

# Clumsiness not 'just a stage'

Ahhh, Nadia ...  
For an embarrassing number of years, I idolized Nadia Comaneci. I know why; it was that damn made-for-TV movie that seemed to run every Sunday afternoon of my childhood.

It told the Romanian gymnast's story, from her rise as a pigtailed ingenue, to her descent into Western decadence (boyfriends and banana split binges), to her eventual comeback.

Ahhh, Nadia ... in her cute Romanian leotard, tumbling through the floor exercises, charming the Olympic judges. I wanted to be her. Every time I watched that movie, I would spend the rest of the afternoon practicing somersaults and standing on my head until the living room spun.

And then came 1984. The Summer Olympics. The year the Reds stayed home and Mary Lou Retton kicked global butt.

For the first and only time in my life, I watched every televised minute of an entire Olympic event. Mary Lou (with Nadia's coach, the great, gruff Bela Karolyi) was so cute, so graceful, so springy.

Oh, how I wanted to be her. I wanted my face on a Wheaties box. I wanted to do battery commercials. I wanted to be dubbed "America's sweetheart."

Only one thing stood between me and gymnastics stardom.

OK, a couple of things. First, Bela would never take me, and even if he would, my mom couldn't afford the lessons.

I stumble up stairs. I tumble down. I drop things. I spill things. I rip and tear and step on things. I fall, fall, fall.

Imagine if TV's Lucy and Jerry Lewis' Nutty Professor spawned a love child. Imagine that child trying to make her way through life with two left feet and 10 thumbs.

That child will never grow to be



## Rainbow Rowell

*"I am often (well, not often, but I have been) asked why I have never taken up a sport. Ha, I reply. Life is a sport, and walking is my most challenging event."*

America's sweetheart. That child's face will never grace the front of a Wheaties box.

That child will instead make her way through life with constantly scabbed knees and bruised shins.

That child will walk into glass doors. She will stick her straw up her nose when she sips her milk. She will learn to endure — even laugh at — cruel comments like "Walk much?" "Have a nice trip, see you next fall" and "Geez, you're a buffoon."

That child (me, you dumbhead) will never, ever vault her way to fame.

Like my mother, I always hoped I would grow out of it, that I would eventually mature into a cat-like creature. I thought that if I tried hard enough, I would learn to walk like a soft summer breeze.

But I never did. Instead life unfolded before me, a

rugged terrain of tripwires and tiger pits.

I am often (well, not often, but I have been) asked why I have never taken up a sport. Ha, I reply. Life is a sport, and walking is my most challenging event.

I have been advised to pay more attention to walking. And I have tried. For about a week, every time I walked I would watch my feet and whisper, "Right, left. Right left." I would be careful to lift them high — to avoid potential stumbling blocks.

And I didn't trip. Instead I ran into walls, pillars, doorjams and perfect strangers (even imperfect strangers).

I have pretty much come to terms with my clumsiness now. I no longer try to be something I am not — a fully functioning biped.

Instead, I work on damage control. I look for safer ways and places to fall. Like Nadia and Mary Lou, I know the importance of a good landing. When possible, I try not to carry hot liquids.

When I do fall — and I do fall — I try to handle the situation in such a way that no one gets too embarrassed. Watching a grown woman fall can be visually painful for innocent bystanders. Best to smile, wave away those who stop to help and make a gently self-deprecating remark.

"Show's over folks, move along." Finally, I take pleasure in small victories.

A day that I get through my classes and into my room without tripping is a day for celebration.

If I can make it through the week without opening a cabinet door into my face, bring out the bubbly — it's like a national holiday.

An exciting national holiday, like the Fourth of July, not Presidents' Day.

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

# Our special guests

Emily Poulsen  
Zoe Triantafillou

## Freedom to choose keeps women safe

Choice is one of the fundamental rights guaranteed to citizens by the United States Constitution.

This choice also includes allowing women the right to reproductive freedom.

The decision to terminate a pregnancy is one of the most difficult choices a person could make in their lifetime. Rosie Jimenez was one of the people who had to make such a choice. October 26, 1995 marks the anniversary of the death of Rosie Jimenez, and the third National Young Woman's Day of Action.

Rosie was three months away from receiving her college degree, and a single mother of a 5-year-old. When she became pregnant for the second time, she decided that it would best for herself, and her child, to have an abortion.

She could not afford a legal abortion in a private clinic so she went to a "back-alley" doctor where she later died of septicemia, blood poisoning.

In her pocket was a \$700 college scholarship check that she would not use for an abortion in a private clinic; she refused to abandon her education and her future.

Thursday is a day that requires every person to know the rights, facts and obligations that come with abortion. This is a day when we need to focus on every person's right to choice, regardless of color, religion or economics.

How many more women will have to die as Rosie did because of a lack of funds and belligerent communities?

Many people may remember reading articles in the Lincoln and Omaha newspapers regarding a young girl being kidnapped by Blair police to prevent her from having an abortion.

The facts of this case are that the girl had not even consulted with her physician and was considering several alternatives, such as adoption, abortion or keeping the baby. When the young man, the father, heard that abortion was a possibility, he was infuriated. Eventually, the pregnant girl was taken from her own home by the police, to prevent her from having an abortion.

When the girl did see her own doctor, he advised her that abortion was not a viable option because she was too far along in her pregnancy. Now the young girl is a mother of a healthy baby.

In the state of Nebraska, minors must have parental or a legal guardian's permission before an abortion can take place.

There is also a wait period of 48 hours after the parent or guardian has been notified.

