

OPINION

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Daily
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Bathing beauties

Americans want swimsuit competition

Miss Oklahoma Shawntel Smith was crowned Miss America Saturday night, but the biggest victory at the 75th annual pageant may well have been in another competition.

Nearly 1 million people called in during the show to vote whether to keep the swimsuit portion of the competition. And 79 percent voted "yes."

Opponents call the competition degrading, a carryover of the rampant sexism and gender inequality of times past. Choosing a role model with such a competition, they say, sends a message to young women that in order to be successful, they must be beauty queens.

Is Miss America really that visible a role model in society? Do young women today really aspire to be Miss America more than they aspire to be successful business leaders, attorneys, politicians, ministers or mothers?

But so long as it exists, should we be surprised that a beauty pageant would use beauty and physical fitness as criteria in selecting a winner?

In the words of Miss America 1994 Kimberly Aiken, "If I don't want to compete in a swimsuit, I won't be Miss America. If I don't want to take the SATs, then I won't go to college. I feel Miss America is an institution that shouldn't be touched."

The people have spoken (such as they are). And for now, they say, "hands off."

Missing

Dubious Herbie survey still at large

Well Herbie Husker is back, for now.

And the controversy surrounding his removal has died down or been transferred to other football issues.

So this seems like a good time to ask a question that burned in the background of all that Herbie flack:

Just what happened to Bill Byrne's touted "survey?"

You remember the survey — the one that said Herbie didn't sell well abroad and offended farmers at home.

Byrne produced the survey to explain or justify his actions at the time Herbie disappeared.

Or, rather, he referred to it. No one has ever seen the survey — at least as far as we can determine — except Bill Byrne.

Though it's not for a lack of trying.

Several people have asked — at one time or another — to see the thing.

But it remains at large.

So, if the survey exists, there seem to be several questions one could ask about it.

In fact, we have a few of our own:

Who paid for this survey?

Who conducted this survey — and by what methods?

Who commissioned this survey and who saw its results? That is, besides Bill Byrne.

And, after all, just where is this survey anyway?

Does it really exist — or is it merely the product of one feverish imagination?

The university at large has a right to know the answers to these questions.

And if there are no answers forthcoming, then someone has to answer to some serious charges.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Conan the Librarian

I am appalled and outraged that the UNL library system allows journals to be checked out.

I went looking for a journal only to find the entire volume (which included five journals) to be "unavailable."

When I discussed the situation with reference librarians, they could do nothing more than shrug and tell me there's a proposal to stop journals from being checked out, but that it was buried in some committee, never to see the light.

So much for a library system that helps "all" students.

Jack Sargent
Graduate
Communication Studies

Chicago cult

In response to the editorial printed (From the Chicago Tribune) on Sept. 13, 1995, I don't think Tom Osborne's opinion of himself is as high as that of media individuals who elevate themselves to the status of judge, jury and executioner before a fair trial is given.

If Mr. Phillips is found guilty of one, or all of the things he's already been depicted as guilty of in the press, then I'm sure he will be punished.

If he's cleared on all, or most of the charges, I sincerely doubt we'll see any sort of an apology from those that vilified him the most.

Kenneth D. Lowther, Jr.
Senior
Computer Science
via e-mail

Unanswered questions

While the front page color and the drop quotes grabbed my attention enough to pick up the Friday (Sept. 15) DN, I was soon let down by 34 inches of fluff.

Jeff Zeleny's story (Nation watches Husker crisis unfold) examined none of the pertinent questions:

Why aren't Benning and Washington buying tickets to the games with Phillips? Would this be because the evidence against him isn't quite as overwhelming?

How do the arrest/conviction rates

of the football team compare with a random pool of 150 non-athletes of the same age and gender demographics?

How about with teams like basketball, track, volleyball, swimming, etc? How can the athletic department muster the resources to make a national championship team yet can't get a graduation rate or average GPA much over the student body average?

Should the idolatry and a good part of the downtown Lincoln economy be trusted to 150 young men enrolled in institutional day care, who, with the guidance of numerous coaches, trainers, doctors, dietitians, strength coaches, and tutors still make serious misjudgments resulting in vandalism, sexual assault, physical abuse, and spent cartridges?

Now I'm interested to read your next story.

Joe Heinze
UNL Alumnus
Lincoln
via e-mail

Lesson learned?

First of all I would like to state the obvious: Lawrence Phillips made a huge mistake on September 10.

He is known to all of us as a talented young athlete who seemed to have everything going for him.

In reality, he is just a college student with a background that none of us have ever known or can imagine. He carries the hopes and dreams of a whole state when he steps on the football field every Saturday afternoon.

This would be a tremendous amount of pressure for anyone to handle, especially a young man who entered a group home at age 11 and has never been exposed to these types of situations.

The fact of the matter is, none of us can even come close to comprehending the amount of stress Lawrence Phillips is under.

We all have made mistakes before and have learned greatly from them.

I personally think Lawrence will learn from this unfortunate event and get his life back in order.

I just hope the fans support him like they did when he ran for 359 yards and seven touchdowns in his first two

games.
Eric Kessler
Sophomore
Education

Logical fallacies

I am writing in regard to Mark Baldrige's column (Legal prostitution beneficial, Sept. 11).

Mr. Baldrige states four reasons why prostitution should be legalized, each of which is based on a faulty assumption.

He first says that prostitution should be decriminalized to slow the spread of AIDS. He states, "The demand for unprotected sex runs high," and prostitutes are pressured not to insist on condoms. Then he implies that if prostitution were legal, prostitutes would insist on "safe sex."

However, the more logical result would be that prostitutes would still be pressured into allowing "unprotected" sex by economic factors, since presumably the demand would not decrease.

He also argues that the sex industry would yield huge revenues in taxes, but he assumes that legalizing prostitution would end back-alley encounters. That is like assuming that there are no more back-alley abortions since "Roe v. Wade."

His third reason is to eliminate abuses of prostitutes by pimps and police. He claims that decriminalization of prostitution would somehow protect prostitutes from violence and the drug scene.

Prostitution dehumanizes women. It turns them into objects for sexual gratification. Legal or not, such degradation of women inevitably leads to abuse and violence toward them.

Mr. Baldrige ends by saying, "A safe practice of commercial sex endangers no one, harms no property and, in any event, brings nothing but pleasure."

I ask him to reconsider his statement and realize that legalized prostitution endangers all women, harms all of society, and brings shame and degradation to all who permit such dehumanization of any segment of society.

Lori Brannen
Junior
Music Performance

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