

## Daily Nebraskan

Since 1901

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### Out of excuses

#### NUForce's campaign reaches breaking point

Sometimes, you've got to know when to throw in the towel.

That seems clear in the case of NUForce, a party in this year's student government election led by presidential candidate Angela Clements.

On Feb. 15, NUForce's candidate for second vice president, Rowena Pacquette, was thrown out of the race after forged signatures were discovered on a form required to run for office that she submitted.

Candidates for second vice president must gather 200 student signatures to officially file for office — of those, 35 of Pacquette's were forged, the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska Electoral Commission found.

The signatures were apparently forged by a former UNL student, Terrence Batiste, who wrote a letter of confession and apology to the Office of Judicial Affairs, to which the forgery case was forwarded.

NUForce's Clements denies any involvement in the forgeries — and we must take her at her word — yet we must also hold her accountable for things that occur under the heading of her party.

Leaders of organizations, no matter if they are directly responsible for an incident, must take responsibility for anything that occurs under the banner of the entity they head.

Instead, Clements let Batiste take all the blame. He was a convenient fall guy.

That's not a quality of a good leader.

NUForce's image was already bruised when Pacquette turned in the signatures in question, which were due Jan. 31, a day late.

Clements said Pacquette filed her signatures late because she simply didn't understand the process — another case of passing the buck and another quality that isn't desirable in a leader.

The forgeries came as another blow to NUForce, whose Sheila Gathuma was disqualified Feb. 13 because she turned in only 30 signatures to apply for the Arts and Sciences College Advisory Board, instead of the required 35.

In response to the forgeries, the Electoral Board fined NUForce \$100 and forbade it from posting large banners on campus.

The board, in announcing the punishment, was following the same principle Clements should have followed when dealing with the forgeries: If it happened under the NUForce name, I'm going to take responsibility for it.

In admonishing candidates not to breach ASUN election rules, Electoral Commission Chairman John D. Conley stressed the need for professionally run campaigns.

"If you think this is student council or homecoming in high school, I'm afraid you're wrong," he said Tuesday.

It would serve NUForce leaders well to heed Conley's advice: A college-level campaign needs to be run like one. No forging shenanigans and no excuses and buck-passing when your party messes up.

It makes one wonder how a party, whose platform has included cleaning house in the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska, will be able to achieve more accountability in the senate when its members can't even run a successful — and honorable — campaign.

In this newspaper's view, it can't, which is why Clements should withdraw from the campaign.

It's unfortunate NUForce's ideas of greater senate accountability, a more diverse senate and a renewed focus on human rights were overshadowed by a shoddily run campaign.

But it's time to throw in the towel.

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Sarah Baker, Jeff Bloom, Bradley Davis, Jake Glazeski, Matthew Hansen, Samuel McKewon, Kimberly Sweet

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#### Editorial Policy

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Neal Obermeyer/DN

## Strike at the source of the problem



Jake Glazeski

Last night, the incomparable Elton John and the inimitable Eminem performed in a much-publicized duet during the Grammy Awards. Maybe you saw it. Oh, nelly.

Michelangelo Signorile, one of the most prominent columnists on queer issues these days, has come to the fore, demanding an explanation for Elton John's betrayal of sorts.

Elton owes the gay community an explanation, he says.

An explanation for what? Well, since Elton is gay and Eminem has written lyrics depicting violence against women and expressing hatred toward gays, He thinks there's a conflict of interests.

But can it be said Elton owes anyone an explanation? It's not like he's an elected official or an official representative of the gay community. The gay community has embraced him, and he's accepted that embrace. But does his behavior need the community's approval? Is he bound by his association with them?

It's an artifact of liberal thinking in general where a person's nonintellectual characteristics — be it his or her sexuality, race, gender, whatever — are associated with what amounts to a party line drawn along such characteristics. When a person doesn't toe that line, he or she is held accountable by the community to which they "belong," whether they want to be held accountable or not. And if you're a celebrity, the price for breaking the line can be severe.

This is mob thinking; it serves only to negate the very advances gay rights groups hope to make. Allowing that Elton can support organizations such as the Human Rights Campaign while agreeing to perform with Eminem also acknowledges that *gay people can think for themselves*. Is that so bad?

Well, that's the end of the straw man. The prominent gay activist would argue: But Elton isn't just performing with some Schmoie with abnormally blond hair. He's performing with someone that has written very disturbing lyrics that "victimize" homosexuals. Those lyrics oppress homosexuals because they create an environment wherein violent behavior against such individuals is acceptable.

