



NATHAN NYANJOM
A DIFFERENT ANGLE

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Nationality is more than just a jersey

The singing of the national anthem is a staple of any sporting event, and the FIFA World Cup final in the summer of 2006 was no exception.

When it came time for the Italian soccer team to be shown singing its national anthem, starting midfielder Mauro Camoranesi was shown not singing — not because he was trying to do his best emotionless impersonation of Chuck Norris but because he simply didn't know the words.

Born and raised in Argentina, Camoranesi only became a "naturalized" Italian later in life, justifying it by saying, "I'm not a traitor; I still feel 100 percent Argentine."

AT-LARGE COLUMNIST

It's only a football matter, nothing else.

While this anecdote of Camoranesi makes one laugh, the sad truth of the matter is that in soccer, and many other sports, players leave their countries of origin to join bigger, larger and more prominent countries, helping these world powers achieve athletic success that otherwise would be unattainable.

This practice is not only immoral but deplorable, and responsibility lies not on the individual athletes in question but on the countries that absorb these foreign players, including the United States of America.

That's right — the United States of America is at fault.

We were told by our mothers growing up that it's OK to not be the best at something.

As we got older, we found that this was not the American way. In our effort to become No. 1 at every sport imaginable, we have lowered ourselves to the level of taking players from other countries and quickly making them American citizens so that we can exploit their physical abilities.

In the form of 18-year-old Freddy Adu, the United States has the face of the future of American soccer. While Adu was born in Ghana and raised there until he was 8, when he moved to the U.S. with his mom, his foreign past seems to be forgotten since he now is the captain of America's under-21 national team.

Distance runner Bernard Lagat similarly will win awards for the United States at this summer's Olympics despite representing his native Kenya at the 2004 games.

It's OK that the United States isn't superior when it comes to international sport as this is a reflection of the greater opportunity extended to America's youth. We are presented with ample opportunities through which to achieve success — opportunities alien to children of other countries.

Just as with education and music, American youths must pick a few sports to play from a list of hundreds while children growing up in many South American and African countries have only the choice between soccer or stickball.

The children of many of the world's football powers have fewer options in sport and in life, and it is for this reason that soccer has a greater emphasis in everyday life. Argentina and Brazil lead FIFA's rankings as of now — countries that had the 67th- and 49th-highest gross domestic product per capita in 2000, respectively.

As a proud American citizen, I realize that the greater diversity of choice extended to me comes with a lack of superiority in one individual sport, and this in turn can explain why our country did not win the 2006 World Cup, 2006 World Baseball Classic or basketball competition at the 2004 Olympic games in Athens.

Brazil would never offer its national team jersey to foreign players, and it is important that we do the same.

If America wants to achieve superiority in these global sports, it is important that it do so the right way — by investing time and money in developing home-grown talent.

In the meantime, let's hope that Freddy Adu knows the Pledge of Allegiance.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Terrence Nowicki, The Western Front



Handle with care

CHPD right to have senior officers lead protest response

Protests are by nature usually meant to push the limits of legality in order to ensure the message is heard.

This can create some dicey and potentially explosive situations if officers called in to respond to the protest don't handle the situation with care.

To assuage the possibility of problems, the Chapel Hill Police Department made the right call in changing policy to require a supervisor of sergeant rank or above to attend protests in the town to ensure no major disturbances occur.

The change was made in response to the review of a Nov. 30 protest at a Burger King, where a UNC graduate student was arrested after refusing to

leave the scene when an officer told the crowd to disperse.

The new policy also calls for police to visit the site of planned protests in order to be better prepared to handle them.

Police presence at protests can quickly spiral out of control if officers don't practice good crowd control while avoiding unnecessary clashes with otherwise peaceful protesters.

A rather extreme example of what can occur when the police don't react to crowds well is the 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, when police use of pepper spray and tear gas sparked a battle between protesters and police officers that resulted in 600 arrests and the resignation of the chief of police.

While our quiet little 'burbs of Chapel Hill is unlikely to see anything on that scale, it does show the necessity of proper police preparation, as does the Burger King incident.

At the same time, protesters need to understand that in some cases, police are already bending the law to allow the protests to occur. They should be sympathetic to the job the officers are doing and acquiesce to reasonable police requests.

Having more experienced police officers on hand at protests will go a long way in ensuring that the police act in such a way that protesters' First Amendment rights are upheld while the rights of others to use public space is not infringed upon.

