Bars," that employed the murderous Quantrill's Raiders, a group of mercenaries who at-



Bryan Dixon Emerald

tempted to eradicate the town of Lawrence, Kan., in 1862. It was John Wilkes Booth, a former soldier for the Confederacy and a Southern partisan, who assassinated Abraham Lincoln.

After the war, the Ku Klux Klan, a group of former Confederate troops, led by former Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest, murdered blacks, Catholics and immigrants trying to exercise their franchise or even just live peacefully. The Klan flew — and still flies — the "Stars and Bars." During the civil rights battles in the '50s and '60s, a number of Southern states either began to fly the Confederate battle flag from prominent state buildings or incorporate it into their state flags. It's obvious to anyone except die-hard fans of the Confederacy why they did this at that particular time: It was to show defiance to the civil rights movement, as if to say, "The Confederacy is here — y'all go away." Today, other than by legitimate Civil War re-enactors (most of whom, as a precondition to membership, demand that their comrades have absolutely no pro-Klan or racist views), the flag is flown mostly by groups espousing race hatred, including the Klan, Nazi groups and the former "Aryan nations."

The fact is, flying the "Stars and Bars" and calling it Southern pride is about the same as saying that only the "hakenkreuz," the swastika banner of Nazi Germany, can properly depict German pride. Or that the old Imperial Japanese Army banner (a rising sun with rays) is a more representative banner than the current hinomaru, a red disc on a white field, for the new democratic Japan. Or perhaps that to show proper pride in their country, the people of South Africa should display the pre-1993 Afrikaner, apartheid-era flag.

In all these cases, the governments represented by the flags no longer exist. There is no longer a Confederacy, just as there is no longer a Third Reich, or a Japanese Empire or apartheid in South Africa. To believe otherwise by flying the flag of an extinct government is self-delusion.

If the people of the South want to show pride in their region, more power to them. They can drink mint juleps and Kentucky Bourbon until their livers turn green and their blood's 100 proof. They can go ahead and pretend they're all Scarlett O'Haras and Rhett Butlers. But put the "Stars and Bars" away. That flag should be seen as a complete embarrassment to anyone from the South and an insult to the country in which the Southerners now live.

Pat Payne is a columnist for the Oregon Daily Emerald. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald. He can be reached at across\_SD@hotmail.com.

## Public issues deserve public scrutiny

The Emerald editorial board doesn't ordinarily produce an editorial two days in a row. But Monday afternoon's announcement by University Athletic Director Bill Moos and Vice President for Administration Dan Williams caught us off guard and deserves an immediate response.

Apparently, an "exit strategy" was developed, allowing University women's basketball coach Jody Runge to offer her resignation, receive an undisclosed financial settlement and close the book on the whole controversy surrounding her job performance and the specter of NCAA violations.

We would love to write a long, thoughtful editorial examining the reasons why Runge left, the relative merits of the charges against her, and the wisdom (or lack thereof) of the final decision and the amount of the settlement.

Unfortunately, we can't. Neither can any of the many interested people in the community who have

been following the issue closely — thanks to the attention Runge brought to the program during her eight years at the University. At Monday's press conference, it was made clear that the settlement's dollar amount won't be released. It's a private matter, Williams said. The law firm's report may or may not be released, the two administration officials said.

If it isn't made public, no one will ever know if the University actually had legitimate reasons to push Runge as far as it did. It's a private matter — that was Moos' and Williams' repeated response to questions about the settlement and the report.

Basically, this is crap. Moos himself made the whole issue public. Thanks to the law firm's investigation, Runge was metaphorically dragged through the mud in front of the whole community, only without the actual details that would allow us all to come to an intelligent conclusion. But now it's private. Sure.

So at the end, is Runge's name cleared? We don't know. What was really going on in the program? We don't know. Did Runge violate rules? We don't know. How much did the Athletic Department pay to keep her from suing? We don't know. And, the way matters are set now, neither will you.

And that's not OK.

This is a public university. It was a public issue, and Runge was a public employee. The law firm's report and the terms of the settlement should be released. The community — University students, faculty and staff, as well as the surrounding Eugene area — deserves to know.

It's only fair that the administration and the Athletic Department are placed under the microscope now, just to make certain that they were carrying out their job duties in an appropriate manner.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

## Letters to the editor

### Let us read Horowitz's ad

I can't believe the commotion over the slavery reparations ad in the April 17 Oregon Daily Emerald. The article only wanted to contribute to a free exchange of ideas, and it did. Most replies to the ad were quick to call David Horowitz racist. The article wasn't racist in nature, it just looked at logical, rational arguments against monetary slavery reparations. Isn't it conceivable that a non-racist might have problems with reparations for reasons not based on race?

But even more, I can't believe that some individual or group removed all back copies of that day's paper so that others couldn't read the ad. I looked in the EMU for extra copies, and they were gone. Maybe they were taken by people interested in the ad. Apparently, at other campuses across the country where the ad was published, people have removed the papers so students couldn't read the ad. When people do this, they are blatantly stating:

"Our position is not strong enough to withstand arguments, even misguided or erroneous ones, from the opposition."

If they expect us to believe what they do, let us read the ad! How much stronger will our belief in your cause be if we know exactly what the opposition says?

If their only recourse against their opponents is to silence them, my guess is that they do not have a very strong argument based in fact and reason, and they want the average person to decide the issue based upon emotion and misinformation.

Dave Reed  
 senior  
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