As one student said in Wednesday's DN, Elton is "contributing to his own oppression."

The argument works only if you accept the premise that states producing lyrics that depict violence encourages such violence. And, yes, I am vaguely aware of studies that suggest being exposed to violent media tends to incline young'ns into imitating such violence and being desensitized to it.

But that premise is only permissible if you accept what is, at base, moral relativism. You must accept that morality, in practice anyway, rises from the emulation of behaviors you perceive and moral codes you are taught; in other words, it is not founded on an objectively provable set of observations. Thus, exposing a person to ideas that encourage antisocial behavior is irresponsible, perhaps immorally so, because it will ultimately encourage the actual realization of that behavior. Thus, no morality can be inherently "better" than the other. Whatever is moral depends on who you are, where you are and how you grew up.

Gay activists, in accepting this premise, directly contradict themselves because they are trying to convince others that there is nothing inherently wrong with homosexual behavior, or at least that decisions on the secular level should not be affected by evidence of such behavior. In other words, there *do* exist objective moral standards. So if such moral standards exist, violence against women and gays will continue to be wrong, no matter how much people are exposed to images encouraging it.

Listening to Eminem will not form the moral in a person's mind that violence against women and gays is right, nor will not hearing his music convince the person otherwise. Thus, Elton performing with Eminem poses no conflict of interests.

The possible fact that some people may be affected by the images from the media does not mean it is irresponsible for the media to propagate such images; it suggests only that such people hold a morality that is not objectively founded. And that is the root of the problem.

Gay activists need to abandon altogether their attempts at coercing opponents and supporters and beating them at the polls. They need to devise objective standards — based on rationality and not on impassioned pleas that refer back to Matthew Shepard every other breath.

In particular, Signorile and others like him need to stop trying to bully gay celebrities into toeing this narrowly conceived line and should instead focus on establishing a platform that is based on reason rather than uniformity of thought along race/sexuality/gender lines.

### Letters to the editor

#### A tough woman's reply

A few words concerning Karen Brown's piece "Winter wonderland."

While I am flattered at my dear friend and co-worker's description of me as "the toughest woman on Earth" (Thank you, darlin'), I'm afraid that the quote attributed to me might leave some readers with a diminished view of the Landscape Services Department and, heaven knows, I've got my groundskeeping reputation to uphold.

My co-workers often accuse me of lacking humor, and this may well be the case (Call me "the most serious woman on the earth"), especially at 3 a.m. when it's 10 below.

Actually, we all keep a pretty good attitude about snow removal. In any event, I am quoted as having said, "If someone in high heels or boots falls, it's their fault." Well, since *we* all wear boots, you might wonder what the heck I'm talking about.

Cowboy boots — what I actually said was that when doing snow removal, I can't be responsible for people in high heels and cowboy boots.

It's a sentiment that I think most of us share. We really do bust our butts for y'all, but you gotta have some common sense about what to wear on your feet during winter in Nebraska.

I have worked here about 15 of the winters since 1979, and I have been accused of obsessiveness about snow removal.

It's true. I want everyone to get where they're going safe and sound — little kids, wheelchair travelers, those with crutches and our elders. I can get a little picky.

Anyway, all this is just to say that I try to keep a sense of humor around me but that I don't want the department or me to be perceived poorly, especially not after all these 3 a.m. mornings. We have fun, but we take our snow work seriously.

It is always a joy to see my buddy, Karen, in that cold, middle of the night dark, wielding her shovel perhaps more responsibly than her pen. She hustles, and she looks good in her coveralls.

Emily Levine  
Landscape Services  
East Campus

## Karmic flux of friendships

Have you ever had a conversation with someone and the phrase arises, "So what ever happened to ...?" and you could say something like, "Oh, we drifted apart," or "She just up and disappeared from my life for no apparent reason."



Yasmin McEwen

Or you could tell the truth. Of course, I don't always tell the whole truth. Sometimes it's the Yasmin-approved and selectively altered truth, but still, it is an attempt at the truth.

Well, I was having this discussion concerning old friends (while dipping my spoon into the melted caramel of my bread caramel pudding at the Garden Cafe) last weekend, when I realized that I had lost a few friends along the way of my star-studded, celebrity-event-filled, so-called brilliant life.

I said to my confidant — who was busy marveling at the massive amounts of sugar that I had downed in the last 24 hours while remaining halfway coherent — that it seemed I had had some pretty wormy friends in the past. Save for the fact that I, myself, could have been wormy to others, too, on the very same or even numerous but separate occasions, I cleverly steered myself back to the topic of the worminess of others.

