

Tony Williams, president of the Afrikan People's Union. Michelle Paulman/DN

Skin color shouldn't shock, offend or even make any difference, minority students say

By Yuk Peng Lee
Diversions Contributor

Some people are tall, some are short. Some are fat, but some are slim. So it is with skin color. Some are black, others are white. Does all this make a difference? It shouldn't. Everyone enjoys the sunshine and breathes the air. Sunshine and fresh air are free of charge. Everyone is the same and

See LEE on 9



Brian Shellito/DN

Scot faces 'hugeness' with chagrin

First & Worst
By Matthew Grant
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Before I came to Nebraska a friend said to me:

"Aaaayyyy, man, won't it be so mad when you get off the plane and stand there and think: I'm in America and I'm on my own."

"Yeeeah," I said. The construction was all over the place, but I knew what he meant.

But as it turned out, I wasn't on my own. I was hung-over, exhausted and most likely smelling lightly of vomit, but I was in good company, at least, partly as a result of smoking bans.

The policy on the plane was to confine smokers to the smallest, least desirable area possible.

Had smoking been banned, the three of us may well have been strained and irritable wrecks for the eight hour flight.

As it was, sitting in the plane's rear-most seats without even a window to peer out of, we had nothing better to do than socialize. We proffered cigarettes, relaxed and flicked ash into half-empty plastic cups.

We talked about travel and drank everything that was offered — until, after passing over some arbitrary line in the air half-way across the Atlantic, I experienced a rebirth as a minor and the hostesses refused to serve me anymore.

"You can have a pop," they said.

"A what?"
"A pop! — soda?" came the drawled reply.

"Oh, no, thanks," I said, "I'm not thirsty or anything."

A few hours later this appeared to have been a blessing in disguise. One of my traveling companions, a middle-aged farmer on his way to visit his daughter in New York — who had had a glass of Scotch glued to his palm since take-off — unexpectedly, sat up, grabbed for a sick-bag and attempted to regurgitate into it.

My other traveling companion, a fellow Scot off to study in Illinois, jumped up to get paper towels while a crowd of air-hostesses formed around us to make condescending noises: those damned smokers. . .

Wherever you're from, it would be difficult to know nothing of American culture. As a European, certainly, I had seen countless American movies and TV shows and eaten in at least a few fast-food chains.

But nothing can quite prepare you for the experience of actually being somewhere.

My first thought on landing in Chicago was not as my friend had suggested. There was this highway running past the airstrip: look at those cars, I thought, they're huge.

Of course, I had known before I came here that American cars are big — but seeing them for real for the first time somehow made it seem very different.

By the time I had passed through immigration I was beginning to feel like Gulliver in Brodningbad. Everything seemed to have doubled in size.

"I ordered my 'pop.' I asked for a medium, but they gave me a huge anyway."

Feeling disoriented, I lit another cigarette.

"Put that out!" bellowed a huuuuugggeee security guard with a gun on his hip.

"Sure thing," I said and scurried off between his legs.

Once I got deep inside O'Hare, I began to believe I wouldn't ever get out. Everyone I asked told me to go a different way. I ran backwards and forwards, up and down and round in circles — changing from Gulliver to the March Hare in "Alice in Wonderland."

I'm late, I'm late. . .

Eventually, though, I got to the right bay — only to find the plane wasn't leaving for another hour. To kill time I went to buy a 'pop.'

The selection of food in front of me was unbelievable. Everything had grown in size again. There was an enormous pizza and rows and rows of huuuuugggeee, huuuuugggeee cakes and cookies.

I ordered my 'pop.' I asked for a medium, but they gave me a huge anyway.

"Have a nice day," mumbled the cashier, looking as if she was about to die of exhaustion.

I was about to die of exhaustion myself, but I didn't want to sleep, lest I miss the announcement for my

flight. In the seat opposite me an American lifeguard was berating Europe in a loud voice to anyone who would listen. "Anyone" was another lifeguard and his trainee lifeguard son who were sitting in the same bay.

"I went from Brussels, that's in Belgium, to Paris, that's in France," said the first lifeguard. "It's like being back in the '50s, everyone in leather jackets, with their girlfriends. Then we went to Amsterdam, that's in Holland. . . I'm sorry if I annoy you by telling you what country a city's in, it's just a habit I have. . ."

It's a standard part of culture shock to feel hostility toward natives of the foreign country, but I'm fairly sure I would have disliked this individual at any time.

I definitely should have slept on the plane to Nebraska, but a large amiable Texan sitting next to me forced me to drink beer with him instead. By the time we had landed, things had taken on a dream-like quality.

There were two other international students arriving that same evening. We were met and given a brief tour of Lincoln before being taken to our dorms.