If the teenage mother does not

*Illegal abortions accounted for 17 percent of deaths of women who were pregnant in 1965. Since 1985, deaths during legal abortions have decreased to 0.4 per 100,000, an eight-fold decrease.*

wish to tell a guardian she can obtain a judicial waiver. The father of the baby does not have to be informed of abortion, but it is highly recommended.

So the young father of the baby in the case referred to above had no legal right to say whether or not the young woman should have the abortion.

Since abortion was legalized in 1973, it has saved the lives of millions of women who would have otherwise gone to drastic and deadly measures to end their pregnancy.

Illegal abortions accounted for 17 percent of deaths of women who were pregnant in 1965.

*For all you Husker Fans and players, having a safe legal abortion is much safer than playing football with a 1 in 25,000 chance of death per year.*

Since 1985, deaths during legal abortions have decreased to 0.4 per 100,000, an eight-fold decrease.

For all you Husker Fans and players, having a safe legal abortion is much safer than playing football with a 1 in 25,000 chance of death per year.

Students for Choice is an organization on campus that helps students be informed and speak out about the pro-choice movement.

On October 26, Students for Choice will be holding a rally in front of Broyhill Fountain to honor Rosie Jimenez and all other young women in the fight to provide safe, legal and affordable abortions.

(All references cited above were collected from Planned Parenthood of Lincoln).

Triantafillou is a freshman journalism major

Poulsen is a senior environmental studies major

# LSD shines on one bright day

The first time I ever dropped acid was a colossal failure. Colossal, because double: I didn't get off — and my girlfriend, Daisy, did.

It was Daisy, after all, who'd administered the sacrament — placed the tiny paper on my tongue, instructing me not to swallow, to let it dissolve in my mouth.

But the dose was months old, saved for a special occasion, and the delicate chemical, so fragile to begin with, had deteriorated past the point of effectiveness.

For me, but not for Daisy.

I spent the next eight hours, then, with a woman who insisted on breathing in rhythm with the wallpaper.

For whom the most fascinating thing in the world was watching cigarette smoke change color on its winding journey to the ceiling.

Who talked incessantly for hours — and then wanted to run home to bed.

And all I felt was sort of grouchy, a little wired, like I'd gulped six cups of coffee in rapid succession.

It wasn't until the second (and last) time I indulged in a taste of the lysergic that I got to experience the more traditional "trip."

It was the Fourth of July (I won't say which year) and I wandered out under the fireworks display at Holmes Lake like a supplicant.

The experience was already waning for me when I saw the smoky trails of extinguished starbursts — large, gray, cottony dandelions gone to seed — as weightless but enormous brains drifting low over the assembled crowd, their neural nets a visible structure against the hematite sky.

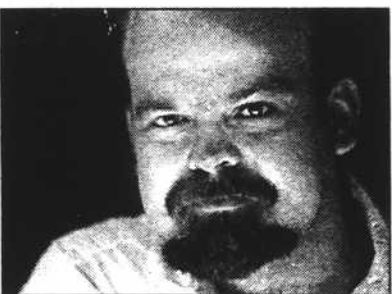
See? I was tripping out.

I was in another dimension.

I was freaked.

Like, gone, man.

Earlier in the day I had discovered the devil in a lamp post, watched the pulse of color throbbing along a canary's throat, viewed an excruciating episode of "Dynasty"



## Mark Baldrige

*"LSD, for me, strung a thousand pearls of intuition on the necklace of one, bright summer day."*

(nobody here but us corpses!), realized I'd never thrown a frisbee properly — and set out to do it right, and recognized all my friends and the odd people I encountered for what they really were — the beautiful wise apes of the Garden of Eden.

In that order.

And there was more, much more — too much to write down.

And through it all I tried, when I could speak, to convey to those around me the content of my visions. I attempted to make a translation from that realm to this one by means of words. I think I was at least partially successful — in any case, no one ever told me later that I was boring.

It's not that I imagined, then or now, that what I was experiencing was so terribly profound.

I spent that time the way I spend a lot of my free time — thinking about things.

I mean really, I'm a geek, what could be simpler?

But I'm good at it and that's something; I'm used to odd realizations — little flashes of intuition

about anything and everything. No matter how useless the information, I enjoy such moments.

And this was really no different, except in degree. LSD, for me, strung a thousand pearls of intuition on the necklace of one, bright summer day.

A day that still glows with that same light in my memory of it.

I never felt drunk — the stupor that comes with alcohol or marijuana was absent from this experience. In fact, I felt fine, clear-headed, lucid — in the old sense of the word. I felt full of light.

There were times, of course, when I forgot myself. When my sense of self became detached from my own awareness and the eye became all that was left of "I."

I can see no other way in which the drug could possibly have harmed me: I haven't become a heroin addict since. I do not eat human flesh.

But the person who gave me the drug, the person who transported it to Lincoln, the person who made it in a dubious lab, and even I myself could each have been arrested at our various points of contact with a substance some would call dangerous or even wicked.

It puzzles me.

I would never recommend to anyone that they try any drug — I am no doctor, after all.

But I cannot understand the fear and hatred some people exhibit towards these psychedelic drugs.

Why should they care what I do with my free time? It's my life, I spend it this way.

And in among the rubbish of days I can barely remember — of tired thoughts grown weary by repetition — that one day stands out in my life like a jewel.

I'd like to go back there some day.

Baldrige is a senior English major and the Opinion page editor for the Daily Nebraskan.

### BE OUR GUEST

The Daily Nebraskan will present a guest columnist each Monday. Writers from the university and community are welcome.

Must have strong writing skills and something to say.

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