One time, there was this friend of mine who would disappear in my most desperate times of need. She abandoned me after a car crash, hitching a ride as far away from the scene of the crash as possible, leaving me for dead as I lay motionless on the green grass next to my totaled car.

There was the other time when I was in my first and only fight ever, catching punches thrown at me wildly by a crazed girl with braces because I stole not only her Calvin Klein jeans (or so she says) but more importantly, her boyfriend.

My best friend proceeded to run away from the fight, leaving me to get a bloody nose and later to be accosted by the girl's gangster best friend lovingly called "Angel." I had nightmares about Angel beating me up after school for weeks.

Then there was the friend who I let stay at my house this summer for one of our best friend's bachelorette parties. When we were both getting ready for our big night out, I showed my friend a new pair of pants I had just bought at Banana Republic the weekend before.

I remember they were still on the hanger, the tags were still on them. I remember pulling them out of the rack to show her, and her eyes widened as she said, "Woah, cool pants." I was like, "Yeah, they're pretty cute."

Funny how the very next morning she woke me up at the crack of dawn, saying she had to get a move on and that it was nice to see me. I can still see her face hiding behind the wall as she yelled a good-bye in the predawn hours, and later I didn't think anything but, "Gee, that was an abrupt exit."

A few days later, I decided that it was a good day to wear my new pants, but when I went into my closet to take them out, they were gone. It really wasn't hard for me to put two and two together, being so gifted in the math and sciences areas.

So I called my good friend who was safely back in Colorado. "Hey!"

"Hey girl, how ya been?"  
"Not so good. Hey, you know the funniest thing happened; I am looking for my new pants, you know, the ones I just got from Banana Republic, and I can't find them anywhere."

"Hmmm ... Where did you put them?"

"Well, I didn't put them anywhere. They were on the hanger the last time I saw them, the last time being when I showed them to you."

"Well, what ever did you do with them?"

"You don't think they got up and walked away all by themselves, do you? I mean that couldn't have happened. Is there any way that you could have accidentally packed them away with you?"

"Uh, no."  
"Well, why don't you look around OK. Hey, I gotta go."

And after numerous e-mails from her — with no apology for the stolen pants, I might add — I still am not talking to her. The funny thing is that she never got mad at me for accusing her, and she never talked about the issue; she just kept asking me why I wouldn't e-mail her back. I have a couple of words for my good friend: "Get a clue."

Other friends I consulted on the matter said: "Well, maybe this is just a weakness of hers. Maybe you should just get over it." Or "How can you even talk to her ever again? You're lucky she didn't get into your purse!"

So with conflicting advice like this, I really didn't know what to do. In these situations, I believe it's best to consult my dogs. They are the real experts in matters like these. Vinny says, "Just pee on her." Falcon says, "Does she have any fried chicken, and can you get some of it?"

I deduced that since she was too far away to pee on and that she didn't have any fried chicken that I could conceivably get my hands on, the friendship was basically off, which really didn't bother me too much until this morning, when I was driving in my car, singing badly off-key with the cold air fogging up my windows. I realized that there really is such a thing as bad karma, and yes, a person can actually bring it upon themselves. How so?

Which brings me to the story of the first and only physical fight I had when I was an innocent lovely coquette in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. I remember that I had, yes, indeed, specifically set out to befriend this girl that I met at a homecoming dance because her boyfriend was so cute that yes, I had to have him.

That's right. I called her and said we should hang out together, talk on the phone, watch the football game that Saturday together (hint hint: Why don't you invite your boyfriend over, and he can watch it with us) and other fun girly girl activities.

Sadly, I got the boyfriend, but once I got him I was shocked and horrified to find out that he was not what I was looking for, and we only lasted four days after. I got so sick and tired of his repeated phrase of "okey dokey." Then I said, "You know what, why don't you go back to so and so."

To make a long story short (I know it's way too late for that), remember the Calvin Klein pants this girl said I had so wrongly stolen from her?

Well, I did steal them, and for the life of me, I can't even remember what I did with them.

So if you are out there, and you know who you are, I will buy you a new pair if you give me a call. I really don't blame you for giving me a bloody nose because after all, I kinda deserved it.

I mean, yes, I did steal your jeans, and yes, I did steal your boyfriend, too.

Since then, I've had boyfriends stolen, and not surprisingly, one very cherished, brand new pair of pants. Go figure. But in the end, I guess sometimes it takes some wormy events to make a person realize that maybe what they got was something they may have really deserved after all.

Lesson learned, and now about that fried chicken ...