My only real memory of that period is the feeling I was not really in America at all, but on a movie set. Having seen so many American movies, the real America appeared like a parody to my bemused brain.

Essentially I was already asleep. A while later, I finally found my way to a bed and instantly collapsed on top of it.

I'm in America, I thought, and I'm on my own.



Biljana Obradovic, President of the International Student Organization. Michelle Paulman/DN

Lee

Continued from Page 8

should be treated equally.

But these things happened in Lincoln:

Anthony L. Williams, president of the Afrikan People's Union, was chased by a car filled with white men while riding his bicycle at 19th and Vine streets. They shouted ra-

cial slurs at him for no reason, he said.

Biljana D. Obradovic, president of the International Student Organization, said six Indian student's were made to leave the Reunion last year while having a drinking party there.

The Indian students went to the International Student Organization for help. They felt they had been discriminated against.

With the help of International

Student Organization, the students got redress. The Reunion owner apologized in print in the Daily Nebraskan.

Obradovic, from Yugoslavia, is a teaching assistant from the English department. She said she thought discrimination was a big issue on campus.

Williams agreed. Racial slurs develop a feeling of hatred, he said.

See LEE on 11

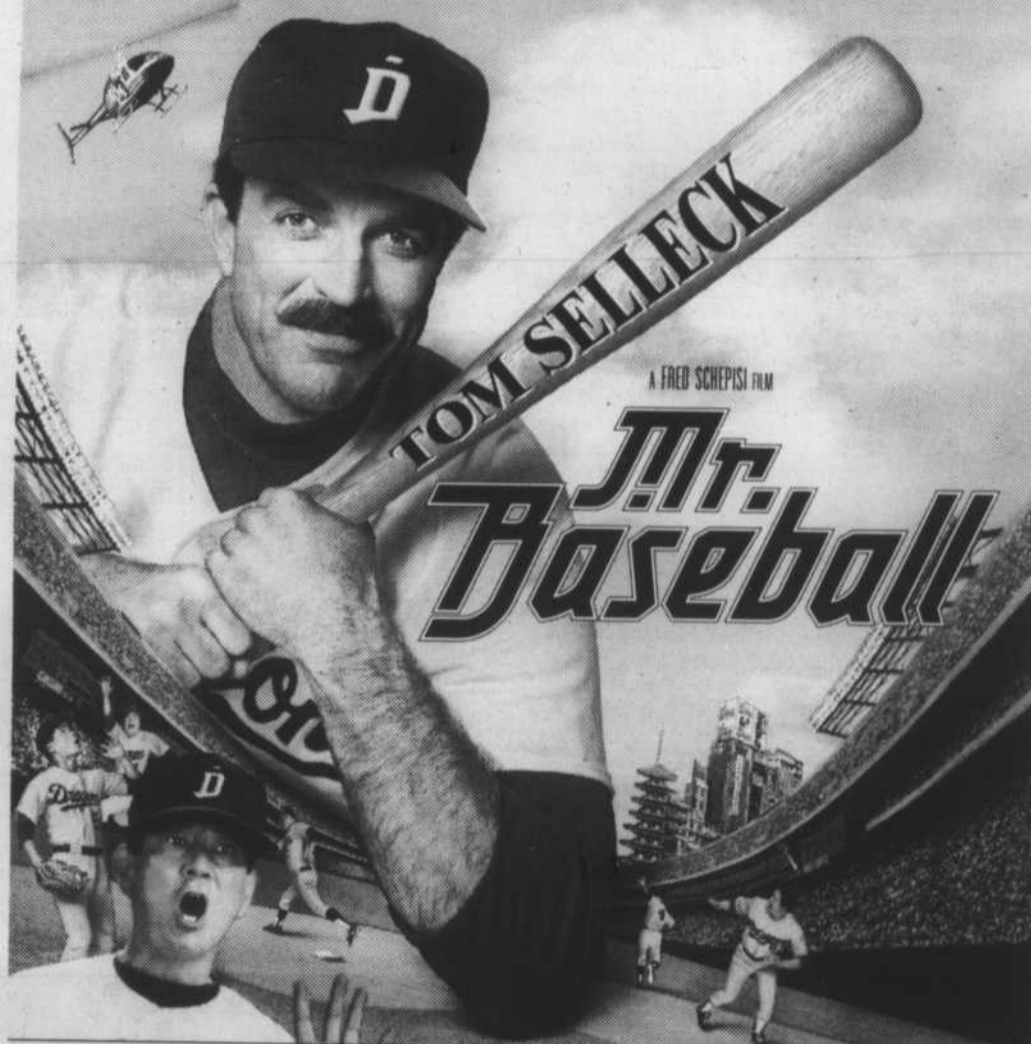
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