

Hanna

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let it grow and now it's filled in all right.

I'd gladly take a nickel for every person who has seen me and said, "Jim, your beard's filling out. I didn't think it would."

And who can blame them. I'm not a man's man and a full beard on me seems as impossible as a full beard on a mixing bowl.

And yet, there it is. Sprouting from my face like greens on a Chia pet, my hairy testament to masculinity waves grandly in the breeze.

I'm going to shave it off soon because I don't really like it. It doesn't really look all that good, it itches and I'm always afraid that I'll get salsa in it when I eat at Amigos.

Still, I'm glad I grew it. I've learned what it is to be a beard-wearin' man. I can now speak as a person who has had hair on his face and there are a few things I can share with you about the experience.

First off, don't get bothered by people who play with their facial hair. I've passed many an hour of stifling boredom by idly flicking, pulling, petting, twisting and ruffling my facial hair. It's almost unconscious.

The latest dumb thing I've found to do is to pull a few of the longer hairs into my mouth and clench them

in my teeth. It's not fun or pleasurable but I do it anyway.

I suppose I just speak for myself but I don't do this out of any false sense of machismo. I'm not flaunting or paying homage to my hormones. It's just odd to have hair on your face and diddling with it is part of the experience.

Also, growing a beard does not really release you from the chains of shaving. I've had to trim and clip my facial pet almost every morning since it was born. I originally grew it so I wouldn't have to shave but now I spend just as much time pruning my face as I would shaving it.

Finally and maybe most importantly, should you or someone you love grow a beard, don't make a bigger deal out of it than it is. My beard experiment is certainly not worthy of as much attention as a column like this gives it.

Try not to be rude ("Your beard sucks, why did you grow it?") and try not to fawn ("That beard is SO cool! I love it! That is the greatest thing I have ever seen in my life! Do me!").

As hackneyed as it sounds, a beard only changes a person physically and, if handled properly, it shouldn't change the person himself. (When they're handing out more dirty names, I'll take sap).

So I think I'll cut mine off and see if it makes a difference. I doubt it



Paul Chandler/Daily Nebraskan

will. I wasn't trying to make a statement when I grew it and I won't be making a statement by removing it. Besides, if having a beard makes me a real man, I don't think I want one anyway. Hanna is a senior theater major and a Daily Nebraskan reporter and columnist.

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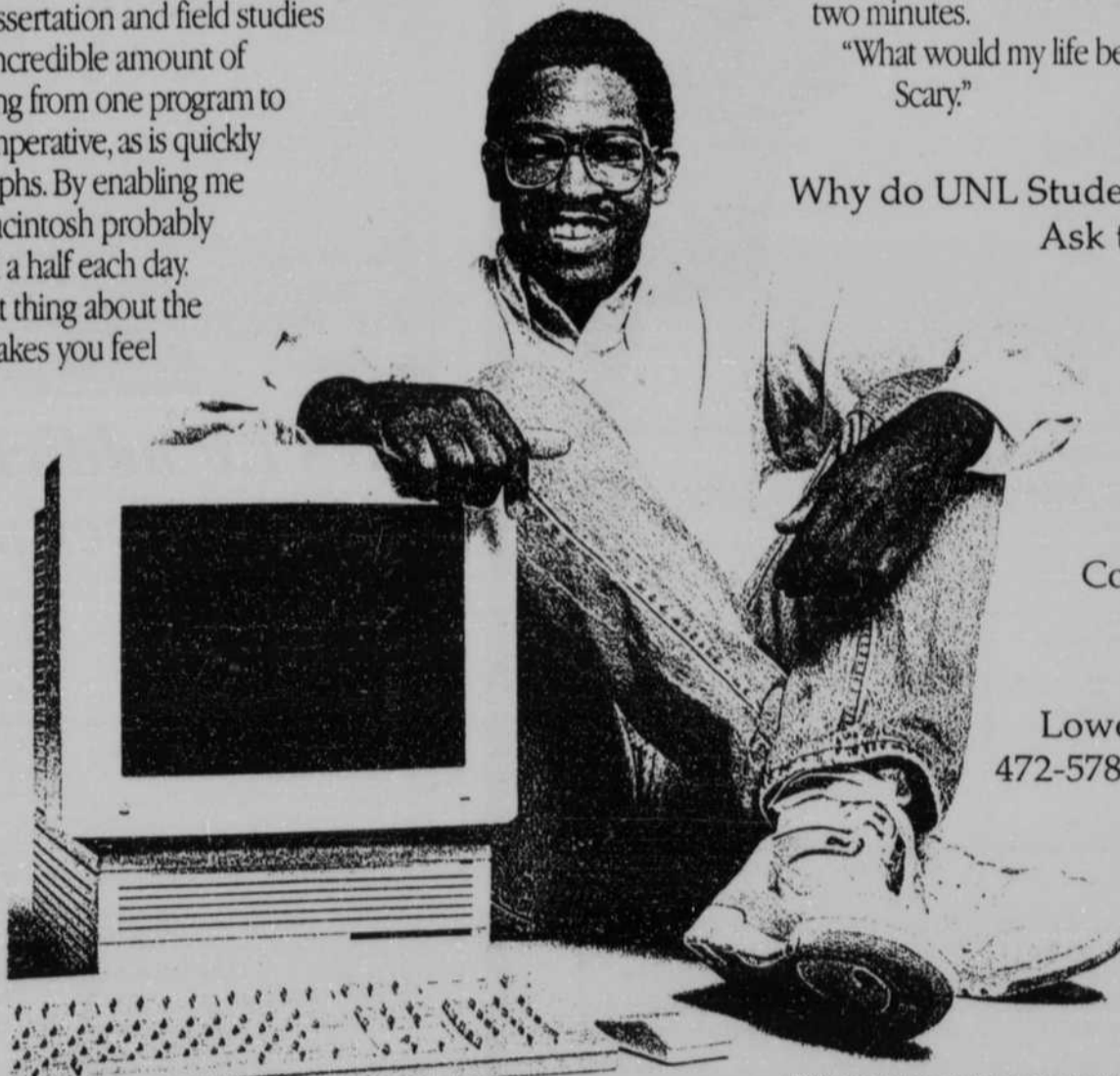
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