Don't neglect the middle

Government should increase, improve college tax credits

During campaign seasons candidates make all sorts of outlandish promises with hopes of swaying the public into their camps.

But an idea recently tossed around in the gun battle between the Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton camps is that of increasing tax credits available to families of college students.

We hope this is one issue that the candidates continue to focus on, as increasing tax credits can help both the lower and middle classes in the fight against increasing tuition costs.

Currently the government allots \$1,650 worth of tax credit per student via the Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning Tax Credits legislation, instituted by President Bill Clinton in 1997.

For the accounting-challenged, a tax credit is like a discount on your taxes. The government essentially covers part of your tax bill.

There are two different types of tax credits — refundable and nonrefundable. A refundable tax credit allows for the taxpayer to

receive money back if he has more credit than tax. The difference between the credit granted and the tax owed goes into the taxpayer's pocket.

However, the college tax credits under the 1997 law are non-refundable, meaning that if the credit exceeds the tax owed, no tax is paid, but instead of going to the taxpayer, the difference stays in government coffers.

The current policy of non-refundable tax credit works well enough for the middle tier, which is typically less eligible for need-based financial aid. That said, a greater tax credit would certainly improve the situation further for them.

Because of their nonrefundable nature, the tax credits are less useful to lower-income student households, which typically pay little or no taxes anyway and thus get little benefit from the tax credit.

Both realistic Democratic candidates are offering plans that would change the Hope credit to a refundable tax credit and increase it up to \$3,500 (Clinton) or \$4,000 (Obama)

per student.

Both also want to make advances on the credit available, so it's more like cash in your pocket than a discount on your taxes — a matter of semantics but an important one.

The increase should benefit middle-income students who are typically left in the awkward situation of having fewer financial aid options available but aren't wealthy enough to be able to pay for college out of pocket.

The middle class is often neglected by other financial aid options. Pell Grants, which go almost exclusively to low-income students, were increased last year by Congress, and President Bush's budget proposal this year sought to increase them further at the expense of loans targeted to middle-income students.

The change to refundable credits would also benefit lower-income Americans, who would have a little extra money courtesy of the tax credit and could put it toward their educations.

Let's hope this campaign promise is one that sticks around beyond November.

No men allowed

Women-only gym hours should benefit women

Harvard University recently adjusted the hours of one of the school's three recreation centers to include women-only hours.

The move was made in an effort to accommodate the needs of female Muslim students so that they could continue to adhere to religious observances that would be jeopardized by using the facility with male students.

We applaud Harvard's move and think that other schools should follow suit if it would benefit students.

In today's political climate it would not be surprising to find some students up in arms about Harvard's response to the requests of six students.

In fact, an opinion writer for The Harvard Crimson newspaper wrote about the change, calling it "unjust to men and useless to women."

But for many women, and not just those practicing Islam, there are a number of issues that make exercising with men uncomfortable or undesirable.

Some might be concerned with modesty, like the Muslim students, while others might simply not like getting the "you're wasting my time, get off the chest press machine" look from a few overly pushy patrons.

Also, the school set aside the least-trafficked hours in order to displace the least amount of students possible. The gym is restricted to women from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays.

There are two other recreation facilities open to students at those times, therefore making any real complaints about these minimal restrictions moot.

The most convincing argument, however, is in regard to student fees. The women who were unable to use the exercise facilities paid student fees, part of which contributed to the operation of the gyms they couldn't comfortably use. They too should have the opportunity to benefit from the services provided by their fees.

Harvard is a private institution, which affords it more leeway when making decisions to accommodate the religious beliefs of students.

As a forward-thinking public institution, however, we'd like to think that should any student on campus be struggling with similar issues as the Harvard women, then they too would be accommodated.

These women deserve the freedom to practice their religious beliefs while having the opportunity to use school facilities.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"I'm a man without a country. I still have cultural identity questions. ... I'm not really American or Venezuelan."

ROBERT BILBAO, TEACHER, ON FORMER UNDOCUMENTED STATUS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Feel strongly about something that has been printed? Post your own response to a letter, editorial or story online. VISIT www.dailytarheel.com/feedback

Surry Wood earned DTH senior recognition, too

TO THE EDITOR:

I was psyched when I saw Quentin Thomas on the front page of the Daily Tar Heel Tuesday morning ("Playing the waiting game," March 4). He deserves it.

However, after I read the article detailing Thomas' story before he came to Chapel Hill and the struggles he's faced while on the basketball team, I was disappointed to see there was no mention of senior Surry Wood. Not even a measly little paragraph.

