

JAMIE KARI

# Racial guilt complex ludicrous

Homecoming is supposed to be a good time. But like every other good time, there are always those ready to poop on the party.

Three weeks ago, University of Nebraska-Lincoln students Kwani Stewart and Ayanna Boykins both complained they had been overlooked as applicants for the 1994 UNL homecoming court. Both women happen to be black, and both claimed the royalty selection process was biased against minorities.

In a letter to the homecoming royalty committee, Stewart and Boykins said the committee itself was "not diverse enough to understand the applications submitted from minorities."

But according to Andy Vuko, chairwoman of the royalty committee, race never was a factor. In fact, Vuko said there was nothing on the application that asked for the applicant's race. When Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs James Griesen, who oversaw the selection process, confirmed Vuko's report, the complaints lost most of their validity; the issue was a done deal.

Or at least it should have been. The following day, the Daily Nebraskan ran its editorial, saying: "Just as last year ... this year's (homecoming) will be homogenous," and that "once again, UNL's homecoming royalty court has failed to accurately represent the UNL student community."

Then there was the disturbing Daily Nebraskan letter to the editor from Thyra Lowe, a UNL graduate student. In her letter, Ms. Lowe complained that the racist attitudes of "America's majority" have not changed much since 1751. The letter attacked more than just the royalty committee; it implied America's entire foundation was laid on a racist policy, making minorities take a lesser role in society.

All in all, it made for an interesting week. But it got better. On the day after Stewart and



*For us, despite the sins of America's past — whether slavery or segregation or mistreatment of Hispanic, Asian or European immigrants or American Indians — America is one of God's greatest gifts to humankind.*

Boykins' complaints were made public, one of my liberal fault-finders asked me what I thought about the accusations and the whole situation. I said, "Oh, somebody will always whine about something."

"Dammit, you're a jerk," my liberal adversary cried. "After everything those people have been put through, don't you think we could let one of them be homecoming royalty?"

"After we have put them through things like slavery and segregation, don't you feel a little guilty that not even one African-American is on your own school's homecoming court?"

"I'm supposed to feel guilty?" I asked. "Why should I feel guilty?" There, in my latter question, lies the heart of the matter.

It all comes down to the aspect of guilt. The Daily Nebraskan editorial was written by a white student with a guilty conscience, with the intent of creating more guilt within more white students. Ms. Lowe's letter was written to portray white America as oppressors. Both attempts failed at their objective.

The fact is, most white students, including those on the royalty committee, have a different sense of guilt than those of the liberal lot, to which certain DN editorial writers and Ms. Lowe belong.

To most white students, sin is personal, not collective. Our sense of shame is about what we have done ourselves, not about what our ancestors did six generations ago.

Collective guilt is an affliction from which liberals suffer; we conservatives do not.

This immunity to collective guilt makes conservatives a more fair people; we judge on individual merits, regardless of color. To us, ethnicity, as a qualification, means nothing. A conservative would neither reject nor appoint someone to the homecoming court solely because of the color of that person's skin.

When choosing homecoming royalty, we should not necessarily be looking to represent campus ethnicity. We should look to find the best of the best, whatever the color. Those demanding more minorities on the court feel white America is undoubtedly guilty of some injustice and that whites must do something about it.

What Ms. Stewart, Ms. Boykins and Ms. Lowe should remember is that, in this country, aside from some personal homecoming disappointments, 30 million black Americans have achieved a measure of prosperity and freedom they would have found nowhere else on earth. And the same holds true for the rest of us.

Sometimes, amid the lawn decorations and royalty pageantrics of the season, it is easy to lose perspective on the truly important things.

Happy Homecoming.

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RAINBOW ROWELL

# Celebrity status still in mind

Ever since I was little — relatively little anyway — I believed that someday I would be famous. I never imagined how or made any grandiose plans; I just believed in the back of my mind and in my heart that someday "Rainbow Rowell" would be a household name.

I never took tap lessons or gymnastics or acting. I did try to learn a musical instrument, the violin, in the fifth grade, but I wasn't very good. Besides, only people with silly names like Yo Yo or Itzhak become famous violinists, anyway.

And what is the reward really for being a famous violinist? Wholesale rosins? Cameos on "Sesame Street"? Oh, no, I was sure the fates had something much bigger for me in mind.

So, I finished grade school and junior high never giving up hope, but never doing anything to make myself a celebrity.

I practiced acceptance speeches for all the famous awards I'd someday win. I imagined what I'd wear to the famous people parties (green velvet and hats with peacock feathers).

I picked out which little people I'd remember once I made it big (and who I'd forget). I practiced my gracious smile and my paparazzo pose.

I pondered how I'd deal with Mary Hart and John Tesh, and how I'd elude humiliation during a David Letterman interview.

I memorized the words to "Rain on My Parade" and named my own fragrance.

In the meantime, I prepared for college. I prepared for internships. I studied. I tested well. All the while, believing that someday I'd be ... (dramatic pause) ... a star.

I — like someone who dreams



*I practiced acceptance speeches for all the famous awards I'd someday win. I imagined what I'd wear to the famous people parties (green velvet and hats with peacock feathers).*

about winning the lottery but never buys a ticket — went about my business waiting for fame and fortune (did I mention fortune?) to fall in my lap.

Here's a tip: If you're waiting for fame to fall in your lap, don't sit in Nebraska.

Now I am 21 years old. Twenty-one years old.

Most celebrities are wasted, weathered shells of their former selves by age 21 (Drew Barrymore, Tiffany). Most celebrities already have blown through their second wind by this age.

Most of them have at least had some sort of big break. At the very, very least, most of them have tried.

Hear that noise? That's the clock ticking. If I am to have even a glimmer of hope at fame, I need to get moving. And fast.

Where do I begin? My talents may be limited, but I have star quality. (Nobody's ever told me so, but I'm sure of it all the same.)

Modeling is out of the question. I'm too old, too short and too much of a lot of other things.

Music? Again I have no talent. Alternative music? Maybe I could be the whiny girl lead singer for some band of pasty-faced guitar geeks. I can wail and slur my speech with best of them. If necessary, I could take tambourine lessons.

Movies? No.

Television? Maybe. I have experience. I've been on local television a couple of times. (Pete Citron approached me after the premiere of "The Boy Who Could Fly." I gave a moving review. "Yeah, it was OK.")

I have already entered a contest on the back of a Kit Kat wrapper to get a walk-on part on "Full House." I kind of look like D.J. (KIND OF), so maybe they'll invite me to join the cast. I have a hunch that the chemistry between John Stamos and me would spell ratings bonanza.

I don't want to end up like the bartender in "Piano Man" — bitter, giving people free drinks, the smile always running away from my face. Sure that I could be a movie star if I could get out of that place.

I bet it just frustrated the heck out of that bartender that Mr. Big Star Billy Joel kept coming in, parading around with his supermodel wife. Serves him right that she left him.

First things first, I need an agent, someone with contacts. Is Don King available? Are there any Nebraskan superagents?

I wonder who handles Tom Bevacqua.

*Rowell is a senior news-editorial, advertising and English major and a Daily Nebraskan associate news editor.*

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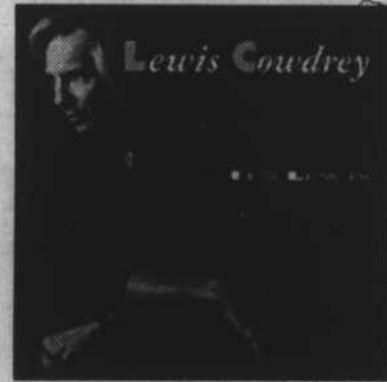
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