I understand that Thomas has obviously had more playing time and played a more vital role on the basketball team. He stepped it up this season, and he should be recognized.

However, the sports desk's failure to mention Wood and his path to the UNC basketball team was wrong. The basketball team is a TEAM, and every player is important. It's Wood's last home game too, and his story needs to be told to the readers as well.

Tarheelblue.com said, "It's the senior night edition of the Mailbag. And of course, it begins with a reminder: Tonight is the last opportunity for fans to salute Quentin Thomas and Surry Wood for what they've given to the program."

What THEY'VE given. Wood deserves the respect and recognition in the DTH for all of the hard work he has put forth to earn a spot on the basketball team.

Hannah Autry
Sophomore
Journalism, Political Science

Obama has tangible ideas to go with his rhetoric, too

TO THE EDITOR:

Russell Parmele, that was a cute letter ("Conservatives should not silence criticism of Obama," March 4). It is obvious that you have not followed the presidential campaign very closely.

Yes, Barack Obama frequently uses the words "hope" and "change" in his speeches. This is partly because their meanings resonate with the American people. That's what politicians do — they coin words and phrases that illuminate their general dispositions.

However, it's important to realize that "hope" and "change" are key to the substance behind Obama's candidacy. Obama is someone who can help transgress bitter partisanship and push back the lobbyists who are choking the voices of the American people.

If you really want substance and "tangible" ideas, go to Obama's Web site and read his detailed policy proposals. When a candidate is speaking on the stump, it's difficult to just talk policy. However, if you've listened to his speeches recently, you would realize they are now full of policy issues.

Obama is not calling for the government to take over health care; his focus is on cutting costs, improving quality and creating a new public health plan that helps drive down prices while preserving the plans that already exist. That is not socialism.

However, if you are staunchly opposed to socialism, please don't cash any Social Security checks when you retire.

Raven Moeslinger
Junior
Political Science

The secular left actually does have some extremists

TO THE EDITOR:

In Tuesday's Daily Tar Heel, Noah Savage's letter to the editor ("There is only an extreme on the right, not the left," March 4) was misleadingly titled.

Savage was not arguing that there is no leftist extreme, only that the secular left is not an extremist political position in the same way that the religious right is because the secular left covers a much wider political group than the religious right.

While I generally agree with Savage's position, an anti-religious extreme is present within the secular left, which claims that religion is inherently harmful.

Consider, for example, American author Sam Harris, whose book "The End of Faith" advocates ending religion altogether. Also notable is British biologist Richard Dawkins, whose attacks on religion have been parodied on South Park. And let us not forget the original secular leftist extremist, Karl Marx.

I make no judgment on these positions (except for Marx — I'm not a fan of communism); I myself am an atheist, though not anti-religious. I simply can't deny the presence of an extremist element within the secular left.

Cameron Van Iderstine
Freshman
English

Hope is the driving force behind American ideology

TO THE EDITOR:

In response to Russell Parmele's criticism of Barack Obama ("Conservatives should not silence criticism of Obama," March 4), he obviously does not understand the basics of what the United States of America was founded on.

Under oppressive British rule, the driving force of our revolution became hope. Hope is what this nation is built on and is a driving force behind American ideology.

The American people have been subjected to corrupt politics and promises that are often never fulfilled long enough; now with the U.S. in such lousy shape, the only thing left is hope.

It is Obama who rises above, delivers a health care plan for the people and allows the people to decide where their hard-earned tax dollars go, whether it be for social security or the environment or back in your pocket.

Obama isn't necessarily enticing to the public because of his speeches full of wonderful jargon or his promises of hope, but the fact that he is the last standing candidate that is truly what a president should be ... a representative of the people.

So yes, with the economy suffering and the Iraq war getting out of hand, the degradation of the environment and the fact that millions of people do not have health care, I am entitled to hold on to and believe in the fundamental idea that America is based on ... hope and the person who represents it best, Obama.

Darren Webber
Freshman
Applied Sciences

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,
115 years
of editorial freedom

SPEAK OUT

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- Sign and date: No more than two people should sign letters.
- Students: Include your year, major and phone number.
- Faculty/staff: Include your department and phone number.
- Edit: The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Limit letters to 250 words.

SUBMISSION:

- Drop-off: at our office at Suite 2409 in the Student Union.
- E-mail: to editdesk@unc.edu
- Send: to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515.

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